

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 14.05.2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty:** Department of Arts, Media and Communication
- **Department:** Department of Arts, Media and Communication
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Γραφικών Τεχνών (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

BA (Hons) Graphic Design (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor's Degree)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό Γραφικών Τεχνών (1 έτος, 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)

In English:

MA Graphic Design (1 year, 90 ECTS, Master's Degree)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name



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. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

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

EEC REPORT

1.1 Mission and strategic planning

The Department's mission statement was presented to the EEC. It has not been made available to the public yet since the departmental accreditation is still in progress.

The graphic titled 'Our Department's Vision and Mission' outlines the strategic planning. However, the EEC would like to point out that currently those development strategies are quite loosely defined. A first step would be to clarify and refine the strategic plan, attaching goals to dates, and identifying specific and achievable action items. The steps to reach 'Local Recognition' at the 'Medium-term' have not been defined. **The EEC recommends the addition of steps needed to achieve the set goals.**

The Department's strategic planning does include short, medium- and long-term goals and objectives. These mainly focus on pursuing excellence in research and student experience; however, with regard to curriculum development, the definition of what constitutes 'innovative curriculum delivery' needs to be expanded. **The EEC encourages the Department to clearly identify definitional criteria for what it means by 'innovation' in curriculum development.**

The assessment of how the study programmes align with the Department's goals and objectives only refers to the two programmes being evaluated by the EEC, i.e. the BA (Hons) in Graphic Design and the MA in Graphic Design. As stated, the lack of definitional criteria for 'innovation' makes it difficult to properly evaluate the alignment of the new programmes with the Department's aims and objectives.

The EEC is convinced that the Department's academic community (the academic staff members and the student representatives) will be involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies. The Department has indicated it will implement a set of strategic decision-making instruments, including a Department Council whose members will liaise with the other Committees of the University (ASQAC, RIC, SEEC), the SAMT (Senior Academic Management Team), the Senate and the Council.

As stated above, the EEC is confident that academics and students will participate in the Department's development strategy. What is less clear is how alumni of the Department will be engaged with, and for what developmental purposes. Also, while the Department has the ambition to build a strong network of professional and scientific associations, and community-based organisations, they are at the early stages of this process and, as they state in their own self-reflection (p.174,) there is 'currently no formal Department body through which these stakeholders can be formally represented'. **The EEC encourages the Department to establish this Advisory Board and to determine how, and through what mechanisms, it will contribute to the Department's development strategy.**

The EEC agrees that the mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate. The university has procedures in place for gathering data on student recruitment, enrollment, satisfaction, alumni, and student employability. However, these procedures and metrics will require some calibration when imported to the new Department, since the creative practices represented will likely require new sets of indicators, especially with regard to an indicator such as 'employability'.

1. *Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.*

The Department of Arts, Media and Communication is going to offer new programmes. The BA(Hons) in Graphic Design, the MA in Graphic Design, the MSc in User Experience Design, and the BA (Hons) in Fashion Design fit neatly into the offerings of the new Department, and are ideally aligned with the related programmes offered in other departments, such as the BSc (Hons) in Media Production and the BSc (Hons) in Web Design & Development (Dept. of Sciences), and the BA (Hons) in Advertising & Marketing Communications (Dept. Business & Management). This proximity holds great potential for inter- and transdisciplinary exchanges both in terms of teaching activities and research collaborations.

2. *Coherence and compatibility among Departments*

UCLan Cyprus has three existing Departments: Sciences, Law, and Business & Management: The addition of a Department of Arts, Media & Communication seems logical and addresses a gap in the university's offerings. It follows the same structure and ethos as the other Departments, in that it gathers a portfolio of UG and PG programmes, is focused on student employability, fosters connections with industry, and values research-informed teaching. There is potential for meaningful collaboration and exchange across departments, especially in the case of the programmes under review by this committee, since the practice of graphic design necessarily intersects with many other fields and disciplines. **There is a key difference, however, between a Department of Arts and the others already established at the university, and that is the busy, often noisy—and sometimes chaotic— atmosphere found in sites of creative learning, produced by passionate, expressive students engaged in processes of screen-printing, scraping and sorting, hacking, podcasting, choreographing participatory workshops, experimenting with weaving machines and more. Additionally students in the arts, who are expected to find a clear sense of identity and to position themselves in relation to their field, need time and space to develop socially. These factors do not have precedents at UCLan Cyprus and the EEC recommends visiting as many other institutions as possible to learn what is needed to facilitate and nurture creativity in its myriad manifestations.**

1.2 Connecting with society

The Department has the ambition to address the needs and demands of society and the local community and to take them into account in its various activities. Already, in their roles in existing departments, academic staff have shepherded projects such as the identity design for the Red Cross Atlantis Camp and a children's activity book for use by refugees in Red Cross camps. It was difficult for the EEC to evaluate the efficacy of the mechanisms used to assess these needs and demands, however. Currently they rely on quarterly reports prepared by the university's Research and Innovation Committee and more informal mechanisms such as the encouragement of 'a dialogue' (p.52) and the fact that many of the academic staff are members of boards and committees, including some which are geared towards social issues and issues of local concern. Particularly notable is Lecturer in Media Production, Ms Christiana Varda's activity in multiple organisations, including being the founder and CEO of the non-profit organisation [MediaWhat](#), focused on community-based actions that develop media literacy skills with children and youth in Cyprus.

Obviously detailed information about the Department's programmes of study will be made available on the University's website only following accreditation by Cyprus QAA. Overall the Department repeatedly states its will to maintain an open dialogue with the local community, that is, the general public and community-based organisations. **The EEC finds that, while this attitude is certainly positive, the means and channels through which this dialogue will take place should be further explained.** From the documentation provided and conversations with faculty members, this exchange seems to rely mainly on announcements via the university's website and related social media platforms. While not explicitly stated in the Application, the EEC has the impression that the link with the community at large – including the industry – relies more on personal networking of faculty members and occasional activities. **The EEC recommends that whatever these channels are or will be, they should be highlighted and made explicit on a more formal/official level.**

Academics of the department are actively involved in a series of projects with community partners, such as a rebranding project for Larnaka with the Larnaka Tourism Board, educational book illustration for migrant children with the RedCross, as well as other projects including student work. However, it is not yet clear how the effects, success and sustainability of those activities and projects are being assessed.

Once the new Department starts having graduates, the University's Student Support Office and the University Alumni Officer are going to handle the alumni communication centrally. This includes an annual graduate survey to monitor the employability of graduates that will be conducted by both the Student Support Office and the University Alumni Officer. The alums of the BSc Web Design and Development that the EEC met with were personable and enthusiastic about their experience at UCLan Cyprus. When asked, they said they would be open to hosting interns from the new Department and the EEC had the impression that good relations are maintained between programmes and their graduates.

