ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report
(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos at Baoding University of Technology

- **Town:** Baoding, Hebei, China

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):**
School of Architecture, Engineering, Land & Environmental Sciences (Neapolis University Pafos - Cyprus)
School of Resources and Engineering Technology (Baoding University of Technology – China)

- **Department/ Sector:**
Department of Civil Engineering

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:

Προπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών (BSc) στην Πολιτική Μηχανική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS)

In English:

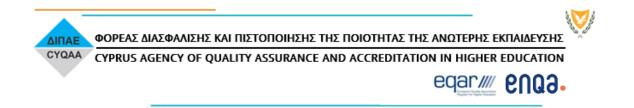Civil Engineering (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, BSc)

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].
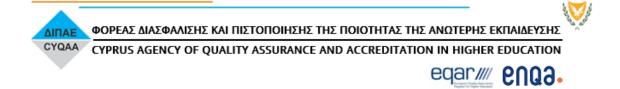
A. Introduction

The committee members visited Baoding University of Technology in China on November 27th, 2024. The committee members were provided with resources and participated in discussions with academic and administrative staff from both Neapolis University Pafos (NUP) and Baoding University of Technology (BUT), including students currently enrolled to the program under evaluation to carry out their evaluation for the undergraduate programme in Civil Engineering (4 years, 240 ECTS, BSc) of the franchise program at BUT offered by NUP.
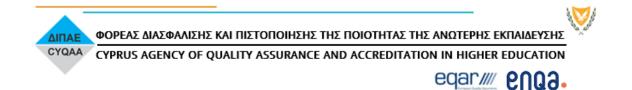
The academic staff from NUP and their colleagues from BUT gave presentations and offered complementary data when requested.

The committee members are of the opinion that the assembled evaluation report and its findings are representative of the current situation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
(Chair) Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	Professor	Politecnico di Torino, Italy
(Member) Dimitrios Lignos	Professor	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland
(Member) Emmanouil Chatzis	Associate Professor	University of Oxford, UK
(Member) Dimitrios Minas Papadakis	Student Member	University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
    (a) sub-areas
    (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
    (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.
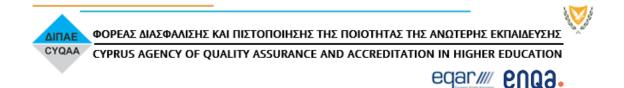
Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

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

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1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

1.1 Policy for quality assurance
1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
1.3 Public information
1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*

- o *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- o *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- o *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- o *benefits from external expertise*
- o *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
  - ▪ collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.
  - ▪ conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.
  - ▪ performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.
  - ▪ establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.
  - ▪ conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*

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- *qualification awarded*
- *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- *pass rates*
- *learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *employer insights concerning career readiness*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
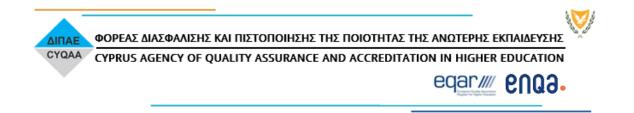
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The 4-year (i.e., 8 semesters) undergraduate programme features 240 ECTS out of which, 150 are allocated into core courses, 60 are complementary, 6 to placement, 9 are free elective, and 15 ECTS are attributed to the dissertation. The academic programme under evaluation is offered in English. Pertinent information regarding the programme is publicly available through a website.

The programme objectives are based on eight learning outcomes to meet the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level six, specifically including a theoretical skillset in applied science and engineering and more broadly the understanding of the civil engineering profession, ability to set experiments to gather relevant scientific data for analysis and evaluation. The programme seems to be designed to promote international mobility to its future graduates. In most courses, it appears that critical thinking is promoted. Even though all enrolled undergraduate students are of Chinese origin, all courses seem to be offered in English. In that respect, and in principle, an international student may be able to follow the academic program. Till now, there has not been any though.

