

Doc. 300.3.1

Date: 28/07/2020

External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS
- **Town:** NICOSIA
- **School/Faculty:** SCIENCES
- **Department:** COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

COMPUTER SCIENCE (4 YEARS FT, 240 ECTS, BSc)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

COMPUTER SCIENCE (18 MONTHS FT, 90 ECTS, MSc)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

COMPUTER SCIENCE (3 YEARS FT, 180 ECTS, PhD)

- **Department's Status:** Existing

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Due to covid-19 pandemic, the whole evaluation took place remotely and online. The site visit at the European University Cyprus in Nicosia took place on July 28, 2020. During the site visit, the EEC was accompanied by Natasa Kazakaïou, the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education representative. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met with the agency representative on the 27th of July to discuss the external assessment of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at European University Cyprus.

During the site visit, the EEC met and had a series of constructive discussions with members of the governing board of the University and also with members of the teaching and administration staff who assisted in the presentation of the programs of studies. In particular, the EEC met with L Symeou (Vice Rector of Academic Affairs), A Efstathiou (Vice Rector of Research and External Affairs), P Papagiorgis (Dean), V Gkretsi (Internal Quality Assurance Committee), P Chourides (Internal Quality Assurance Committee), M Appiou Nikiforou (Chair), V Papadopoulou (Program Coordinator), K Papanikolaou (Program Coordinator), I Michos (Assistant Professor), A Grondoudis (Assistant Professor), G Hadjichristofi (Associate Professor), D Hadjiloucas (Associate Professor), K Katzis (Associate Professor), G Christou (Associate Professor), C Dimopoulos (Associate Professor), Y Danidou (Lecturer), P Leng Cheng (Lecturer), F Theodorou (Administrator), G Kalfas (Student Rep), M Kourtelis (Student), A Christou (Student), O Pavlou (Student), C Chrysostomou (Student), C Ioannou (Cosine), Ken Karantonis (Hellas-Sat), Constantinos Loizou (SK EMBIODIAGNOSTICS) amongst other participants. The EEC received a series of presentations about the university's and department's vision and ambition and also about the structure, the teaching and research environment of the department under evaluation. A video tour of the campus about its resources and facilities were also provided.

During the evaluation process, the EEC had access to: a copy of the 200.1 Application for Evaluation – Accreditation – BSc, MSc and PhD Programs of Study documents (three in total) and a copy of the 300.1 Application for Departmental Evaluation document. The following supplementary documents were received upon the EEC request: University, Department and each under evaluation program of studies presentations, Employability survey, Progression and completion data, Student feedback satisfaction, Samples of coursework, Survey on learning experience, Software list, Application data, Women-men admissions and graduations data and finally, details for a project promoting female start-ups in STEM.

The European University Cyprus provided a comprehensive documentation. The EEC considered all aspects of the submitted documentation and the site visit discussions. The EEC would like to acknowledge the organizational arrangements.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
NIK BESSIS (CHAIR)	PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE	EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY
ANASTASIA AILAMAKI	PROFESSOR	SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LAUSANNE
PETER TRIANTAFILLOU	PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF DATA SCIENCE THEME	UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
VALENTINOS PARIZA	STUDENT	UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*
- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:	<i>Non-compliant</i>
3:	<i>Partially compliant</i>
4 or 5:	<i>Compliant</i>

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*
- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*
- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.1 Mission and strategic planning		1 - 5
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	4
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	3
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	3
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	3
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	4
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	4
1.1.7	The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective.	4
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

The Department is ambitious and is currently offering a very large number of programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Yet, the rather small number of permanent academic staff is at odds with this ambition. To acquire credence and international academic respect either the number of programs needs to be reduced or the academic expertise of the Department needs to deepen to credibly support offered specializations.

It is unlike standard practice at the European level for CS Departments to offer so many different courses, especially involving rather heterogeneous areas (e.g. Occupational Safety and Health).

The growth plan needs to be more detailed: detailed roadmaps need be developed that show how the Department will develop in terms of students, staff, and courses, in breadth and depth, alongside detailed increased investment.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.
2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

It is surprising to see a CS Department offering courses in Public Safety and Health.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Need to strategically decide if the aforementioned program is of importance and should be offered at the undergraduate and PhD levels.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society		1 - 5
1.2.1	The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.	4
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	4
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	3
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The Department has made serious efforts in connecting with society, via student placements, its Industrial Advisory Board, and its R&D projects engaging with public agencies/offices. The Department needs to better document how it monitors its societal impact and its adaptations of its strategy as time passes.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.3 Development processes		1 - 5
1.3.1	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.	3
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	3
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	3
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The Department needs to be more proactive for attracting academic and student talent. For the latter, especially at the graduate/research level, the Department needs to invest in graduate student scholarships and develop and communicate a stronger academic nurturing profile, helping younger academics grow into significant contributors to science and learning.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

As expected, most undergraduate students come from Cyprus. The Department needs to develop a strategy for attracting top student talent, while competing internationally against top institutions, with lower fees.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department is well established. It has a substantial number of students and eager, caring faculty staff, as well as adequate support for labs and teaching/learning support from permanent and contracted academic staff.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The Department exhibits an extrovert character, already making a mark for its strong student employability record and appearing in international rankings. It is making serious efforts towards

connecting with societal needs, as evidenced from its Industrial Advisory Board, its numerous student placements at Cypriot industries, and its several projects with public agencies/offices. Its academic personnel seems eager and very helpful to students, as evidenced from staff evaluations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Department needs a carefully thought out development plan in several dimensions: (i) student growth, (ii) research presence, (iii) external funding, and (iv) permanent academic staff.