1.3 Development processes

The procedures and measures to attract staff follow formal and detailed guidelines. Those are transparent and, beyond teaching and research skills, demonstrate relevant program-specific criteria such as artistic work and practice. **There is room for improvement towards enhancing research, artistic support and infrastructure.**

The professional development of staff is supported by a balanced academic workload ratio between teaching, research/artistic work, and administrative responsibilities of 40:40:20. It further includes training for academics to become Fellows of The Higher Education Academy (FHEA), as well as research and artistic collaborations with UCLan UK, and access to various support mechanisms of the partner institution. The new Department is thereby utilising strengths provided by the partnership with UCLan UK. An annual academic promotion scheme and a clear list of requirements for promotion foster transparency and clarity.

Different aspects add to attracting students on a local and international scope, including the collaboration of Marketing with Admissions and Recruitment, merit-based scholarships and bursary schemes that are eligible to all students, the delivery of the programs in English, as well as a focus on neighbouring countries with an emphasis of shared cultural affinities. The ICMAC (International Center of Arts, Media and Communication), emerging out of the cooperation with the Wuhan University of Communication, China, is looking to organise various events and activities in order to foster an international environment.

The funding processes for the operation of the Department were not addressed during the site visit. But an outline of a Department budget was provided in the documentation.

The Department expects 12 BA and 11 MA students for the academic year 2024/25. Following the breakdown of the university's current student population, this would equal for the BA: 1 EU, 5 Cypriot and 6 international students, and for the MA: 1 EU, 5 Cypriot, and 5 international students. Since there are not any students on the new courses yet, their country origins and distribution of those cannot be identified.

Findings

All programmes are accredited by CY-QAA and validated by UCLan, UK.

Over half of the University's student population is international. The Department of Arts, Media and Communication strategic activities and plans are to attract further international as well as local students from the Larnaka area.

The Department's set goals are to generate cutting-edge research, artistic work, and outstanding scholarly activity, while providing innovative curriculum delivery, and contributing high impact solutions to multiple communities and sectors of society. Its strategic development areas cover education, research and artistic work, as well as service and outreach.

There is ambition to address the needs and demands of society and the local community, and to take them into account in the Department's various activities.

The procedures and measures to attract staff follow formal, detailed and transparent guidelines that demonstrate relevant program-specific criteria. The professional development of staff includes training for academics towards FHEA and an annual academic promotion scheme including clear requirements.

Scholarships, the delivery of the programs in English and a focus on recruitment from neighbouring countries form only a few of the strategic activities likely to attract international students. The ICMAC, emerging out of the cooperation with the Wuhan University of Communication, is looking to organise various events and activities in order to foster an international environment.

Strengths

The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate.

The new courses fit neatly into the offerings of the Department, and are ideally aligned with the related creative disciplines of fashion, user experience design and advertising/marketing.

Procedures and measures to attract staff follow formal and detailed guidelines. Those are transparent and, beyond teaching and research skills, demonstrate relevant program-specific criteria.

Several activities and plans are strategically designed to attract students on a local and international scope.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Department's development strategies are quite loosely defined. A lack of definitional criteria for 'innovation' makes it difficult to properly evaluate the alignment of the new programmes with that goal. The EEC recommends to clarify and refine the strategic plan by attaching goals to dates, and identifying specific and achievable action items. Furthermore, the addition of steps needed to achieve the set goals should be implemented.

The creative practices represented will likely require new sets of indicators, especially with regard to 'employability'.

Since students in the arts need time and space to develop socially, **the EEC recommends visiting as many other institutions as possible to learn what is needed to facilitate and nurture creativity in its manifestations.**

There are strong ambitions to build a network of **professional and scientific associations** as well as community-based organisations. **The EEC recommends setting up a Department body through which those can be formally represented.**

In regards to community engagement, the EEC recommends that they should be highlighted and made explicit on a more formal/official level. Another recommendation is to assess the effects, success and sustainability of those activities and projects.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE *(in blue)*

Section 1.1.

The graphic titled 'Our Department's Vision and Mission' outlines the strategic planning. However, the EEC would like to point out that currently those development strategies are quite loosely defined. A first step would be to clarify and refine the strategic plan, attaching goals to dates, and identifying specific and achievable action items. The steps to reach 'Local Recognition' at the 'Medium-term' have not been defined. **The EEC recommends the addition of steps needed to achieve the set goals.** The EEC recommends to clarify and refine the strategic plan by attaching goals to dates, and identifying specific and achievable action items. Furthermore, the addition of steps needed to achieve the set goals should be implemented.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: The Department of Arts, Media and Communication team has enhanced and updated the strategic plan of the Department, based on the valuable and constructive feedback received from the EEC, as available in Appendix I.

The Department's strategic planning does include short, medium- and long-term goals and objectives. These mainly focus on pursuing excellence in research and student experience; however, with regard to curriculum development, the definition of what constitutes 'innovative curriculum delivery' needs to be expanded. **The EEC encourages the Department to clearly identify definitional criteria for what it means by 'innovation' in curriculum development.**

A lack of definitional criteria for 'innovation' makes it difficult to properly evaluate the alignment of the new programmes with that goal.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: From our perspective, innovative curriculum development refers to the utilisation of innovative educational methods and approaches across different aspects of the curriculum. All programmes of the Department encompass the continuous exploration, adaptation, and application of cutting-edge techniques, technologies, and methodologies, which are reflected within each programme's curriculum design, curriculum delivery, feedback mechanisms, and learning/practice environments. In what follows, we provide information on how we view such innovative approaches and provide examples of how they are implemented across the curriculum.

Curriculum Design: The programme's curriculum design integrates emerging trends (research and industry informed curriculum), interdisciplinary approaches, and real-world challenges. With regards to the BA and MA in Graphic Design, their curriculum was designed so that during their studies, students have the opportunity to design graphics for digital applications and platforms (such as websites, web apps and mobile apps) for emerging technologies (such as augmented and virtual reality), and more, as well as be exposed to the latest research findings in their area. A good example is the BA Graphic Design module "Introduction to Visual Media Technologies" which brings such innovations in the curriculum and introduces students to the latest technologies in their field. This knowledge is further enhanced and applied through other modules within the programme, e.g. "On-Screen Graphics and Typography". Moreover, as indicated in the respective Module Descriptors, the curriculum of various modules (e.g. GR1002, DD2000, MK1006, DD1000, GC2000) incorporates elements of professional practice, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social impact to prepare students for the evolving needs of the design industry. Additionally, as with all our programmes, the academic team of both the BA and MA programmes will be regularly reviewing industry trends, conduct meetings with professionals, and collaborate with industry partners to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and forward-thinking.

