

Doc. 300.3.1

Date:

# External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
American University of Cyprus (AUCY)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty:** Faculty of Sciences and Technology
- **Department:** C
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## Programme 1

**In Greek:**

Πληροφορική

**In English:**

BSc in Computer Science

## Programme 2

**In Greek:**

Διοίκηση Πληροφοριακών Συστημάτων

**In English:**

BSc in Management Information Systems (MIS)

## Programme 3

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** Choose status

**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 External Evaluation Committee (EEC) was briefed online by Mr. George Aletraris, from the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education on December 16th 2020. Mr. Aletraris attended the online meeting.

The online visit took place on December 16th, 2020. The day was split in four sessions: a meeting with the Rector of AUCY and the director of admissions and marketing, a meeting with the dean of the faculty of sciences and technology and the head of the computer science, a meeting with over twenty academics, ready to join the department, and a meeting with the head of the IT department and 6 members of the administrative service.

Members of the External Evaluation Committee were able to ask questions throughout these sessions. There was a thoughtful and informative dialogue. During the evaluation process, the EEC had access to the Application for Evaluation – Accreditation – New Program of Study document as well as a video presenting the new campus and the building facilities prior to the online meeting. Additional material was provided during the online meeting about admission criteria, the business advisory council as well as faculty improvement and assessment. The EEC considered all aspects of the submitted documentation and the site visit discussions. The EEC would like to acknowledge the quality of the organizational arrangements.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Philippe Bonnet</b>	Professor	IT University of Copenhagen
<b>Ioannis Ivrisimtzis</b>	Associate Professor	Durham University
<b>Phivos Mylonas</b>	Associate Professor	Ionian University
<b>Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou</b>	Student	University of Cyprus

## 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		
<b>1. Department's academic profile and orientation</b>		
<b>1.1 Mission and strategic planning</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	4
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.	4
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	3
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	3
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.	3
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

**AUCY has established an academic strategic planning and process that are appropriate for its size and diversity of the intended specialties. The policy complies with the laws and regulations that govern AUCY, but there is still room for a greater involvement of the academic community. AUCY vetted procedures, designs and defined academic quality assurance objectives, and established a comprehensive process to enable an improvement of the department's academic strategy. Quality indicators are customized to the AUCY's mission, aligned with its own set goals. Still, a streamlined process for quantifying indicators has to be defined. The proposed mission and strategic planning process is currently and will be accepted by internal to AUCY stakeholders, but on the other hand, external stakeholders, such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations need to further participate in the department's development strategy.**

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).

**At this point, programmes of study offered by AUCY's department are considered to be minimal in size and planning. The EEC was presented a few ideas and potential future planning, lied outside of the scope of current evaluation. On the other hand, due to the minimal size, both programmes of study seem closely interconnected, partially employing common administrative and faculty staff and up to an extent sharing curriculum courses. Finally, coherence and compatibility among departments is not considered applicable in the case of the current evaluation, since there is only one department.**

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

**N/A**

## **1. Department's academic profile and orientation**

<b>1.2 Connecting with society</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	3
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.	N/A

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

**Based on the presented information, the needs and demands of local society have been taken into account when planning AUCY's activities and most probably this will lean into**

a positive impact towards Cyprus society, in general, and Larnaca area, in particular. AUCY's web-site is under construction and so far contains minimal information to the general public about AUCY's activities and offered programmes of study, so there is definitely room for improvement there. It is also within the department's strategy to establish the BAC consisting of members from the business community in Cyprus, in order to assess the needs of local society. Finally, since the university and the department has not started operations yet, an effective communication mechanism with its graduates is not considered applicable.

## 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.	2
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.	2
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.	4

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

**Selection of teaching staff did not follow a well-defined, well-documented procedure, but rather either an intuitive one, based on personal contacts of key AUCY personnel and/or other subjective criteria, or a workshop-based approach through the FDC. Quality assurance metrics and a well-defined policy/procedure should be established for all academic staff hiring, i.e., specific thresholds with respect to prospective personnel's h-index and/or citations count. The department's academic development plan is in principle mainly focused only on personal collaborations of current staff. The department has a plan to attract students mostly from Cyprus and to test them with respect to their English language status. The fulfillment of their high-level status is not satisfactory guaranteed but remains quite vague, especially since students will be advised and oriented to join the program that best suits their own academic caliber. On the other hand, AUCY has ensured adequate funding to cover the operational costs, as well as costs related to research, innovation and development. Still, a decent financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary required tools for the full exploitation of its resources.**