The Department needs to think more strategically as to specific areas of specialization within the Computing Science field and/or develop substantial expertise in areas where the Department is offering programs (e.g., Computing Science, Computing Engineering, Information Management, etc.) and/or areas where the Department appears to wish to concentrate in (e.g., AI, Information Systems, etc. as shown in its desired Learning Outcomes of its degrees).

As the Department's net financial contribution to the University appears to be strongly positive and since a stated goal of the University is to invest a large percentage of donations and profits to improve its academic programs, the University is strongly encouraged to support the Department's development/growth and increase the Department's depth and breadth of expertise in key strategic areas (such as AI and Information Systems).

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Partially Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Partially Compliant

2. Quality Assurance

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
2. Quality Assurance		
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy		1 – 5
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	5
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	4
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	3
2.1.4	The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1	Teaching and learning	4
2.1.4.2	Research	4
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	4
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	3
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		
Click to enter text.		

2. Quality Assurance

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study		1 – 5
2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	3
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	4
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective.	4
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	4
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	3
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	3
2.2.7	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.	3
2.2.8	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	3
2.2.9	The Department flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods.	3
2.2.10	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	3
2.2.11	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	3
2.2.12	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
2.2.12.1	Building facilities	4
2.2.12.2	Library	4
2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	4

	2.2.12.4	Technological infrastructure	4
	2.2.12.5	Academic support	4
2.2.13	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.		4
2.2.14	The Department's mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.		3
2.2.15	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.		3
2.2.16	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.		3
2.2.17	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.		3
2.2.18	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.		3
2.2.19	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.		3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

[Click to enter text.](#)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The EEC felt that European University Cyprus overall policies and plans on quality assurance are generally consistent within the DIPAE's national higher education framework, European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance (ESG), the EFQM Excellence model and the Investor in People Framework. There is a University-wide internal evaluation committee and a department council. The council has student representation which is of good practice. There is a set of monitoring review indicators and a structured self-assessment report which as practices are both recommended practices under the aforementioned guidelines. These are sufficient samples demonstrating evidence of quality assurance compliance.

The intended learning outcomes at both program and course level specifications and samples of the policies underpinning teaching, learning and assessment, marking and degree classification demonstrate that the provider is using sector-recognized quality standard practices.

The appeals and complaints procedure is well explained. A meeting with students confirmed that students are aware of the process. Discussions with staff led to the conclusion that there was no any grievance in relation to these programs.

Plagiarism is detected through Turnit in and is managed via a relevant committee as part of a comprehensive procedure.

Staff who met the EEC have a good understanding of the approach to maintaining quality standards and are supported by comprehensive staff development programs.

Admission processes are quite comprehensive and cater entry requirements for diverse backgrounds for both home and international applicants. The department collects data in relation to graduate employment and student performance. However, these are treated in isolation and subsequently, there is no an annually produced report which analyses performance data in a collective and systematic way.

Resources including library, IT Labs, software and classrooms are very well equipped and appropriate. Welfare student support services are very student focused.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Quality assurance plans is generally consistent within the national framework of operation. The range and quality of student support services.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Lack of annual monitoring report.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	Compliant
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	Partially Compliant

3. Administration

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 – 5
3. Administration		
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	4
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	4
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	3
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	4
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	4
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	4
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	4
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	4
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	4
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Overall, the Department's administration structure and provided support is in line with expectations, as in mature European Universities. One area of slight concern is that the number of administration staff for the Department is three. With so many offered programs, this seems rather small.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Overall, all quality indicators and criteria with relation to administration are inline with expectations.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Grievance procedures, transparent decision-making, and the overall functioning of the Department's Council adequately support the Department's administrations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Click to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
3. Administration	Compliant

4. Learning and Teaching

(ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study
- 4.2 Organisation of teaching

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.1 Planning the programmes of study		1 - 5
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	3
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	4
4.1.3	The content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	N/A
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		
The programme of study, albeit broad, needs to be revisited and reworked according to a strategic plan.		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.2 Organisation of teaching		1 - 5

4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	5
4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	5
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	4
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	5
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	4
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	5
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Teaching has not started, so it is not possible to evaluate the criteria related how learning and teaching is implemented.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department offers a rather wide range of courses. The study plan is well-articulated with cross-cutting courses and a very diverse material. There are several courses which help the development of students (computational thinking, courses on conducting and on presenting research, etc). The thematic choice is very broad (from traditional topics to ML, AI, etc). There are also several courses one does not usually find in a computer science department.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The department works hard to keep the offering current and foster interdisciplinary education. Placing Computer Science as a central pillar in the sciences and offering rather exotic courses offers the students a unique bridging opportunity and improves employability.