Curriculum Delivery: Programme curriculum delivery should include innovative teaching and learning methods that promote active learning, critical thinking, reflection, collaboration, and experimentation. As indicated in various Module Descriptors of the Department's programmes, such teaching and learning methods include project-based

learning, flipped classrooms, design thinking workshops, and peer-to-peer learning experiences. With regards to the BA and MA in Graphic Design, similarly to the rest of the Department's programmes, both programmes embrace a growth mindset and foster a culture of curiosity and exploration. Multimedia and media production resources (e.g. the Media Studio, DSLR cameras, 3D printers, VR headsets, computers etc.), gamified learning activities, and interactive presentations are incorporated in teaching and learning. During their studies, students are encouraged to explore diverse perspectives, experiment with unconventional approaches, while also having several opportunities for self-directed learning. Additionally, the programmes leverage digital tools and platforms for remote collaboration and feedback exchange such as MS Teams, Slack and Blackboard.

Feedback Mechanisms: In all programmes innovative feedback mechanisms go beyond traditional critiques and grades. They focus on constructive, timely, and personalised feedback that empowers students to reflect on their work, iterate on their designs, and develop their unique voice as designers. Feedback should emphasise the process rather than just the final outcome. With regards to BA and MA Graphic design, as indicated across the programmes' Module Descriptors, tutors adopt a feedback loop approach where students receive feedback at various stages of the design process, not only at the end. This involves peer reviews, one-on-one feedback sessions, video critiques, and asynchronous feedback exchange through MS Teams. Programme Modules also utilise rubrics and assessment tools that emphasise holistic evaluation criteria such as creativity, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Learning/Practice Environment: Innovative learning/practice environments should provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios, collaborate with industry professionals, and contribute to meaningful projects. In our Department's programmes (BA and MA Graphic Design), this is achieved through internships, design studios, community engagement initiatives, and interdisciplinary collaborations (e.g. with Media Production, Fashion Design and Web Design students). Additionally, tutors facilitate project-based learning experiences that simulate real-world design challenges. During their studies, students have the opportunity to work on cross-disciplinary teams, participate in design competitions, and engage with local businesses and non-profit organisations to address authentic design assessment briefs. For example, in BA in Graphic Design such activities are implemented in a number of modules, especially DD3000 and GR3333. Additionally, throughout all programmes, tutors provide mentorship and networking opportunities to help students build their professional portfolio and establish connections within the industry.

Overall, innovation in the Department of Arts, Media and Communication is defined as a holistic approach that encompasses the curriculum, teaching and learning methods, feedback mechanisms, and learning/practice environments. By embracing change, experimenting with new approaches, and staying connected to industry trends, the academic team of all programmes can inspire students to become versatile, forward-thinking graduates who drive positive change through their work.

What is less clear is how alumni of the Department will be engaged with, and for what developmental purposes. Also, while the Department has the ambition to build a strong network of professional and scientific associations, and community-based organisations, they are at the early stages of this process and, as they state in their own self-reflection (p.174,) there is 'currently no formal Department body through which these stakeholders can be formally represented'. **The EEC encourages the Department to establish this Advisory Board and to determine how, and through what mechanisms, it will contribute to the Department's development strategy.**

There are strong ambitions to build a network of professional and scientific associations as well as community-based organisations. **The EEC recommends setting up a Department body through which those can be formally represented.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We welcome the EEC’s constructive recommendation to establish an Advisory Board for the Department. This is a standard practice we follow with every Department and its programmes, as we consider this of substantial benefit and value. Having an Advisory Board for the Department allows us to have a formal and systematic approach for external stakeholders (e.g. representatives from the industry, community organisations, professional associations, alumni, etc.) to have an active role in the formation and annual evaluation of the Department’s strategy, especially when it comes to future directions and developments. Similarly, the Advisory Board for each programme has an active role in the annual review of the programme and its curriculum, and provides (among other things) feedback on the current expectations of the industry/employers.

It is expected that the Advisory Board will be formed once the Department and its programmes are accredited.

There is a key difference, however, between a Department of Arts and the others already established at the university, and that is the busy, often noisy—and sometimes chaotic— atmosphere found in sites of creative learning, produced by passionate, expressive students engaged in processes of screen-printing, scraping and sorting, hacking, podcasting, choreographing participatory workshops, experimenting with weaving machines and more. Additionally students in the arts, who are expected to find a clear sense of identity and to position themselves in relation to their field, need time and space to develop socially. These factors do not have precedents at UCLan Cyprus and the EEC recommends visiting as many other institutions as possible to learn what is needed to facilitate and nurture creativity in its myriad manifestations.

Since students in the arts need time and space to develop socially, **the EEC recommends visiting as many other institutions as possible to learn what is needed to facilitate and nurture creativity in its manifestations.**

The creative practices represented will likely require new sets of indicators, especially with regard to ‘employability’.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: The vibrant, dynamic atmosphere characterised by passionate student engagement in various artistic processes indeed sets a unique tone, fostering creativity, experimentation, and self-expression that we are really looking forward in welcoming on our campus.

We are highly aware of the need to provide adequate time and space for students to explore their artistic identities and cultivate their social development within this context. For this reason, we have already taken proactive steps to address these considerations.

A number of designated spaces that will provide adequate time and space for students to explore their artistic identities and cultivate their social development are already in place and they will be increased as the Department becomes bigger. The newly developed, state-of-the-art and specialised facilities such as the Design Studio, Atelier, Sewing Studio, Media Studio and Mac Lab will be providing arts and design-related students with creative hubs where they can experiment, design, create, and collaborate using a wide range of equipment, materials and resources. A full list of these resources can be found in our original application. Similarly, the InSPIRE Centre offers a dedicated workspace equipped with more state-of-the-art equipment (e.g. virtual reality, wearables, robotics, 3D printer, eye tacker, galvanic response sensors, etc.), enabling students to work on projects within or beyond their curriculum. These spaces serve as incubators for innovation and creativity, empowering students to explore their artistic passions and realise their creative visions even outside class hours.

When it comes to learning from peers, in addition to our strong connections with the University of Central Lancashire in the UK, collaborations with other esteemed institutions with well-established arts and design related Departments are integral to our approach and growth. Examples of such relationships are our collaborations with the Wuhan University of Communication in China, the Cyprus University of Technology, and the University of the West of England.

These partnerships serve as invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange, best practices sharing, and gaining insights into fostering creativity across diverse cultural and educational contexts. Through these collaborations, we aim to gather valuable lessons on facilitating and nurturing creativity in its myriad manifestations, drawing upon the expertise and experiences of our local and international peers.

Furthermore, these partnerships are not static; they represent the beginning of a journey towards continuous improvement and growth. Once our department is accredited, we are committed to further expanding and deepening these collaborations. We envision a network of global partnerships that enrich the learning experiences of our students, broaden their horizons, and prepare them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

At this point, we would also like to highlight that several academics within our department bring with them extensive experience from working at or with arts-related departments of other esteemed universities. Their wealth of experience and insights acquired from such environments and collaborations will also be instrumental in shaping the artistic culture and direction of our department, enriching the educational experience we offer to our students.