The program is comprised of 41 courses in total including the dissertation. The workload is spread over 8 academic semesters. The NUP has appointed four full-time academic staff to cover 19 courses within the curriculum based on the material distributed during the evaluation process (see *Slide 17 of Programme Presentation*). Nineteen other courses are covered by six academic staff from BUT (see *Slide 16 of Programme Presentation*). Nine out of 10 of the above dedicated staff hold a doctoral degree whereas one is appointed as a special lecturer. Therefore, the student-to-staff ratio is about 20:1 within the Civil engineering program, which is above the 17.9:1 across the faculty.
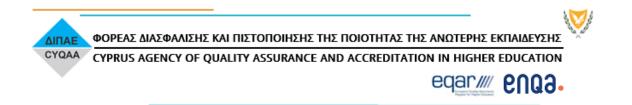
The quality assurance is established based on a joint management committee featuring three members from NUP and four members from BUT. The is a joint academic committee that is comprised of the department heads, the program coordinators as well as a student representative. The quality assurance is Rank A and considers the evaluations from students, which are obligatory. Moreover, the quality assurance is ensured through electronic platforms including Prose tool, Moodle. It appears that these are based on what has been established in NUP. The student evaluation results are gathered and analysed by the quality assurance committee.

The established requirements for enrolment into the program are based on standard enrolment criteria across China as well as an additional English language requirement. So far, the success rates based on available statistics is about 90% based on the presented material. The average graduation rate cannot be defined as there are no graduates yet from the respective program.

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

There is a website that provides public information that is pertinent to public.

The Quality assurance Rate is A as evident from established practices for student-staff feedback, including the course evaluation, student evaluation and staff evaluation that are weighted accordingly.

There seems to be coherence in the programme including links between core and complementary courses that are currently offered.

During the first semester, there is a technical terminology course established that is useful to students for both writing and presenting technical reports.

There is a mid-term exam in addition to the final exam for all courses. Moreover, several core courses have adopted quizzes that are distributed to ensure that the learning objectives and outcomes are met.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

To date the programme appears, on paper, to be consistent with other civil engineering programs within China. Still, several recommendations may be useful for its further development:
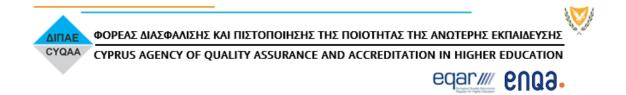
- It is understandable that the programme has been currently designed to promote international mobility; however, in design-oriented courses, the local practice and standards should be incorporated and better reflected. Based on the available information, this aspect is not covered in courses related to design of concrete, steel and timber structures. This issue is important for future graduates who may decide to pursue a professional engineering career in China where local practice, fabrication detailing, material and construction requirements are different than those in Europe. Hence, graduates from the current programme may not have the same opportunity to pass the National Professional Qualification Examination for Registered Civil Engineers that is set by the Chinese government. This matter is important because one of the programme's objectives, as stated in the material distributed throughout the evaluation process is (a) readiness for engineering practice (see PLO7) including technical and professional components; and (b) understanding of the civil engineering profession in a societal and global context (see PLO8).
- The course #41 (see Page 9 from Programme presentation) discusses the Construction Law and Practice in China as according to the exchange with NUP representatives the professional rights of graduates of the programme would be solely applicable to China; however, in design-oriented courses offered in the Franchise programme, the construction practice is tailored according to Eurocodes and European construction practice, based on (a) the programme presentation and (b) the interview of the academic staff. This does not fulfil the programme objectives and in specific PLO7 and PLO8. Moreover, this appears to be inconsistent with what is currently done in NUP.

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- More "learning by doing" type of courses/activities (project-based learning) could potentially improve the overall student experience and further improve team works. This can be done as part of semester projects that may already be in place.
- Practices to reinforce the design component of the programme involve as follows: strengthening the connection with local design offices that perhaps involve international activities with projects overseas, the organization of industry-oriented seminars, the leveraging of design studios like what is currently offered by the lecturer in architecture, who was interviewed as part of the evaluation process and who appeared to be knowledgeable of the international constraints and culture in architecture as well as the local culture.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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2. Student – centered learning, teaching and assessment *(ESG 1.3)*

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
2.2 Practical training
2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

2.2 Practical training

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*

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- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*
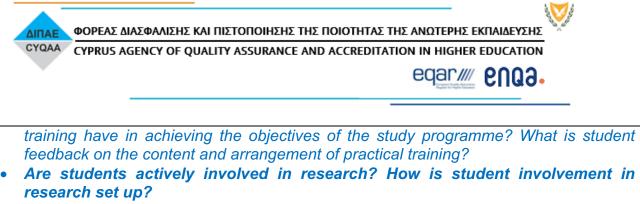
2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task isexplicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical*

training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?

- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*
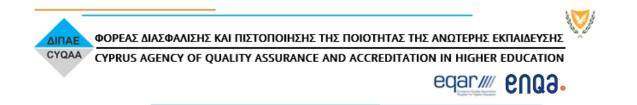
Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The suggested programme combines several good practices from both Universities to encourage active-learning teaching. Following the practices in NUP the lecture notes and all material related to a course is uploaded on the electronic platform Moodle. The programme has hence adopted good digitization practices in terms of delivering the teaching material to the students. The same platform is used to provide additional e-learning based material by the lecturers of each course, such as additional examples and quizzes. It is also used efficiently for gathering feedback from the students. The previous tool also facilitates the use of a mixture of modes for assessment. The final mark is awarded following a combination of a final exam, the submitted coursework and a mid-term examination which is commonly used by the lecturers. The contributing weight of each examination mode is known to the students in advance.

Following the practices in BUT the students have access to reasonably good facilities for their practical work. The labs are well equipped for demonstration purposes and for carrying out experiments that demonstrate the basic concepts of mechanics and physics taught in the curriculum. Considering that the programme is currently focused towards 50 students (with the potential of an increase to 75) the ratio of demonstration devices/benches per students seems appropriate. The committee also noticed good practices in terms of lab demonstration. For example, the demonstration of P and S waves using mechanical analogues (springs) and the demonstration of the effects of earthquakes on buildings using small shakers with portal frames and lego-type brick buildings is engaging and promotes active learning.

The relatively newly built BUT library (in 2003) has very good facilities and spaces for students. The students of the programme have access to all the physical and digital resources of this library. The students of this programme are further given access to a computer room dedicated to providing digital access to the electronic library of NUP. The students can also access the NUP e-resources from their own computer. The combination of the physical library in BUT and the digital resources

from NUP appears to work well and provides the students with access to a good number of resources and physical study spaces.

The courses are taught in English and all the material provided is in English. This is imperative for the international dimension of this programme. The e-resources provided from NUP are in English. The students have further access to resources in Chinese from the BUT library, those are not part of the programme, but if a student chooses to further benefit from these resources they can. In the presentation there were examples shown of site visits from NUP, which does not fit the purpose for students studying in BUT as during the interview almost none is planning to do an exchange study in NUP during their bachelor's degree. It was mentioned that the students of this programme will also be given with the opportunity of visiting such sites in China. The lecturers provide examples of such visits to dams, lakes and wastewater treatment plants. This is an additional mechanism of interaction between theoretical and practical work.

The students reported very positively on the office hours mechanism, which seems to work well in practice. The students felt that they could easily contact their professors (through email or Moodle) and request for meetings to clarify questions on the course.

The programme offers the opportunity to take credits through placement. The programme is still at its early stages; hence, it was reasonable that the presented examples of such placements are few and meaningful statistics cannot be gathered at this stage.

Finally, the degree follows the good practice of a dissertation in the last semester. This is enriching for a BSc degree. It also provides students with an added opportunity to experience mixed aspects of research and practical design depending on their interests.

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

There is a mixture of use of new technologies and traditional techniques which both promote active learning.

The physical library of BUT is a strength.

The parallel use of the e-resources from the NUP library and the access to many resources online is another strength.

The labs are spacious and equipped appropriately.

The use of Moodle for allowing electronic access of students to resources works well.

The teaching staff appears to be happy with the use of moodle for providing additional quizzes and receiving feedback and the feedback from students is also positive. The BUT personnel have come up with some clever physical demonstrations in labs, the earthquake demonstration mechanisms are very useful.

The students benefit from additional relevant facilities in BUT such as the geological museum. Providing the ability to students to replace placement with an additional elective is a good strategy.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

As the programme becomes more mature more useful statistics on placement will be gathered. It makes sense that the current data is not sufficient to draw conclusions on the placement mechanisms. It would nonetheless help if there were a more organized approach in ensuring students are given ample opportunities for placement. For instance, BUT could consider creating a support team, which is responsible for finding placement opportunities, presenting them to students and resolving problems that occur during placements. This could either be a 'placement office' or it could be introduced as part of the library in either BUT or NUP. Moving forward it would be useful to have a more organized way of students benefiting from site visits organized in Cyprus for other NUP students. For example, the site visits mentionned in page 18 of the NUP Department presentation. This could perhaps be added to the program as a one-week (optional) educational trip for the purposes of seeing construction practices in an EU country (for example Cyprus). The number of students is small (currently 50 and less than 75), which means that the teaching rooms will be adequate. The (single) lecturer for each course has a reasonable number of students per classroom. However, additional help to the lecturers in handling office hours would be useful. The committee further notes that the number of teaching staff is small given the number of enrolled students, and each lecturer is responsible for multiple courses, which further overburdens teaching hours. There will be a separate recommendation regarding the number of staff in a later section which will also benefit the student experience.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
> **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*
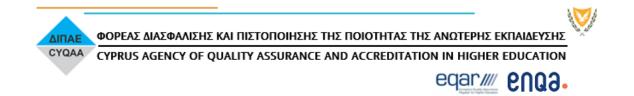
3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*

