Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 11.02.2020

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Cyprus University of Technology
- **Town: Limassol**
- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Fine and Applied Arts**
- **Department/ Sector: Multimedia and Graphic Arts**
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Πτυχίο Σχεδιασμός Προϊόντων

  In English:

  BA Product Design
- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**
- **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

This report is based on the application for accreditation of a new study programme in product design at CUT and an onsite visit that was conducted February 10, 2022 from 10:00 to 17:30. Due to corona restrictions, the visit was conducted remotely on video.

The following schedule was used:

10:00 – 10:10

A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

10:10 – 10:50

A meeting with the Rector - Head of the Institution and the Vice Rector of Academic with a short presentation of the institution.

A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee

10:50 – 11:30

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department with a short presentation of the School's and Department's structure, mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis, connecting with society, and development processes

11:40 – 12:50

A detailed presentation of the Programme Product Design (4 years/240 ECTS/BA), including the programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programme's design and development, methodology and equipment used in teaching and learning (i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching material, evaluation methods, projects, samples of written examinations / thesis)

14:00 - 15:00

A meeting (QA session) with members of the teaching staff on each course for all the years of study, including

Discussion on the CVs (i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, compliance with Staff ESG), on any other duties in the institution and teaching obligations in other programmes.

Discussion on the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).

Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.

Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

15:10 – 15:50

A meeting with 10 students and graduates

15:50 – 16:10

A meeting with 6 members of the administrative staff.

16:10 – 16:40

On site visit to the premises of the institution (library, computer labs, research facilities, labs, workshops).

16:40- 17:

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the programme's Coordinator with discussions on the facilities.

17:20 – 17:30

Concluding remarks with first comments from the EEC.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	*Position*	*University*
Ole Andreas Alsos	Associate Professor, Head of Shore Control Lab, Vice Dean for Innovation and Dissemination	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway
Fabrizio Ceschin	Reader in Design	Brunel University, London, Great Britain
Guenther Grall	Dean of Degree Programme, Design & Product Management	Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Austria
Andriani Yiangou	Student representative	University of Cyprus, Cyprus

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

Findings

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

- Considering the application document, and the meeting with representatives of the administrative staff, it seems that good practices for quality assurance are in place.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

- The programme design (led by four teaching staff members) has been co-developed involving other teaching staff members, students and administrative staff.
- There is a strong institutional support by the university management, with a Rector that is passionate about the programme.
- It seems that a formal and structured market research has not been conducted, but still the university have a good feeling about the need for product designers through interviews with national potential employers (e.g. makerspaces).
- The programme has been designed with focus on employability. Therefore, the programme has a wide definition of product design, including digital design, 2D design, service design, etc.
- It is unclear whether the Cypriotic labor market after some time can absorb 20 product designers every year
- The programme aims to produce graduates capable of developing "evidence-based solutions" and capable of "making things". However, this would probably require additional technical contents to be integrated in the courses. For example, manufacturing processes should have a stronger presence in the programme. It is important also for graduates to be able to distinguish between manufacturing methods for prototyping and manufacturing methods for small or mass production.
- Claims were made that it is a priority to integrate sustainability contents in the programme. However, only a few courses in the programme that do that in addition to 'Design and sustainability'. If it is a priority, this should be reflected in the contents of the courses.
- It seems that the Year 1 of the programme has been designed in order to minimise the number of new courses to be produced (i.e. only two new courses will be developed in Year 1 and all the others are from the Multimedia and Graphical Arts programme). It seems that this is a pragmatic decision (i.e. minimise the number of new modules to be taught) rather than a choice to respond to students' learning needs.
- There is a good range of elective modules offered to students.
- Product designers need to be able to collaborate with engineers and programmers, and there is an unrealized potential for multidisciplinary collaboration with other fields with a different mindset and working practices.

1.3 Public information

- This is not relevant since this is a new programme and no public information have been made available

1.4 Information management

- Considering the application document, and the meeting with representatives of the administrative staff, it seems that there are good practices for collection, management, monitoring and analysis of information for study programmes.
- Collected information (e.g. student progression, career paths etc.) is used to inform teaching staff and management decisions.

Strengths

- The programme has been designed with a participatory approach with broad involvement of staff, students, administration, and management.
- The programme uses a wide definition of product design, which creates candidates with a broad set of skills that makes them attractive for various companies.
- It seems that there is the opportunity to enrol high quality students in the programme (considering the high demand and the small number of places available).
- The overall goal of the programme, i.e. to produce graduates capable to "make things" and develop "evidence-based solutions", rather than only focusing on conceptual design.
- Wide range of elective courses to enable students to personalise their learning journey.
- Excellent integration of multimedia, digital and human-computer interaction contents in the programme, enabling in this way a broader understanding of product design (e.g. including digital design, product-service system design).
- Good policies for quality assurance and information management.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Consider the need for students to not only learn about prototyping and makerspace manufacturing methods, but also about manufacturing methods for small batches and mass production.
- Consider increasing the technical content of the programme (e.g. materials and manufacturing methods)
- Consider integrating more sustainability contents in the programme (to match the claim that sustainability is a strategic priority of the university). This could be through dedicated courses or through integrating contents in the other courses (e.g. in the product design courses, the packaging design course etc.). In any case, this should be formalised in the courses' syllabuses.
- Consider if Year 1 of the programme (with most of the courses taken from the Multimedia and Graphical Arts programme) fully addresses the need of product design students.