In essence, our collaboration with other institutions is just the beginning of our efforts towards creating a vibrant, supportive, and inclusive environment for artistic expression and creative exploration. We are dedicated to learning from the best practices of our peers and leveraging these insights to cultivate a dynamic learning environment that empowers our students to realize their full creative potential.

Section 1.2

Obviously detailed information about the Department's programmes of study will be made available on the University's website only following accreditation by Cyprus QAA. Overall the Department repeatedly states its will to maintain an open dialogue with the local community, that is, the general public and community-based organisations. **The EEC finds that, while this attitude is certainly positive, the means and channels through which this dialogue will take place should be further explained.** From the documentation provided and conversations with faculty members, this exchange seems to rely mainly on announcements via the university's website and related social media platforms. While not explicitly stated in the Application, the EEC has the impression that the link with the community at large – including the industry – relies more on personal networking of faculty members and occasional activities. **The EEC recommends that whatever these channels are or will be, they should be highlighted and made explicit on a more formal/official level.**

In regard to community engagement, the EEC recommends that they should be highlighted and made explicit on a more formal/official level. Another recommendation is to assess the effects, success and sustainability of those activities and projects.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We appreciate the feedback provided by the EEC regarding our Department's commitment to maintaining an open dialogue with the local community, including the general public and community-based organisations.

While personal networking of faculty members plays a vital role in increasing community connections, we would like to highlight that our University has both formalised and centralised processes in place to enhance partnerships with industry and engagement with society.

Specifically, industry and society engagement initiatives are overseen by the University's Head of Business Development. This role ensures that collaborations with external stakeholders and partners are formalised through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), providing a structured framework for specific partnership activities.



Moreover, our University's internal repository and monitoring system (Apollo) also works as a partnership management system and a database for partnership agreements (can be filtered by School/Department, discipline, area of collaborations, etc.) through which the University tracks and monitors ongoing collaborations with industry partners and community organisations (e.g. joint activities, initiatives, student engagement, etc.) identifying the efficiency of each collaboration. By transparently centralising this information, the University and its Departments can effectively manage relationships, track progress, and identify further opportunities for collaboration.

Additionally, it should be noted that partnerships and MoUs are evaluated annually at a University and Department level, to assess their impact, sustainability, efficiency and success, with activities delivered being key metrics in this evaluation process.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

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

EEC REPORT

2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

The university has a solid Quality Assurance Policy and System (as described in detail in the appropriate section of the Application). The Policy and related procedures have been developed in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and in conformity with Cyprus QAA regulations.

These are implemented at every level of the institutional structure through the engagement of bodies such as the Senate, the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee, as well as various Boards emanating from internal stakeholders (Module Assessment Board, Programme Assessment Board, Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Board). Since the Quality Assurance Policy is part and parcel of the institution's strategic management, the EEC recommends that a description of the Quality Assurance policies be made easily retrievable on the university's website.

The procedures for quality assurance support academic integrity and guard against intolerance or discrimination of any kind.

The Quality Assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities, namely: Teaching and learning, Research, and Community engagement. Through periodical monitoring and reporting between the committees emanating from the Academic Senate (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee and Research and Innovation Committee) as well as at the Department level, the academic quality is constantly assessed and enhanced.

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

The quality standards and indicators used in the internal monitoring of each programme offered at the institution are defined in accordance with the Cyprus QAA. They cover all aspects related to teaching work, including personnel, objectives and structure of the study programmes, synergies with research activities, administrative support, infrastructure and financial resources. These standards apply throughout the institution, and will apply in the newly established department.

The system and criteria for assessing students' performance are clearly described in the relevant documentation. The results from student assessments are used along with feedback from the teaching staff to periodically monitor and enhance the study programmes.

The institution has implemented a robust and effective policy to deal with all forms of academic misconduct committed by students, as well as preventive mechanisms — these are outlined extensively in the documentation provided. The same policy includes accessible, equitable and uncomplicated procedures for managing students' complaints on issues of student evaluation or academic integrity.

Information about study programmes, credit units, learning outcomes, admission criteria and completion of studies, as well as facilities and positions of teaching staff are published and regularly updated on the university's

website and in printed matter (prospectuses, study guides, course handbooks). The Department's admission criteria are aligned to higher education standards of the EU.

Data related to students' academic performance are systematically collected and procedures are implemented for evaluating such data according to a relevant policy, managed by a Data Management Committee.

The Department is meant to collect and publish graduate employment information. However, since the Department is not yet in operation, it has not been possible to obtain any such data, nor data about success exam rates, average grades or score breakdown, average duration of studies, dropout rates, etc.

The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards with regard to facilities, resources and spaces (classrooms, laboratories), technological infrastructure, as well as academic support. The university also ensures an adequate student support service in regard to academic and/or personal difficulties. Procedures are in place allowing to monitor each student. In the light of the expected enrolment, the ratio of student number to teaching personnel is fully adequate.

Findings

The university has a solid Quality Assurance Policy and procedures developed in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and in conformity with Cyprus QAA regulations. These are implemented at every level of the institutional structure: Senate, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee, Module Assessment Board, Programme Assessment Board, Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Board.

The quality standards and indicators used in the internal monitoring of each programme offered at the institution are defined in accordance with the Cyprus QAA, and cover all aspects related to teaching work, including personnel, objectives and structure of the study programmes, synergies with research activities, administrative support, infrastructure and financial resources.

The system and criteria for assessing students' performance are clearly described in the relevant documentation. The results from student assessments are used along with feedback from the teaching staff to periodically monitor and enhance the study programmes.

Information about study programmes, credit units, learning outcomes, admission criteria and completion of studies, as well as facilities and positions of teaching staff are published and regularly updated on the university's website and in printed matter (prospectuses, study guides, course handbooks).

Data related to students' academic performance are systematically collected and procedures are implemented for evaluating such data according to a relevant policy, managed by a Data Management Committee.

The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards with regard to facilities, resources, spaces, and technological infrastructure.

Strengths

The Quality Assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities, namely learning and teaching, Research, and Community engagement. Periodical monitoring and reporting between the committees emanating from the academic Senate as well as at the Department level ensures constant assessment and enhancement of the academic quality.

The institution has implemented an effective policy to deal with all forms of academic misconduct as well as equitable and simple procedures for managing students' complaints on issues of student evaluation or academic

integrity.