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- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The partnership of NUP and BUT has invested on 10 full-time faculty members to support the undergraduate programme. Nine (9) of these members hold a PhD degree, whereas one is appointed as a special lecturer. The academic staff features associate, assistant and lecturer positions. Each faculty member appears to teach at least four courses. Some of the appointed faculty members teach five courses, which is an abnormal teaching load compared to what is offered at NUP.

During the evaluation process, it was not evident if there are teaching assistants who are fluent in English available for assisting throughout the semester(s) in classes. This issue may potentially compromise the faculty's ability to conduct uninterrupted research activities to improve the university's research standing and further develop the courses offered in the programme with constantly new information. This is standard practice in accredited programmes.

The teaching performance of each academic staff member is assessed via a course evaluation form that is distributed to students. Consequently, this evaluation process is explicitly considered to improve the course and teaching practices. The results are analysed via a platform and the faculty receives feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching.

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

Four out of 10 academic staff members specifically appointed from NUP to be permanent in BUT. Each academic staff member has an international standing with prior experience in other academic institutions from around the world either through their doctoral and/or their prior professional affiliations.

Classrooms provide the means to deliver the classes; however, improvements on facilities could provide a more effective teaching experience.

Equipment and demonstrators for hands on work and data gathering is available as part of core courses (e.g., mechanics of materials) within the standard curriculum, which is always helpful to students to visualize challenging concepts throughout their academic studies.

Noteworthy stating that although the equipment is functional, part of it may be outdated. Same findings hold true for computer equipment seen in the library as well as other teaching halls.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Recommendations are summarized as follows:

- The teaching rooms and laboratories could be modernized to ensure that a high quality of studies is retained, especially if the programme grows further. Moreover, the committee noted additional safety requirements to be incorporated in some of the laboratory halls and around mechanical equipment that is known to be potentially dangerous to students (e.g., vibration table, no safety precautions on available pressurized chambers that were demonstrated during the visit, and safety regulations on equipment are all written in Chinese, whereas English shall be favored in this case).
- It will be extremely beneficial to establish formal agreements between BUT and other universities that provide access to experimental laboratory facilities to ensure that the currently employed faculty staff (especially those employed by NUP) dedicated to the programme could be given a chance for academic promotion based on established research done in China where they are currently employed full-time. This could also improve their teaching capabilities including hands on material and exercises that are tailored to current local practices, fabrication detailing, local quality control criteria and material specifications as well as other practices that are vastly different than those from Europe. This will be extremely beneficial to design-oriented courses given that one of the project objectives is to promote a closer collaboration with local stakeholders and engineering practice and that the programme is solely recognized by the People's Republic of China based on feedback during the evaluation process.

- Further improve the teaching and laboratory facilities on campus to support activities associated with project-based learning, integrated courses in architecture and civil engineering. Some of the equipment seems outdated and could be renewed to facilitate the learning experience as discussed during the interview process with the current students and the on-site visit of the existing facilities and classrooms.
- Currently, each faculty teaches, on average, four courses (some teach five courses), which is a more-than-normal teaching load. This may not be sustainable for a faculty member to increase their research output. In that respect, the hiring process should be further improved by hiring at least four (4) additional academic staff members to meet the equivalent 14 academic staff members (10 permanent + 4 temporary) that are currently appointed at NUP to facilitate the "same" academic programme <u>but with a considerably lesser number of enrolled students</u> at NUP (about 10 per year) than in the Franchise program in BUP (about 50 to 75 per year). Noteworthy stating that the last recommendation for recruitment at NUP over the next five years was to hire at least three (3) additional faculty members that shall be based in Cyprus.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification *(ESG 1.4)*

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
4.2 Student progression
4.3 Student recognition
4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
    - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*
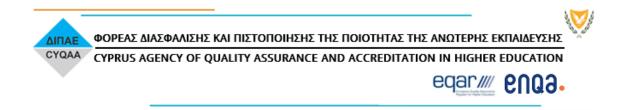

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

A mixture of good practices from the Chinese and European educational system benefit admission and recognition. The admission system is based on the existing Chinese university admissions system. The National College exam (Gaokao) is used as in the case of other Chinese Universities. This is a very good mechanism as it offers information on the comparative performance of students to those of other Universities on annual basis. The University selects students based on their scores. There is no separate interview and given that this is the same system used in every Chinese University, this is reasonable.