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	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Findings

- The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development, with a number of electives, enables flexible learning paths.
- The use of internships in the industry gives the students valuable training and experience, which also is beneficial for employability.
- The teaching and assessment methods seem diverse and flexible with the use of a variety of pedagogical methods and forms of assessment.
- The feedback to students seems to be mostly formative (not summative) allowing the students to learn from it.
- Students seem to be encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.
- There seems to be a good balance and respect in the mutual relationship between the teacher and student
- There seems to be mechanisms to deal with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning, however, it was unclear how formalized these were.
- The use of live projects are considered positive for student motivation, engagement and learning.

Practical training

- The proposed study programme has a strong focus on practical training and skills development, which support the planned learning outcome and meet the needs for future employers.
- A number of extracurricular offers and participation in design competitions challenge the student positively.

Student assessment

- The evaluation methods and criteria are not well described in some of the course descriptions and should be more precise
- It is unclear whether the courses are using grades or pass/fail. For courses where creativity, risk-taking and exploration is critical, pass/fail should be considered to allow the students to take chances.
- The assessment methods are diverse and flexible with the use of a variety of pedagogical methods and forms of assessment that correlate to what the students can expect in the work life.
- There is little use of written exams, which are appropriate for a product design education.
- The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in the course descriptions, however, it is not clear what is required to get an A.
- Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given written and oral feedback on their work by the teacher and fellow students.
- Assessments are usually carried out by more than one examiner.
- Excursions (e.g. company) are not mentioned in the course descriptions.

Strengths

- A wide set of elective courses enabling students to personalise their own learning journey
- Problem-Based-Learning as a method is widely used

- There is a strong integration of students into research projects, which inspires them to follow an academic career.
- Rich variety of courses within the Department and an existing network of electives from other disciplines like the Business Department

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Consider adding international experience, such as excursions, short term mobilities to product design related workshops or similar
- For courses where creativity, risk-taking and exploration is critical, pass/fail should be considered to encourage the students to take chances.
- Consider more formalized student feedback system for the courses and study program, such as student representatives in every course, student experience committee on a program level, student surveys on course level, annual reviews on program level.

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)*

Findings

Teaching staff recruitment and development

- The university seems to have ambitious plans for recruiting new teaching staff members
- The teaching staff get 6 months of professional development every third year.

Teaching staff number and status

- Teaching staff competence cover digital products, 2D design and services, but few have competence on 3D products and materials. There are currently not sufficient teaching staff with the right competence to run a product design programme.
- There is a sufficient share of employees with a PhD.
- There is a good gender balance in the collegium
- The faculty have a culture and practice where visiting teaching staff from the industry participates in teaching the study programmes.

Synergies of teaching and research

- Many of the teaching staff are active researchers, and several of them have published research both within their specialities and education research.
- The department has several research labs where students are encouraged to participate.
- The teaching staff mention several innovative teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching.

Strengths

- The current teaching staff seems to be very competent, motivated, and willing to integrate and make the new program come alive.
- The working environment seems to be supportive and collaborative.
- There seems to be a strong culture for combining education and research. Students are invited into the labs to contribute to research activities.
- Researchers are successful in attracting external research funding
- The management has presented a sound plan and timeline for recruiting new staff members.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is critical to recruit additional staff members with core competence in product design and material. The teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the programme, however very few of the staff are currently competent to deliver core courses in the program.

- It is critical for the Faculty to have additional and full-time technicians that can serve the product design programme when it is up and running. Currently lab technicians are only part-time employees, which makes the workshop support vulnerable.

- Consider recruiting teaching staff that have a research track record within product design. Many of the teaching staff have a very strong publication list and portfolio, however few of the publications are within the discipline of the proposed study program.
- Consider ways to facilitate the collaboration with other Faculties at CUT, especially around courses that are relevant for product design, such as structural analysis, material strengths, etc. This would be beneficial in terms of creating interdisciplinary learning opportunities for the students.

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	Non-compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Findings

4.1 Student admission, processes, and criteria

- Assessing the application, it seems like practices for student admission are in place.

4.2 Student progression

- CUT has a good system for temporary leaves and dropouts. Students that drop out are interviewed to find the cause. This information is actively used to improve the conditions for the students.