Additionally, write:

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



**With respect to the expected number of Cypriot and international students, it seems that any number between 8 and 100 (per study programme) will work for AUCY's planning, although an overall number of 175 students is mentioned in the application. Information about the countries of origin of international students and number from each country were not provided, apart from a vague reference to a collaboration with an American university and the vague notion of "EU students" mentioned within the application's text.**

### Findings

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

Being a newly established department its sustainability depends on the quality of its faculty, staff and students and the support these stakeholders will receive. Another determinant is the nature of the relationships the department and the university will establish with the community at large. The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of AUCY staff members will be defined by the corresponding job descriptions established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. The proposed goals for involvement of future students appear to be ambitious and more qualitative than quantitative. Analysis and improvement procedures based on quality academic data will not always be documented under the presented scheme.

### Strengths

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

- The allocated resources for funding the infrastructure and for the operation of the department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study will be managed efficiently and creatively. The processes are clearly described in the manual and most probably will be implemented effectively.
- AUCY endorses a policy and a process that is appropriate for its size and diversity of the offered specialties. The policy complies with the laws and regulations that govern the hosting country (Cyprus).
- AUCY introduces appropriate and transparent processes for allocating the available funds towards the infrastructure, teaching and research needs of each programme of studies
- AUCY's initial needs are documented with plans for future improvement within the next 3 years.
- The department has clear and explicit goals towards improving the quality of education, research, administrative functions, and infrastructure.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Identify key factors that impact the departments rankings and prioritize strategies to improve them.
- Develop a concise set of indicators that can be used for assessing the faculty performance recognizing fundamental differences among all cured disciplines.
- The continuous training and evaluation of academic staff is considered necessary for the establishment of AUCY's quality performance, which should be recorded and constantly monitored on a yearly basis.

- The department should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the provision of academic services that assist the satisfaction of top-quality assurance requirements.
- AUCY's website needs to be the most effective tool for communication and guidance for internal and external stakeholders on both its academic and quality assurance activities. AUCY must ensure that all programmes of study have distinct websites with updated academic and research information with corresponding accreditation information.
- AUCY needs to establish a comprehensive and well-structured self-assessment mechanism focusing on the impact, quality and ranking of its academic staff.
- Introduction of new goals for AUCY's academic staff should be clear, transparent and periodically updated for all staff rankings. The research input and output of the faculty need to be evaluated periodically by implementing internationally established best practices.
- Funding allocation and motivation of academic staff should be based on non-subjective information collected through a corresponding data management system. Detect all data items that are prone to accuracy and reliability errors and provide efficient support for enhancement and crosscheck of accuracy and reliability.
- Work has to be done in order for external to AUCY stakeholders to be enthusiastic and eager to be involved with AUCY. Develop a well-documented external stakeholder engagement process.
- Student involvement should be sought after within the quality assurance process. Develop a meaningful student engagement process focusing on the campus/student life over and above classroom activities and teaching evaluations and enforce it from day one of operations.
- Suitable quality indexes based on established international procedures need to be developed in order to assess both education and research.

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	Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Partially 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		
<b>2. Quality Assurance</b>		
<b>2.1 System and quality assurance strategy</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	3
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	3
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	3
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	4
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.		
<b>The quality assurance policy is defined but generic.</b>		

**The BAC is planned but not yet operational to involve external stakeholders in quality assurance and to guarantee connection with society.**

## 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.	2
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.	4
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.	N/A
2.2.8	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	4
2.2.9	The Department flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods.	N/A
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.	4
2.2.11	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	N/A
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.		N/A
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.		N/A
2.2.18	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.		N/A
2.2.19	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.		1

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

**The head of department is responsible for most tasks. A more collegial approach could be adopted.**

**No performance indicators are defined for quality assurance.**

**Executive management should be responsible for dealing with academic misconduct.**

**While teaching will be provided from 8am to 10pm to accommodate working students, there are no specific initiatives to support part-time students or students with disabilities.**

**The ratio of student to faculty is high.**

**There are no processes in place for identification, evaluation and protection of potential Intellectual Property generated by researchers.**

**Questions about operations cannot be answered because the department/university does not operate.**

### Findings

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

A generic policy is described for quality assurance in the department with a plan for collecting student feedback as well as data about student performance and integrating it in the quality assurance process. Most responsibilities are given to the head of department. The EEC suggests that the department adopts a more collegial approach, where responsibilities are delegated to other faculty members (and possibly committees tasked with managing well defined aspects of the quality assurance process) in the department.