The Department’s admission criteria are aligned to higher education standards of the EU. The university ensures an adequate and tailored student support service with regard to academic and/or personal difficulties.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

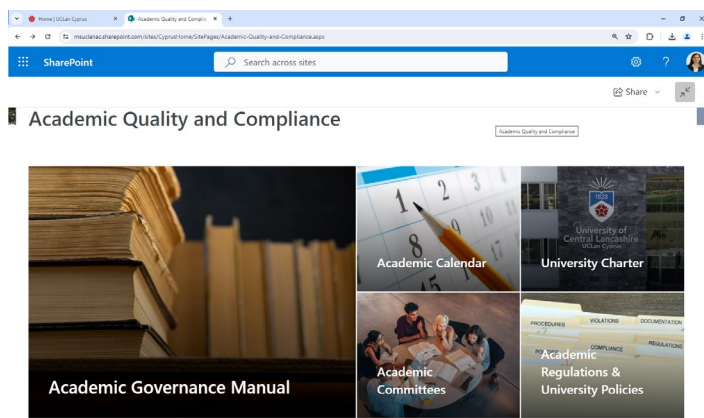
Since the Quality Assurance Policy is part and parcel of the institution’s strategic management, **the EEC recommends that a description of the Quality Assurance policies be made easily retrievable on the university’s website.**

Since the Department is not yet in operation, no data are available about student performance. However, **the EEC would have appreciated receiving data about success exam rates, average grades/score breakdown, average duration of studies, dropout rates, etc. relative to similar existing programmes, such as the BA in Fashion design or the MSc in User experience design.**

UCLAN CYRPUS RESPONSE

Since the Quality Assurance Policy is part and parcel of the institution’s strategic management, **the EEC recommends that a description of the Quality Assurance policies be made easily retrievable on the university’s website.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We would like to thank EEC for their recommendation and re-assure its members that all the Quality Assurance policies and procedures are available on the University intranet, space available to both students and staff.



Since the Department is not yet in operation, no data are available about student performance. **However, the EEC would have appreciated receiving data about success exam rates, average grades/score breakdown, average duration of studies, dropout rates, etc. relative to similar existing programmes, such as the BA in Fashion design or the MSc in User experience design.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: The EEC’s request is understandable, but since this is a new Department, there is no data available for any programmes within the Department. None of the Department’s programmes have been on offer until now since BA (Hons) Fashion Design has been accredited in beginning of May 2024 and the rest of the programmes under this new Department (BA (Hons) Graphic Design, MA Graphic Design & MSc User Experience Design) are under accreditation by CYQAA with the intention to commence delivery in September 2024.

Administration

EEC REPORT

The administrative staff oversees and follows the defined procedures and schemes. This also includes the staff recruitment scheme as well as the recruitment of new students. Competences and responsibilities are allocated adequately.

There are introduction procedures for new colleagues to smoothly join the university. For academics, this includes training in teaching, library training, preparation for conference participations, as well as procedures to enhance their teaching and their research skills 'from day one'. A mentoring scheme in which academics of higher ranks support those of lower positions further supports professional growth.

To support the students, the administrative staff works across departments and is looking to find solutions fast. E.g. if a student needs to borrow a new laptop for a specific period of time, they are helping with this by working together with the IT department. They are not expecting specific challenges with the future students on the new programs.

The constitution, operational procedures and role of the Department Board are clearly defined.

There are clear procedures for the prevention and disciplinary consequences for academic fraud, including definitions of plagiarism. The course of action to deal with student's grievances are neatly documented, and going to be implemented by the staff.

The administrative staff fosters diversity on multiple levels, and is working towards the internationalisation of the Department.

Findings

The administrative staff was well-informed and answered the EEC's questions eloquently. The different protagonists overlook their subject area. This is also well reflected in the referring documents. Competencies, procedures, schemes and responsibilities are clearly defined and transparent.

Strengths

Staff and student support are well organised and appear to work effectively. There are transparent procedures to support the Department, to enable the Department Board to constitute itself and to operate effectively, and well- documented courses of action that deal with student complaints, prevent academic misconduct, or, if proven, pursue disciplinary measures.

To attract new students, the marketing team demonstrates clear definitions of their target audience that are tailored for the BA and the MA programs. They evidence effective communication strategies that utilise useful channels and media to "target graphic-oriented people". As a part of that, they look to foster the recruitment of international students. Based on their experience and actions, they are confident towards achieving the envisaged students numbers on the new programs.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We would like to thank EEC for their positive feedback on our administrative services that allow a smooth and efficient operation of the Department.

Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

EEC REPORT

Findings

The new Department follows the university's mechanisms for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing its study programmes. These rely on active feedback by the teaching staff and students alike. Specifically, feedback is provided through Module and Programme Feedback questionnaires, as well as Student Liaison Committee meetings. Feedback from academic staff is provided through the Module Leader and Course Leader reports, as well as departmental & course meetings. External feedback is to be provided by expert reviewers and through liaisons with industry partners.

The overall course design (content and structure) practice corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) standards and current legislation, while also meeting professional qualification standards.

Distinct student admission criteria are established for each programme, and adhered to consistently. Procedures for accreditation of prior learning and credit transfer are in line with European standards and/or international practices.

Effective and timely communication between teaching staff and students is ensured by various formats such as oral, written or digital means (email, online platforms). Assessment criteria and methods are explained and published in advance.

Strengths

The Department study programmes are very much focused on the students' development with a view to a successful employability. Therefore, study programmes integrate a balanced match of theory and practice.

Attention to the learning environment is key in a Department devoted to the creative arts; in this regard, the number of students in classrooms or laboratories is suitable for a balanced face-to-face interaction with teaching staff. The pedagogy favours student-centred learning and facilitates tutor support through a variety of means.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We would like to thank EEC for their positive feedback on the Department's learning environment which favours student-centred teaching and learning approach, as well as allowing a balanced theory and practice framework.

3. Teaching Staff

EEC REPORT

Findings

A breakdown of the teaching staff in the Department is as follows: Full-time teaching staff: 15; Full-time Associate lecturers: 1; Visiting Professors: 4 (N/A); Part-time lecturers: 2.

Based on the academic profiles of the teaching staff, the ratio of teaching staff to relative subject area sufficiently supports the programmes of study. Full-time academics in the Department possess either a PhD or substantial professional/artistic practice experience, whereas all Associate lecturers possess either a Master's degree or extensive industry experience; the teaching staff appears thus fully qualified for teaching their respective subjects.