4.3 Student recognition

- This was not assessed by the evaluation committee. Given the track record of the university, we assume that the regulations regarding student recognition are in place

4.4 Student certification

- This was not assessed by the evaluation committee. Given the track record of the university, we assume that the regulations regarding student certification are in place

Strengths

- There seems to be established good practices relating admission, progression, recognition, and certification

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- No areas of improvement

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	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Not applicable
4.3	Student recognition	Not applicable
4.4	Student certification	Not applicable

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

Findings

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

- Teaching and learning recourses, such as books, presentations for the product design part were not available for this programme, and not assessed by the evaluation committee.
- Students have access to free versions of the software required in their study programme.

5.2 Physical resources

- Workshops with appropriate machines for product designers are seriously undersized. A plan for two additional workshops dedicated to product designers is in place. The current workshop facilities are in different buildings. The teaching staff highlighted the need for: placing all facilities "under the same roof"; and ensuring that the new workshops are timely in place (ideally at the start of the programme and at latest when the first cohort is in the second year).
- CAD computer lab is missing.
- A gallery space is missing, and this would be needed to showcase product designers' projects.
- Personal desks for product design students to work on (or at least lockers to store models) are missing.
- Existing machinery is way too small, for example the laser cutter only covers 20x30 cm and has 30W.

5.3 Human support resources

- There is lacking administrative recourses at a department level, however, the administration of University is flexible, professional and service oriented, and cover the current administrative needs of the departments.

5.4 Student support

- Current students and alumni's stated that their teaching and learning experience has been overall excellent. Students know about the passionate staff and are satisfied with the personal involvement.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities (e.g. animation and cinematography clubs) are available to students and enable a collaboration between students from different years.
- Students have the opportunity to be involved in research labs, and "get a sense" of what research is.
- Student feedback and evaluation of courses is at a level of improvement. However, students provided examples of how informal feedback provided to the teaching staff was then used to improve the courses.
- A range of services (financial support; support for social, psychological, learning and disability needs) are available to students. At the meeting with the students, they provided examples of the effectiveness of these services.
- International office to provide help to students is equipped with 5 members of staff. However, international mobilities in the department are at a low level (no more than 3 mobilities a year including students and staff).

Strengths

- There is a strong support from the university, and Rector claim to provide necessary resources before the start of the program in 2023.
- Staff is fully aware of the physical resources and facilities required to run a product design programme, and has detailed plans for providing these resourses

- Some of the required equipment for product design workshops (i.e. CNC machine and 3D scanner) are already there.
- Human support, motivation and effort within the staff is high.
- Teaching-organisation, teaching-hours, sabbatical etc. are on a good standard.
- Student support seems to be at a high standard. This also includes support to students with special needs.
- International cooperation is addressed in various activities, European Technical University, EU funded projects etc.
- All students have access to required software.
- Due to the small number of students, student feedback currently is direct, easy and productive. However, with a rising number of students, systematically feedback and course evaluations will be needed.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is critical that the planned workshop facilities for 80 product design students are made available (ideally at the start of the programme and at latest when the first cohort is in the second year). These include rooms for working hands-on with 3D-Obejects, workshop and machinery to deal with wood, metal and plastic materials.
- It is strongly suggested that the current workshop facilities are placed in the same building.
- Consider that the workshop facilities need to be operated by an appropriate number of competent technical staff. This in order to ensuring safety and security while having 80 students finishing their models at the end of semester is a challenge
- Consider the adoption of a fully formalised booking system for the use of workshops. This is needed when 80 new product design students are enrolled.
- Consider upgrading teaching spaces with equipment for hybrid teaching (e.g. ambient microphone and camera, appropriate remote teaching platform).
- Consider the provision of “up to date” CAD facilities for product designers, such as Wacom-Boards or similar.
- Consider strategies to increase the number of international mobilities for teacher and students.

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	Not applicable
5.2	Physical resources	Non-compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Partially compliant
5.4	Student support	Partially compliant

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The department has a highly motivated and competent staff with strong connection with research. However, it needs to be supplemented with new teaching staff with competence in product design, materials, manufacturing, and sustainability.

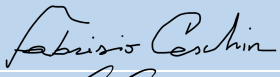
The proposed product design program needs much more space and physical resources than any other program at the faculty. Currently there is not sufficient space, facilities, workshops, nor studio spaces. This requires considerable attention, support, effort, and investment by the university to get in place, and this work should start immediately to get it in place according to the timeline of the program.

The study program, by focusing on producing graduates capable of developing “evidence-based solutions” has good potential for creating employable graduates and feeding the local market. However, we recommend that: more emphasis should be placed on the technical aspects of design (such as materials and manufacturing); a stronger focus on sustainability should be placed to match the claim that this is a strategic priority.

The product design program has potential for recruiting good and motivated students, which are an important component of a successful study program.

We recommend that the proposed study program in product design is given new teaching staff with specialized product design competence and sufficient physical space and recourses. See the individual sections for specific suggestions for improvement.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*
Ole Andreas Alsos	
Fabrizio Ceschin	
Guenther Grall	
Andriani Yiangou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: February 11, 2022