The presentation of the AUCY asserted the importance of inclusion for the university.

The EEC notes the strong emphasis put on research at AUCY during the visit.

The EEC strongly recommends that the responsibility of dealing with plagiarism lies with the dean and executive management rather than faculty members.

There is a clear plan for collecting student feedback as well as student performance and integrating it in the quality assurance process.

The admission criteria are aligned with the legal requirements for universities in Cyprus.

There is a strong emphasis on student welfare, with various forms of support, including psychological support at university level.

Individual mentoring by faculty members is planned for each student. However, the plans to admit large numbers of students will result in a high number of students per faculty member. An approach where senior students mentor new students might be more scalable.

### Strengths

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

- Focus on student welfare
- New building facilities with a modern IT department
- Focus on research quality

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Concentration of tasks on the head of department. The EEC recommends a more collegial approach to quality assurance.
- Dealing with plagiarism is under the responsibility of faculty members. The EEC strongly recommends that this responsibility lies with the dean and executive management instead.

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	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		
<b>3. Administration</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	3
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	N/A
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.	N/A
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	3
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.

**The head of department is responsible for most tasks. A more collegial approach could be adopted.**

**Questions about operations cannot be answered because the department/university does not operate.**

### Findings

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

Decision making in academic issues squarely lies under the responsibility of academics either at department or faculty level (the faculty will be composed of a single department to start with). The Department council is defined appropriately.

Administrative services are defined at university level.

Most responsibilities are given to the head of department. The EEC suggests that the department adopts a more collegial approach, where responsibilities are delegated to other faculty members and well-defined committees.

The EEC strongly recommends that the responsibility of dealing with academic misconduct lies with the dean and executive management rather than faculty members.

### Strengths

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

- Academics are in charge of academic matters

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Concentration of tasks on the head of department. The EEC recommends a more collegial approach to department management.
- Dealing with academic misconduct is under the responsibility of faculty members. The EEC strongly recommends that this responsibility lies with the dean and executive management instead.

**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		
<b>4. Learning and Teaching</b>		
<b>4.1 Planning the programmes of study</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	3
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).	4
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.	4
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	4

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

4.1.1. Appropriate processes are in place. The structures for carrying them over, especially committees with specified roles and responsibilities are not still in place.

4.1.2. Since it is a non-operational department, there is no evidence of student involvement, but there are appropriate plans. Evidence of some involvement of employers. Appropriate plan with the creation of the Business Advisory Council.

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.	3
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.	4
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.	N/A
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	N/A
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	N/A
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	N/A
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	N/A
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>4.1.1. The admission process and the criteria are clear. Since it is a non-operational department the adherence to these criteria cannot be judged.</p> <p>4.2.4 - 4.2.8. cannot be judged for a non-operational University. Evidence of awareness of these issues and of plans to address them.</p>		

### Findings

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

The Department has demonstrated its capacity to design degrees of high scientific standards, which comply with international standards and should satisfy all relevant stakeholders.

Plan for creating a number of committees dealing with educational matters (curriculum, teaching and learning effectiveness, assessment) by the end of 2021, which at the moment are dealt with by the Head of Department and other founding members.

Clear procedures for making major changes to the programmes of study (more than 20% of the programme's content). No processes in place yet for making minor changes to the programmes. We note that this is not a matter of urgency.

A clear set of objectives regarding the fair and timely assessment of the students and the feedback. No specific departmental policy for achieving these objectives. We note that at this early stage it is not expected to have at place a policy detailing issues such as moderation of exam questions, or double marking. However, such a policy should be in place before the beginning of the academic year, i.e. before the educational committees responsible have been formed.

The input of the business community into the development of the programmes will be sought through the creation of a departmental Business Advisory Council (BAC). We support this plan.

The input of the students to the development of the programmes will be sought through the participation of their elected representatives in the Departmental Council. We support this provision.

Appreciate the plans for the provision of academic mentoring and pastoral care of students, at an individual basis, provided by trained academic advisors and a psychologist. Appropriate, at this stage, if both services are provided at Faculty or University level.

The focus on the educational needs of students with disabilities is particularly appreciated.

### Strengths

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

Examples of good practice including:

- Trained advisors and other professionals for the academic mentoring and pastoral care of the students.
- Plans for input into the development of the programmes by the proposed Business Advisory Council and the participation of elected student representatives in the Departmental Council.
- Emphasis on the training needs of students with disabilities.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Some of the work that would naturally fall under the remit of an educational committee, needs to be done before the beginning of the academic year. It is not clear to us whether the current work of the founding members of the Department, in preparation for the first student intake, would benefit from the early creation of such a committee; it is a matter to be considered.