Strengths

The ratio of the number of associate lecturers to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory (15:3); also the ratio of the number of subjects taught by full-time teaching staff to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff is satisfactory. The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient (and indeed, generously so), to ensure the quality of the study programmes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

With a view to the pending launch of the BA and MA programmes in Graphic Design, the EEC has repeatedly pointed out that in many cases the faculty's area of specialisation is, technically speaking, quite off-centre in relation to Graphic Design. However relevant the other disciplinary fields are, and notwithstanding the industry experience of the teaching staff, **the EEC recommends that the teaching team be strengthened by new faculty with a more specific background in the field of Graphic Design.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: We thank the EEC for its constructive feedback and its recommendation to further strengthen the Department's academic team. In the below table you may find the expertise of our current academic team. To be noted that the Department is in the process of employing an additional academic with expertise in Graphic Design. A position was advertised with a closing date of March 29th 2024 (see screenshot below) and we are currently in the process of scheduling the candidates interviews. The successful candidate will start employment with the University in September 2024.

Lecturer or Assistant Professor in Graphic Design

SCHOOL OF SCIENCES | Academic Staff

✕ Closing Date: March 29, 2024 12:00 pm

READ THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Current Programme Academic Team

Name	Specialisation	Programme
<i>Programme Specialised Academics</i>		
Eftihia Toumazides – Katchis	Graphic Design, Digital Design, Packaging Design	BA/MA Graphic Design
Lambros Ioannou	Graphic Design, Digital Design, UX Design and Illustration	BA Graphic Design
Rafaella Maria Lakeridou	Graphic Design, Social Design, Visual Communication	BA Graphic Design
Christos Karpasitis	Digital Design, Digital Media Production	BA/MA Graphic Design
Vesela Popova	Drawing, Illustration, Industrial Design	BA Graphic Design
Christiana Varda	Media Literacy, Social Media, Interactive multimedia, Emotions and Epistemic Cognition	BA/MA Graphic Design
<i>Visiting Academics</i>		
Jez Hattosh-Nemeth (University of the West of England)	Graphic Design, Illustration, Digital Media Design, Fine Arts, Digital Arts, Photography	BA/MA Graphic Design
Jacob Cass (Brand Designer, Strategist & Educator New York, United States)	Graphic Design, Brand Design, Logo Design, Visual Design, Web Design, UX/UI Design and Print Design	BA/MA Graphic Design
<i>Programme non-specialised Academics</i>		
Olga Kvasova	Marketing, Marketing Communication, Intercultural Communication	BA Graphic Design
Antri Kanikli	Theoretical Linguistics, Generative Grammar, Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition	BA Graphic Design
Andria Michael	English Literature	BA Graphic Design

4. Research

EEC REPORT

As of yet, the Department does not have its own Research Policy separate from the university's. It speaks in broad terms of wanting to support the advancement and development of research related to the areas of arts, media, and communication, and plans to follow the university-level Research Policy—namely, that research-active members of staff, research units and/or commercial research entities should contribute their fundamental, applied and innovative research and creative/artistic practice to the 'socio-economic development of the country, the continent and the world'.

The Department does outline its Research Strategy, based around ambitions in five areas of emphasis: to become a recognised centre for research that is high quality and high impact; to produce research that can have a positive effect on the local, regional, and international community; to integrate EDI standards in research activities; to provide a healthy and supportive work environment for researchers; and to encourage collaboration and be open to academic and non-academic partnerships. **The EEC commends these goals but encourages the Department to specify in more detail how they will be achieved and how success would be understood and evaluated.**

For example, the Department states that it encourages research collaboration and wants to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to its research activities, aiming to bring together expertise from various disciplines to pursue cutting-edge responsible research, artistic and innovative activities to address the complex challenges of our time. There are many ways to approach interdisciplinarity in research, and to ensure there is safe space for all members of a collaborative team. It would be useful for the Department to specify which approach (inter-, multi-, trans-, or intra-, for example) it will take and why. Clarity around such an issue would help the Department to create a stronger sense of identity.

The EEC understands that the Department will apply internal regulations and procedures to its research activities to ensure that they are in line with its Research Policy and to ensure compliance with the regulations of relevant financing programmes. The Department's strategic plan for research will be monitored through the Department's Board and the University Committees. The Department will submit quarterly reports on its research activities and output to the Research and Innovation Committee; in this way its research performance will be monitored. The Rector and the Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee assume the overall responsibility for the policy and strategy of research at the University as well as the management of research at the campus.

The EEC was given a tour of the facilities intended to support research at a university-level. These include: research labs, academic office spaces, computer labs, a library, quiet rooms and meeting rooms.

In addition, the EEC was shown the Department-specific spaces and equipment: the Centre of Interdisciplinary Science Promotion and Innovative Research Exploration (InSPIRE), housed in room B036, contains 10 workstations, and an array of digital devices such as smartwatches, smartphones, tablets, virtual reality devices, wireless sensor networks, robotic educational toys, a drone, a Wii Balance Board, an e-health sensor platform with 14 sensor components and various network devices. The lab will be used by students as well as staff members from the Department of Sciences as well as the proposed Department of Arts, Media and Communication.

The Atelier and Sewing Studio will house essential fashion design equipment and supplies such as papers, fabrics, drawing supplies, paper guillotines, fabric cutters, drawing boards, tracing/design light boxes/boards, mannequins, movable mirrors, 10 Flatbed industrial sewing machines, 1 x 4 thread overlocker, 1 x 3-thread Interlock, industrial steam iron, industrial buttonhole machine. The Department has taken care to create an appealing, flexible well-lit space, which they hope will be conducive to the research activities of fashion design students and staff.

The Design Studio provides equipment and supplies for drawing and basic design activities. The large (540x240cm) and centrally positioned work table and stools provides a good setting for a group workshop and collaborative making activities. There are also some boards and shelves which could be used for showcasing research processes and outcomes. Additionally there is a podium and a 55-inch display for presentations. The room is yet to be activated as a research lab and is currently staged with some 'placeholder' materials which the EEC is concerned might be misleading to potential students, since they are not indicative of current graphic design practice nor of graphic design research.

The area which needs most immediate attention is the library which currently contains only a handful of books related to fashion design and graphic design, and almost none pertaining to fashion or graphic design research, graphic design history, or typography.

The Department is keen to provide adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' creative research activities. The EEC is pleased to note that the Department has made arrangements with other institutions (University of Cyprus and Cyprus University of Technology) so that researchers with specialised equipment needs will be able to access it.

The EEC considers that the results of the teaching staff research activity are shared to a satisfactory extent at peer-reviewed international conferences and in international journals. The academics who will form this Department are for the most part research active, with one notable exception among the graphic design staff, who would benefit from some additional guidance and mentoring.

The EEC notes that in line with the current REF guidelines, academic output in a Department of Arts, Media and Communication can include works that have received recognition or distinctions by renowned historians and critics or that have been included in exhibitions or internationally recognised arts-related events. If the Department wishes to engage more fully in practice-based research, **the EEC recommends additional engagement in networks such as the Society of Artistic Research and its online journal, the Research Catalogue.**

The Department states that it will adopt an open access policy for sharing its publications and practice-based research, which will be consistent with the corresponding national and European policy. As per university policy, the Department's academic research outputs will be available on the University's open access institutional repository, CLoK <http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/>, which guides the inputting of data to ensure it adheres to copyright, metadata, data, content, submission and preservation regulations.