Additionally, during the meetings, it was mentioned that the program sets extra requirements regarding the English-speaking ability of the students. This is very well justified as the programme is in English.

Regarding recognition: The current programme is oriented towards Chinese Nationals. It is stated that the admitted students will have taken the Gaokao and so any requirements for recognition are handled by that system. There is a mechanism of students transferring from other Chinese Universities to the program where the 180 Credits from the Chinese system have an equivalence to the 240 ECTS credits. This also allows for credits to be transferred for students moving from another Chinese University to this programme.

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The committee has not been provided with any information regarding mechanisms for admission, transfer or recognition of credits from students coming from Universities outside China. The committee is therefore reaching the conclusion that there is no provision for students coming from Universities outside China.

In terms of degree recognition, the programme uses the ECTS system. It requires 240 ECTS credits. The programme is a 4-years BSc which is certainly ample time for a BSc. The 4-year program copies the structure used for the NUP BSc. Nonetheless, given that this is a programme with a focus on EU-style of education in a country whose pre-university educational system is not aligned with that of EU yet, the longer duration of the BSc at least makes sense. It would also be beneficial to the students as they are not being taught in their native language.

The longer duration of the programme is also helpful in principle to cover some of the challenges of the international nature of this degree. For instance, as mentioned in other sections, design courses need to present examples from not only the Eurocodes but also at least the Chinese equivalents. Note that local practice, fabrication detailing, quality control on the construction site(s) is vastly different between countries.

In terms of progress between years, the programme follows the same procedure as the recognized BSc in NUP. It uses very similar conditions on progress and re-examination, which are clearly stated and appropriate.

Further to the previous, the continuous approval and recognition of this programme from ENIC is an important mechanism to ensure degree recognition. The committee expects that ENIC will follow the standard approach of degree re-certification as with every other programme offered by a University in Cyprus.

The committee notes that this programme does not have the intention to provide its students with a degree that would automatically be accepted by ETEK or any other professional body in EU. The committee notes the feedback from the members of BUT that the degree provides students with the same professional rights as any other degree in China including the eligibility for obtaining a Registered Civil Engineering Certificate in China after 4 years of practice and successfully passing the National Professional Qualification Examination in China. The committee also assumes that this programme has already been recognized by the ministry of education in China, which must have been a separate evaluation process.

Given that the programme has no provisions to provide a pathway for accreditation with a professional body in EU, but it instead aims at allowing graduates to achieve accreditation in China, the issue mentioned in Section 1 regarding the lack of focus on design courses in Chinese codes and regulations becomes problematic. While the added mention of Eurocodes is not a problem, the committee would expect a better effort in ensuring that the students also receive sufficient information regarding the Chinese equivalents. The committee has doubts that this is the case currently.

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Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
The use of Gaoko for admissions streamlines the admissions procedure and is homogenized with admission in any other Chinese University. The use of the ECTS-credit system and the structure of courses according to it is a strength. It also is essential for the degree being recognized. A 4-year period of study for a BSc is positive since it provides the students with more time to deal with the challenges arising from the international nature of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

While this has not been a problem so far as the programme has only received applications from Chinese nationals using the Chinese National College Entry system, the programme will need to explicitly state conditions for the transfer of students from International Universities. Those conditions should also clearly state the credits that would be recognized. In its current form the scheme does not allow for transfer or recognition of credits for students coming from International Universities and if that is also the policy moving forward it would need to be clearly stated in the application form. As a policy it is not in full compliance with other programmes that are typically accredited by CYQAA.

The application file would have benefited from explanations on how the graduates of this degree will receive professional rights in China and clearly demonstrating how this compares to graduates from other Universities. Currently, the committee relies on the verbal reassurance from the members of BUT that the graduates receive professional rights that are not less than those of the graduates of any other Chinese University.

The programme currently has no stated provisions for how the degree of applicants will be recognized by professional accreditation bodies in the European Union (EU). The committee assumes that within each country of EU the corresponding professional body will be setting additional conditions for the graduates of this programme to be allowed to become members of the professional body. This in contrast to the equivalent programme of NUP, which has a defined pathway for professional recognition by ETEK, the professional chamber of Engineers in Cyprus. The committee finds this to be a significant difference between the two programmes which shall be clearly communicated to the applicants and students of the programme. The programme would benefit in any case by interactions with the members of at least two professional bodies within EU, for clarifying potential pathways to accreditation of the graduates of this program by professional bodies, one of which should be ETEK.