Students seem to enjoy the program and employability is high. The feedback is timely and the criteria of admission are on par with excellent academic institutions around the world.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The thematic choices seem rather disconnected. They need to be better linked in order to form a coherent program which follows specific educational goals. The offering of classes is rather broad, but the offerings should be linked with each other in order to be in line with a well-articulated strategic plan for growth including specific focus areas, and timelines for hiring new faculty in the department.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	Partially Compliant
4.2 Organisation of teaching	Compliant

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
5. Teaching Staff		
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	4
5.2	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.	4
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	4
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	4
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	3
5.6	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

[Click to enter text.](#)

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work
- Number of visiting Professors
- Number of special scientists on lease services

- 3
- 14
- 0

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The aforementioned numbers refer to the numbers reported at the time when the department made its application for accreditation. In these numbers, there were 15 academic staff in which 3 were specialist staff. There were 14 visiting collaborators. Now days, the department has 15 academic staff, 2 specialist staff and 29 visiting collaborators. Either way, the spread of staffing base is within the acceptable limits at this point of operation.

Despite the high number of visiting collaborators, teaching workloads are healthy and allow academic staff to undertake other duties including research and administrative tasks. The student/staff ratio is very strong (20:1).

The high ratio, even within the acceptable limits, of visiting collaborators that is affiliated with other institutions is a potential risk that may cause an identity loss in representing the department and the student experience it offers.

The CVs of staff demonstrate evidence of appointed academic staff having prior and relevant teaching and research experience in higher education institutions and are members of professional organizations. Research expertise and publication records are relevant to the programs on offer.

There is a student survey which gathers student feedback. The EEC saw sufficient evidence of self and peer led teaching and class observation peer review procedures.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Competitive staff/student ratio.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

High ratio of visiting collaborators.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
• Teaching Staff	Compliant

- **Research**
(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
6. Research		1 - 5
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	3
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	4
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	4
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	5
6.5	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.	4
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	4
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	5
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	5
6.9	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.	3
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Imminent need for strategic research roadmap.
No policy for internal funding.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The department places high importance on research and encourages excellence. Communications ensure promotion of excellence by adequately publishing awards and distinctions.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The department places high importance on research and encourages excellence. Communications ensure promotion of excellence by adequately publishing awards and distinctions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The mission of the department needs to be a bit more precisely articulated in terms of processes for success in order to fine-tune research policy.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
6. Research	Compliant

- **Resources (ESG 1.6)**

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
7. Resources		1 - 5
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	3
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	3
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	3
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	3
7.5	The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	4
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Click to enter text.

7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 are in line with expectations.

However, currently the Department offers a wide variety of (some) heterogeneous programs. To convincingly perform well in all these programs, the Department needs to seriously extend its investment to (i) hire more permanent academic staff in areas of interest (e.g., AI, Information Systems, etc.), (ii) attract more PhD students, through PhD scholarships.

In addition, currently, accepting circa 2 PhD students per year leaves much to be desired if the goal is to establish serious research groups!

For 7.3, given the above comment, the score would be actually 2 (non-compliant) unless the Department strategically decides to focus only on a subset of offered programs and/or the University invests more of its profits for the Department (staff and student) development.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department appears to be in good financial standing, which ensures adequate funding exists to support the core of its reaching/learning obligations.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The Department has centers of excellence which appear to be well established and attracting significant external funding. Provisions for financially supporting academic staff expenses to acquire equipment and attend conferences are in line with expectations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

More investment is needed to support the depth and breadth of the Department's programs.

More investment is needed for develop the Research and PhD programs. As it stands, said programs are only provided at a rudimentary basis.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
7. Resources	Partially Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.

The EEC has found a number of strengths and particularly some of them are:



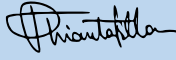

- The Department exhibits an extrovert character, already making a mark for its strong student employability record and appearing in international rankings.
- Quality assurance plans is generally consistent within the national framework of operation.
- Grievance procedures, transparent decision-making, and the overall functioning of the Department's Council adequately support the Department's administrations.
- The range and quality of student support services.
- The department works hard to keep the offering current and foster interdisciplinary education.
- Students seem to enjoy the program and employability is high.
- Competitive staff/student ratio.
- The Department has centers of excellence which appear to be well established and attracting significant external funding.

The EEC has also found a number of areas for improvement, which require addressing, those of higher importance are:

- The Department needs a carefully thought out development plan in several dimensions: (i) student growth, (ii) research presence, (iii) external funding, and (iv) permanent academic staff.
- Lack of annual monitoring report.
- The thematic choices seem rather disconnected. They need to be better linked in order to form a coherent program which follows specific educational goals.
- The research mission of the department needs to be a bit more precisely articulated in terms of processes for success in order to fine-tune research policy.
- More investment is needed for develop the Research and PhD programs. As it stands, said programs are only provided at a rudimentary basis.

Click to enter text.

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
NIK BESSIS (CHAIR)	
ANASTASIA AILAMAKI	
PETER TRIANTAFILLOU	
VALENTINOS PARIZA	
FullName	
FullName	

Date: 28/07/2020