The EEC trusts that research findings will be integrated into teaching. Thus far these research findings are focused on aspects of digital culture, AI, marketing, web design, and media literacy. These are, of course, valuable and relevant, but, as mentioned earlier, such contributions to knowledge will be more easily transferable in the teaching of graphic design, when they are conducted through the practice of graphic design or about graphic design. **The EEC also encourages the Department to make sure its research findings are 'met' and engaged with by members of the design profession and the design industry, as part of its stated ambition to expand the boundaries of the practice.**

The EEC concurs with the Department in its own evaluation that it can comply with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research subjects and the rights of researchers. The Department intends to use the university's mechanisms for compliance with international rules of research ethics via its Ethics Sub-Committee.

Since the Department does not operate yet, there is currently no external research funding directly connected to it. However, the EEC agrees that the external research funding of the academics of the Department is in line with a Department of its size, youth, and geographical location. The Department is cognisant of the challenges

of attracting business investment and of winning EU research funding applications, and is already thinking through some tactics such as carefully chosen collaborations and harnessing the input and guidance of their visiting professors. The EEC advises that they apply more scrutiny to which projects are research-related and which are simply industry collaborations. But on the whole the EEC is impressed at the groundwork which has already been done to attract external research funding.

The Department considers that the University Internal Research Fund provides adequate funding of the research activities of the teaching staff. Department staff can submit proposals to the UIRF panel. Priority is given to funding activities with long-term impact and sustainability. The EEC did not have much data to consult to confirm this claim but considering that such a process has been tried and tested with the other existing departments, it sees no issue here.

Strengths

One of the four elements in the university's mission is dedicated to research and it is evident that the university values research and innovation and is committed to investing in its further development.

The academics of the Department already have some experience of winning external research funding through their research in other Departments of the University, as well as their collaborations with researchers in other Departments and in other universities (from local and EU funds such as Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation and Horizon 2020).

The Department (via the university) has a robust system of checks and balances for complying with research ethics regulations at the local and international levels. The Department will benefit from the work already done in this area, especially by the Department of Sciences. This situation (proximity of departments) is unusual for most art and design departments and can be capitalised upon. As the Department's research activities evolve, however, there may be a need to adapt the mechanisms more specifically for the scenario of art and design-led research.

The Department already has in place a strong foundation of connections and initiatives in the local community whereby knowledge and know-how might be transferred to populations beyond the university, and it is hoped that these will continue to flourish.

The most impressive of the Department research labs is the Audiovisual Recording & TV Production Studio which consists of a control room and a separate recording room, both equipped with high-end audiovisual recording, broadcasting, production and lighting equipment/hardware, such as autocue-equipped UHD and 4K studio cameras on broadcast specification pedestals and a production gallery with a full complement of digital vision equipment including video/audio manipulation, tapeless recording, graphics software and a digital audio mixer.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

All of the research outputs are in areas adjacent to graphic design and fashion design, however; none of them address it head on. It is hoped that in the near future the academics will conduct research into topics that relate more directly to graphic design and share its outcomes in the journals and conferences and via other means of dissemination dedicated to fostering graphic design discourse.

In its application and presentations, the Department stresses the importance of research-informed teaching, however only the MA curriculum includes a module devoted specifically to teaching research skills ('Research Methodologies'). In the BA, the module 'Design Context 3' contains the most explicit reference to, and emphasis on, research and will result in the production of a 'visually rich research project'. However this module will be taught in the final year, and **the EEC is concerned that this is rather late to be introducing research, especially since there are few indications that research skills will be instructed earlier in the programme.** Prior to this, 'Introduction to Graphic Communication' includes one research-related learning outcome; the module 'Design Context 2' contains

one research-related course objective; the module 'Applied Graphic Design' states its intention to teach research in the service of a design outcome (but does not specify how or which research methods will be taught).

The area which needs most immediate attention is the library which currently contains only a handful of books related to fashion design and graphic design, and almost none pertaining to fashion or graphic design research, graphic design history, or typography. The EEC recommends that everyone involved in the department help in redressing this situation by providing their own course bibliographies to the library as well as compiling a general request list for the department based on examples of other libraries if necessary. For example, here are a few titles relating to design and diversity that could be considered and included in module reading lists: *Racism Untaught: Revealing and Unlearning Racialized Design* by Lisa E. Mercer and Terresa Moses (MIT Press, 2023), *Centered: People and Ideas Diversifying Design* by Kaleena Sales (Princeton Architectural Press, 2023), *Extra Bold: A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-Racist, Non-Binary Field Guide for Graphic Designers, An Anthology of Blackness: The State of Black Design*, edited by Terresa Moses and Omari Souza (MIT Press, 2023); *Design Social Change: Take Action, Work Toward Equity, and Challenge the Status Quo* by Lesley-Ann Noel (Stanford University d. School, 2023). There should also be a wide range of innovative print journals, zines and magazines available to support research in this department.

Titles such as *Dirty Furniture, Cabinet, MacGuffin, Eye, Design Studies, Design & Culture, Design Issues, Journal of Design History, Journal of Visual Culture, Fashion Studies Journal, Journal of Textile Design Research and Practice, O32C, AnOther, The Gentlewoman, Fantastic Man, Index, A Magazine, Doingbird, Lula, Tank, The Rake* etc.

The EEC recommends that as the Department establishes its own Research Policy, that it be more specific in its goals, and that it seek to problematize the notion of 'socio economic development' which is surely not the intended destination of most research in the arts.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

The Department does outline its Research Strategy, based around ambitions in five areas of emphasis: to become a recognised centre for research that is high quality and high impact; to produce research that can have a positive effect on the local, regional, and international community; to integrate EDI standards in research activities; to provide a healthy and supportive work environment for researchers; and to encourage collaboration and be open to academic and non-academic partnerships. **The EEC commends these goals but encourages the Department to specify in more detail how they will be achieved and how success would be understood and evaluated.**

For example, the Department states that it encourages research collaboration and wants to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to its research activities, aiming to bring together expertise from various disciplines to pursue cutting-edge responsible research, artistic and innovative activities to address the complex challenges of our time. There are many ways to approach interdisciplinarity in research, and to ensure there is safe space for all members of a collaborative team. It would be useful for the Department to specify which approach (inter-, multi-, trans-, or intra-, for example) it will take and why. Clarity around such an issue would help the Department to create a stronger sense of identity.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: The Department's research strategy is evaluated by the Department's academic board on an annual basis with input from its academics, students and its advisory board. The Department's research output is evaluated quarterly by the Department's academic board and the University's Research and Innovation Committee. Individual research output is also evaluated on an annual basis through the annual academic appraisals.