The programme should consider formalizing the requirement of an English ability test as part of the admissions. It appears to be practice of the programme, but the requirement and entry mark should be formally stated. This should be in compliance with the English language requirements used in other NUP programmes.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Partially compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Partially compliant
4.4	Student certification	Non-compliant

Additional Notes:

4.1 There is no provision for the admission of students to this programme from universities outside of China. This is not in compliance with the requirements of CYQAA for programmes offered in Cyprus.

4.3 There is also no recognition or transfer mechanisms for students coming from universities outside of China. This is not in compliance with the requirements of CYQAA for programmes offered in Cyprus.

4.4 The committee recognizes that based on the evidence seen the degree will be certified as a BSc from a European University as it is structured on the ECTS system. The degree is also a certified University degree according to the corresponding Chinese system. The committee has received verbal suggestions that the degree will lead to an equivalent pathway to any equivalent Chinese programme, for students obtaining professional rights from the Chinese professional accreditation body. The committee has not been provided with any information regarding a pathway that would lead students being accredited in any EU professional engineering body. If there is no such pathway, then this should be clearly communicated to the applicants of the programme. Additionally, if indeed there is no provision for such a pathway, the choice of focusing on the corresponding EU standards in design courses and the insufficient cover of the Chinese standards is problematic. The students receive training on a set of design codes (EU) there is no obvious pathway to accreditation and don't receive sufficient training on the set of design codes (China) for which there is a pathway to professional accreditation. If instead there is the intention of such a pathway to accreditation from some professional body in the EU, then this committee did not receive sufficient information of what this pathway will be and has not been shown any indication that this has been discussed and agreed by that accreditation body. This is not compliant with the requirements of CYQAA.

5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
5.2 Physical resources
5.3 Human support resources
5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

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- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*
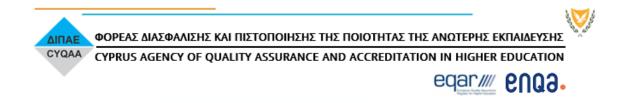
5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

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A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

As the Civil Engineering undergraduate programme of NUP evolves the collaboration with the BUT, key findings are presented by firstly discussing the learning resources and student support offered by NUP followed by a similar analysis of BUT. Finally, the outcomes of their collaboration, based on findings from an onsite visit are discussed.
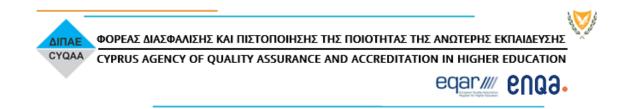
The NUP supports learning and teaching through various digital resources, including platforms and databases that enhance interdepartmental collaboration. Students have access to the NUP Digital Library, providing subscribed databases and publications. Additionally, the Moodle platform offers well-organized teaching materials, including video resources, enabling students to prepare for upcoming classes at least three days in advance.

In this bachelor's programme BUT is responsible for providing all the physical elements required by the standards of teaching and learning processes. BUT offers a library facility that appears to be well organised and has a good ratio of reading spaces. In addition to the e-books provided by NUP, BUT Library also offers this opportunity while it is not limited to that since physical books are also available to the students. Laboratories are reasonably sized and hold a satisfactory amount of testing equipment letting the seamless execution of all the experiments, while classrooms are properly sized and equipped with the coverage of multi-media devices. Finally, a room equipped with computers with access on CAD and computational software exists.

In the bachelor's programme, BUT provides the physical resources required for teaching and learning. It features a well-organized library with ample reading spaces, offering both physical books and access to NUP's e-books. Laboratories are adequately sized and equipped with essential testing tools, ensuring smooth execution of experiments and active participation of most of the students attending the class. Classrooms are spacious and multimedia-equipped, while a dedicated room with high-performance computers supports CAD and computational software use.

The onsite visit as well as the discussion with the academic staff, the students and the administrative staff, provided insights on how the programme will be applied effectively. Teaching staff come from both departments with NUP providing four (4) full-time professors and BUT offering six (6) teaching staff, both explicitly working on the requirements of the offered Franchise bachelor. It should be noted that NUP runs essentially the same programme with considerably lesser registered students but with 14 academic staff members. From the Q&A discussion it became evident that the academic staff is aware of the challenges that come up when attempting to teach methods based on European Standards when the targeted professional market is primarily directed to be China; though the programme is designed to provide international mobility.