The EEC recommends the creation of a mechanism dedicated exclusively to the flow of information between student representatives and staff. Such a process could take the form of a staff/student consultative committee, or any other form deemed appropriate. The aim should be to facilitate discussion and flow of information under a student-driven agenda. Any contribution of the student representatives to the Departmental Council meetings, under its more general agenda, should be valued, but due to lack of experience or confidence, it would often be limited.

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	Compliant
4.2 Organisation of teaching	Partially 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
<b>5. Teaching Staff</b>		
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.	4
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.	3

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

5.8 The organization of the feedback processes is not clear (OK at that stage).

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

At the time of the evaluation, the dean of the faculty and the head of department are employed by the university. Applications have been received for faculty positions. 25 potential faculty members participated in the evaluation and expressed their will to join AUCY and possibly move to Cyprus if appropriate terms are found.

### Findings

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

As evident by their CVs, the scientific merits of the staff are of high standards.

Good mixture of areas of expertise, allows for a broad curriculum, while still subjects are taught by experts in them. Nevertheless, in certain areas of significant current interest (e.g. UAVs) there is a critical mass of expertise, which will help the future development of specialized graduate courses. In that respect, it seems that the advantages of designing a department from a clean have been utilized.

Members of staff are at various stages of their career, the majority of them are early career academics, however there is also a sufficient number of experienced staff.

Satisfactory gender balance for a Computer Science Department, but more can be done, especially at the more senior positions.

Appropriate balance of FT and PT staff.

Appropriate ratio of research/teaching and special teaching staff with appropriate qualifications.

Appropriate appointments at visiting professor positions.

Appropriate balance of research/teaching and special teaching staff.

The main risk identified, is that most of the current staff do not have finalized their contracts with the University. We note however the very high participation in the online general staff/EEC meeting, demonstrating their commitment to the job under consideration.

The next academic year the Department will be only teaching one year only worth of modules, and there is a rationale for phasing-in the staff more gradually. Even so, there should be some spare capacity, which could be significant if student recruitment is below the target. The department's plan to use this spare capacity to smooth the transition of staff that currently holds research intensive or professional positions is very appropriate.

The professional development of the teaching staff is currently planned at Faculty level, through the various activities (seminars, workshops) of the Faculty Development Centre.

### Strengths

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

High quality, diverse scientific staff.

Appropriate mixture of expertise, allows for the delivery of a broad undergraduate curriculum, and the development of specialized postgraduate degrees.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

While the department's commitment to the professional development of the staff was evident, currently there are no concrete plans on how this can be organized.

The EEC recommends, at some later stage, the creation of a departmental professional development plan, which will supplement the existing Faculty one.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

## 6. 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		
<b>6. Research</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	2
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.	2
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	2
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	2
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.	1
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.	1
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.	4
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	4
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.

**AUCY's research policy is formulated in line with its mission, but is quite underbalanced, i.e., its goals are undermined. Faculty and academic staff need to be motivated to produce higher quality standards compared to the goal of a single publication per year in a field, like computer science, that is still thriving worldwide. Facilities and equipment to cover**



the staff and students' research activities will be provided after the establishment of AUCY's Research Center, which is not provisioned to start operations together with the department, but rather in a future date not set yet. On the bright side, a seed grant will be made available mostly to junior faculty members to conduct their research. Specific mechanisms for the development of students' research skills are not foreseen, apart from the verbal encouraging of students. No open access policy is foreseen, nor a specific policy on peer reviewed journal publications per faculty member per year. A policy of transferring research know-how to society and the production sector is not foreseen.

### Findings

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

The research aspect of the department is heavily overlooked and requires significant amounts of efforts by AUCY people to become up-to-date and at the same level as other departments in Cyprus and abroad. Good practices from other well-known and esteemed institutions should be integrated with respect to academic staff peer-reviewed research publications production, and several policies need to be established prior to the department's opening, so as to ensure a decent research orientation of the department.