In general, students and the teaching staff are satisfied with the current facilities and the particular programme. On the one hand students find the teaching staff approachable and that their available, while on the other side teachers are satisfied with the teaching tools under their possession. However, teaching assistants are not assigned in courses which could eventually lead in poorer teaching quality due to overstress of current teaching staff.

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Student support is reported to be available for mental health. In terms of disabilities there is a certain level of infrastructure, however the presence of staff supporting the attendance of members with disabilities was not mentioned. Asking students if they were likely to be placed during the programme they referred that most probably they will proceed with a master's abroad or they would utilize the opportunity to spend time abroad during their final year of their tuition. However, the current programme does not require such component, which is an important one if the international mobility is indeed important.

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

- A well-organized library equipped with digital resources from both institutes.

- Well equipped classrooms with room not limiting the scalability of the programme.

- Students and teachers are satisfied with their working environment.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The attempt of executing a Franchise degree originated from Europe and applied in China raises several concerns listed as follows:

 - Some of the Chinese members of staff during the meeting showed signs of having difficulties in effectively communicating in English. Keeping in mind that only Chinese students currently enrol the programme, raises the concern of switching back to Chinese as the primary teaching language for more than 50% of the available courses besides those offered by academic staff appointed by NUP. This would have negative effects on the quality of the degree since aspects of cultivating international students will be hindered. Recording of classes is recommended, as it should support compliance with the rule of interacting in English.

 - Targeting a BSc of Civil Engineering in both Europe and China markets can be challenging because of the practical nature of technical concepts that are in the teaching material. It appears that students are taught to follow the standards according to European regulations (e.g., Eurocodes) but in the event of a field visit they are getting familiar with the way Chinese methods and practices are applied, which seems to be a paradox. Therefore, when regulatory standards and methods are taught, a strong emphasis shall be given on the differences occurring in both Europe and China. Adopting the aforementioned practice, critical thinking on how to cope in different regulatory environments shall be developed.

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 - The quality of indoor spaces has room for improvement in terms of temperature and air quality, allocating budget for their improvement would enhance the learning processes.
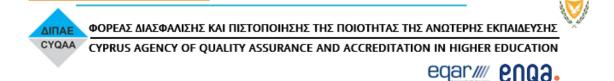
-Accessibility is not fully covered, as for example the library is not equipped with the essential elements that enable students with disabilities to utilize the space.

- It was not apparent from the reports that there were any teaching assistants hired to complement the work of the primary teaching staff.

- Fluid Mechanics (ENGR220) and Hydraulics (CE380) are being taught, however the laboratories presented in the report and during the visit do not have any testing equipment for demonstrating the fundamentals of fluid Mechanics and Hydraulics. This is a major pitfall of the current programme.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Partially compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> ### Sub-areas
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*
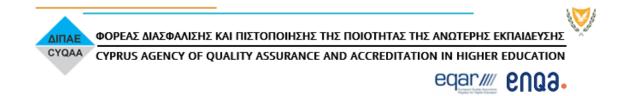
6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

> - o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
> - o *support for writing research papers*
> - o *participation in conferences*
> - • *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*
>
>
> *You may also consider the following questions:*
>
> - • *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
> - • *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
> - • *Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

N/A

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

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

N/A

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

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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 programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

Concerning the undergraduate Franchise program between NUP and BUT, it appears that the programme has established procedures to ensure most of the quality assurance criteria. There is public information available on a website, established procedures for student-staff feedback (e.g., course evaluations) that ensures a quality assurance Rate A. Moreover, there is an electronic platform and dedicated assessment tools to monitor course evaluations.

On the other hand, the primary drawbacks of the current programme relate to (a) design-oriented courses that directly implement the design, fabrication, detailing practice and quality control adopted in Europe (e.g., teaching based on Eurocodes amongst others), which are vastly different than those in China as well as other parts of the world; (b) teaching of Construction Law suitable to the Chinese design practice as according to communication with NUP representatives, the graduates of the Franchise programme will be solely eligible for obtaining a Registered Civil Engineering Certificate in China. This potentially impacts the overall coherence of the programme as students would be taught practical aspects offered in Europe, but site visits will be organized within China where the local practice is not fully aligned with that seen in construction sites within Europe. This perplexing issue does not fully align with the Franchise programme objectives PLO7 and PLO8 presented to the evaluation committee. While the programme is designed to provide international mobility (as discussed during the evaluation), there appears to be an inconsistency regarding the practical applications and potentially construction law regulatory provisions applied in China.