### Strengths

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

- The proposed policies are with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Motivation and benefits - both financial and academic in nature - should be available to all faculty members to seek national, European or worldwide private or governmental research funds.
- A specific motivation in terms of a student grant or travel reward should be established in order to engage students into research activities.
- A clear policy on EU-funding schemes should also be introduced, since it aids to the respectability of both the faculty and the department, i.e., by seeking specific prestigious research funding targets per year, like ERC grants.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

## 7. 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		
<b>7. Resources</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	4
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	4
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	N/A
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	4
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.	3
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	N/A
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	N/A
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>The department seems to have adequate funding to support its strategic plan and initiate its activities. The main concern focuses on the fact that a clear assessment of risks and sustainability of the programmes of study has not been presented, not seems to bother AUCY's management.</p>		

### Findings

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

The estimated amounts of yearly costs are adequate and meaningful, given the size of the Cyprus academic market and prospective overall student and faculty enrollments. Annual budget will also

be adjusted according to the number of enrolled students, faculty, administrative support, technological support, and research funding requests.

### Strengths

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

- Determination and financial support of department's management.
- Annual budget modifications

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Foresee specific numbers/limits with respect to the annual budget modifications based on specific financial or other types of measurable criteria.
- The number of per year enrolled students should not affect/define the number of faculty positions on a per year basis; faculty members should be involved with longer than a single academic year contracts, so as to ensure stability and strengthen the sense of academic team building under the same AUCY affiliation.
- Provide a feasibility study including an assessment of the practicality of the proposed financing plan.
- Provide risk assessment scenarios and propose solutions based on the worst case scenarios, especially with respect to student enrollments and securing of external funding resources.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

Quality assurance plans and processes are generally consistent within the national framework of operation. Academic decisions are taken by academics at faculty and department level. The proposed organization of teaching is reasonable and provides good visibility to students with specializations. There are plans to hire academic staff. Administrative and IT support is provided at university level.

The EEC has identified the following areas for improvement:

- Identify key factors that impact the departments rankings and prioritize strategies to improve them.
- Develop a concise set of indicators that can be used for assessing the faculty performance recognizing fundamental differences among all cured disciplines.
- The continuous training and evaluation of academic staff is considered necessary for the establishment of AUCY's quality performance, which should be recorded and constantly monitored on a yearly basis.
- The department should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the provision of academic services that assist the satisfaction of top-quality assurance requirements.
- AUCY's website needs to be the most effective tool for communication and guidance for internal and external stakeholders on both its academic and quality assurance activities. AUCY must ensure that all programmes of study have distinct websites with updated academic and research information with corresponding accreditation information.
- AUCY needs to establish a comprehensive and well-structured self-assessment mechanism focusing on the impact, quality and ranking of its academic staff.
- Introduction of new goals for AUCY's academic staff should be clear, transparent and periodically updated for all staff rankings. The research input and output of the faculty need to be evaluated periodically by implementing internationally established best practices.
- Funding allocation and motivation of academic staff should be based on non-subjective information collected through a corresponding data management system. Detect all data items that are prone to accuracy and reliability errors and provide efficient support for enhancement and crosscheck of accuracy and reliability.
- Work has to be done in order for external to AUCY stakeholders to be enthusiastic and eager to be involved with AUCY. Develop a well-documented external stakeholder engagement process.
- Motivation and benefits - both financial and academic in nature - should be available to all faculty members to seek national, European or worldwide private or governmental research funds.
- A specific motivation in terms of a student grant or travel reward should be established in order to engage students into research activities.
- A clear policy on EU-funding schemes should also be introduced, since it aids to the respectability of both the faculty and the department, i.e., by seeking specific prestigious research funding targets per year, like ERC grants.
- Student involvement should be sought after within the quality assurance process. Develop a meaningful student engagement process focusing on the campus/student life over and above classroom activities and teaching evaluations and enforce it from day one of operations.

- Suitable quality indexes based on established international procedures need to be developed in order to assess both education and research.
- Foresee specific numbers/limits with respect to the annual budget modifications based on specific financial or other types of measurable criteria.
- The number of per year enrolled students should not affect/define the number of faculty positions on a per year basis; faculty members should be involved with longer than a single academic year contracts, so as to ensure stability and strengthen the sense of academic team building under the same AUCY affiliation.
- Provide a feasibility study including an assessment of the practicality of the proposed financing plan.
- Provide risk assessment scenarios and propose solutions based on the worst case scenarios, especially with respect to student enrollments and securing of external funding resources
- The EEC recommends a more collegial approach to department management.
- The EEC strongly recommends that this responsibility lies with the dean and executive management instead.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Philippe Bonnet	
Ioannis Ivrisimtzis	
Phivos Mylonas	
Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou	

Date: 18/12/2020