A mixture of good practices is used that enables teaching. A mixture of good physical demonstrations such as the seismic demonstrators, and the library space, together with virtual tools such as Moodle, provide a good teaching experience for the students. Similarly, the existing physical library of BUT and the virtual e-library of NUP provide the students with a good number of resources. The labs and lecture rooms are reasonably spacious, and the lecturers make a good use of Moodle for providing teaching material and providing a sufficient number of examination media to the students. The students are aware of how progression between courses works. While the faculty has suggested to transfer some good practices from NUP, such as visiting construction sites, it is not clear how the students in China would benefit from such visits in Cyprus.

It is acknowledged that the teaching staff recruitment and development is indeed compliant including the hiring of dedicated academic staff (in total 10) to the Franchise program of NUP. The evaluation committee commends NUP for the hiring of four (4) assistant and associate professors from abroad to support the Franchise program along with five (5) professors and a dedicated lecturer at BUT. On the other hand, the committee notes that the hiring process should be further improved by hiring at least four (4) additional academic staff members to meet the equivalent 14 academic staff members (10 permanent + 4 temporary) that are currently appointed at NUP to facilitate the "same" academic
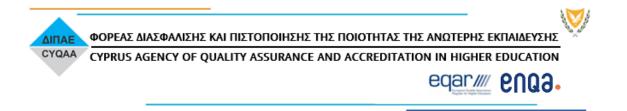
programme <u>but with a lesser number of enrolled students</u> at NUP (about 10 / year) than the number of enrolled students at the Franchise program in BUP (about 50 / year). Note that the last recommendation for recruitment at NUP over the next five years for the "same" programme was to hire at least three (3) additional faculty members (i.e., to reach 17 academic staff in total). Therefore, the teaching staff number is only partially compliant with the Franchise programme requirements. Consequently, the dedicated faculty members (10 in total) appear to teach and out-of-ordinary number of courses (on average four, often five courses per year) that would not provide them an equal opportunity for synergies of teaching and research.

Regarding admissions and certification, the University uses a mixture of certain good practices. The use of the Gaokao for the entry of students coming from the Chinese educational system and the use of the corresponding rules set by the Chinese educational system provide transparent admission, transfer and recognition of credits from students coming from the Chinese school system and other Chinese Universities. But there is a complete lack of description of how these mechanisms apply to applicants outside the Chinese educational system. While the faculty may not have had to deal with such a case yet, provisions need to be made for such students as well as is the usual requirement of CYQAA for other Universities. Additionally, the committee notes that the use of ECTS credits means that the degree will be certified as an EU BSc degree. It is also a certified University degree from a Chinese University. These are positive. It is further positive that the committee received reassurance that the degree leads to the same pathway to professional rights in China as the degrees from equivalent programmes in China. However, there is no clear pathway for the professional accreditation of the graduates of this programme within EU, there is also no evidence of discussions between the Universities and any professional accreditation body in EU. Given the previously mentioned focus of the design courses of this programme on Eurocodes and the lack of focus on Chinese design codes, this is a problem. If there is no provision for a pathway to professional accreditation in EU this needs to be made clear to the students who apply to this programme.

The library is well-organized with digital resources from both partner institutes, and classrooms are equipped to support program scalability. Students and teachers report satisfaction with their working environment, fostering a positive learning and teaching culture.

However, some Chinese staff struggle with English proficiency, risking a reliance on Chinese as the primary teaching language, which could undermine the program's international focus. Recording lectures and offering language training are recommended. Students also face a mismatch between learning European regulatory standards and encountering Chinese practices during field visits. Addressing this requires emphasizing regulatory differences to foster adaptability.

Indoor spaces need improvements in temperature and air quality, and the library lacks facilities for students with disabilities, necessitating upgrades for inclusivity. The lack (if present) of teaching assistants limits instructional support, and laboratories lack essential equipment for courses like Fluid Mechanics (ENGR220) and Hydraulics (CE380), requiring immediate investment.

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While physical resources and student support are compliant, teaching and learning resources, as well as human support, are only partially compliant due to the lack of laboratory equipment, teaching assistants, and language proficiency issues among staff.

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E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
(Chair) Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	
(Member) Dimitrios Lignos	
(Member) Emmanouil Chatzis	.
(Member) Dimitrios Minas Papadakis	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: Baoding, China, November 28th 2024