For the Department to be able to achieve its goals we consider it important for the Department to provide the necessary support mechanisms for the academics to conduct research. The existing mechanisms in place for such support include, but are not limited to:

- Flexible academic workload model safeguarding time for research (time allocation: 40% research: 40% teaching: 20% administration)
- Income Generating Activity support, including teaching reduction
- Internal Research Funding
- Staff Development Funding
- Dedicated Research Officer
- Mentoring Scheme
- Membership in and collaboration with UCLan Research Centres
- Funding for Research Internships
- PhD scholarship schemes
- Promotion Scheme recognising research excellence
- Access to Research Databases
- Research Mobilities
- Sabbatical Scheme

Additionally, the Department has a Research Lead who also represents the Department at the University's Research and Innovation Committee. The Research Lead, among other things, is responsible to organise bi-monthly research seminars and research "coffee-breaks" where the academics can meet to exchange research ideas, share best practices and discuss about intra-departmental collaborations. During these "coffee-breaks" academics from other disciplines are also invited to stimulate discussions on interdisciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations.

Although the Department highly values and encourages intra-discipline research, it is important that its academics engage with inter-disciplinary research also, where they can work with colleagues from other disciplines, offering their knowledge and expertise towards the synthesis of a unified approach to achieve a common goal.

The area which needs most immediate attention is the library which currently contains only a handful of books related to fashion design and graphic design, and almost none pertaining to fashion or graphic design research, graphic design history, or typography.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: It came to our attention that during the EEC visit, the committee only visited one section of the Library that had some books related to Graphic Design and Fashion Design. There were additional sections in the Library containing Graphic Design and Fashion Design books that unfortunately, the EEC was not able to see. Currently, the library has all the required books for MA Graphic Design, and the first two years of the programmes BA Graphic Design and BA Fashion Design (a list is provided in Appendix I). Additional books will be acquired after the programmes are accredited and commence their delivery. For the full list of physical titles currently available in our Library and additional titles that we are expecting to receive by September 2024 please refer to Appendix I.

The EEC notes that in line with the current REF guidelines, academic output in a Department of Arts, Media and Communication can include works that have received recognition or distinctions by renowned historians and critics or that have been included in exhibitions or internationally recognised arts-related events. If the Department wishes

to engage more fully in practice-based research, **the EEC recommends additional engagement in networks such as the Society of Artistic Research and its online journal, the Research Catalogue.**

UCLan Cyprus Response: We agree with the EEC's recommendation on the value of engaging with networks such as the Society of Artistic Research and its online journal, the Research Catalogue. As soon as the Department is accredited, the Chair of the Department will take necessary actions to connect with the suggested networks.

The EEC trusts that research findings will be integrated into teaching. Thus far these research findings are focused on aspects of digital culture, AI, marketing, web design, and media literacy. These are, of course, valuable and relevant, but, as mentioned earlier, such contributions to knowledge will be more easily transferable in the teaching of graphic design, when they are conducted through the practice of graphic design or about graphic design. **The EEC also encourages the Department to make sure its research findings are 'met' and engaged with by members of the design profession and the design industry, as part of its stated ambition to expand the boundaries of the practice.**

All of the research outputs are in areas adjacent to graphic design and fashion design, however; none of them address it head on. It is hoped that in the near future the academics will conduct research into topics that relate more directly to graphic design and share its outcomes in the journals and conferences and via other means of dissemination dedicated to fostering graphic design discourse.

UCLan Cyprus Response: We would like to thank the EEC for its valuable recommendation. We agree with the recommendation, and this is something that is embedded in the Department's strategy also (i.e. research knowledge transfer to the industry and the community and industry and community to inform future research directions). As an example, two of the Department's academics' (Rafaella Maria Lakeridou, Christos Karpasitis) recent research is focused on social design, signage design for behavioural change, design for social change and graphic design for out-of-home social cause advertising. At the same time, Eftyhia Toumazides-Katchis and Lambros Ioannou have expertise and interests in areas including Graphic Design, Illustration, Digital Design and Packaging Design which are all areas under which they can conduct potential research in the upcoming years.

We will ensure that this practice is continued and enhanced in the years to come.

In its application and presentations, the Department stresses the importance of research-informed teaching, however only the MA curriculum includes a module devoted specifically to teaching research skills ('Research Methodologies'). In the BA, the module 'Design Context 3' contains the most explicit reference to, and emphasis on, research and will result in the production of a 'visually rich research project'. However this module will be taught in the final year, and **the EEC is concerned that this is rather late to be introducing research, especially since there are few indications that research skills will be instructed earlier in the programme.** Prior to this, 'Introduction to Graphic Communication' includes one research-related learning outcome; the module 'Design Context 2' contains one research-related course objective; the module 'Applied Graphic Design' states its intention to teach research in the service of a design outcome (but does not specify how or which research methods will be taught).

UCLan Cyprus Response: The Department team acknowledges the importance of research-informed teaching, which has been taken into consideration during the design stages of the programmes. It is worth mentioning in the case of the BA (Hons) Graphic Design, throughout the 4-years of the programme, students undergo a systematic progression in research skills and methodologies tailored for design, culminating in more independent research projects in their final year.

During the first year of their studies, students develop the necessary research foundation knowledge and skills through the EF1498 (Academic Writing) module. As part of the module, students learn to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research, explore basic research methods, conduct literature reviews, and practise research referencing, setting the stage for their journey into practice-based inquiry.

Moving into the second year, students delve deeper into practice-based research methods pertinent to design through the DD1000 (Design Context 1) module. Here, they are introduced to various research methodologies relevant to design history, such as archival research, oral history interviews, observations, visual analysis, and comparative analysis, all with a focus on practical application within design contexts. Additionally, in GC1111 (Introduction to Graphic Communication), students apply these methods at a basic level to tackle set projects, gaining practical experience in research and analysis within the realm of design.

During the third year, students are tasked with applying their acquired practice-based research methods and analysis skills to contemporary design issues in DD2000 (Design Context 2). Simultaneously, in GR2221 (Applied Graphic Design), they utilise diverse research methods to inform their design decisions, emphasising the practical application of research findings in graphic communication. Through user surveys, observations, and interviews, students gain insights into audience preferences and socio-cultural factors influencing graphic design, grounding their work in real-world practice. Furthermore, students engage with in-depth visual analysis and field trips to design studios and exhibitions, enriching their understanding of design processes and industry practices through direct experience.

During the final year, students leverage their accumulated practice-based research skills and design knowledge to undertake independent research projects in DD3000 (Design Context 3). Here, they plan and execute comprehensive, visually compelling research projects on chosen topics, demonstrating a clear line of inquiry, original conclusions, and a deep understanding of their practice's context. This culmination of practice-based research reflects their growth and proficiency in utilising research methods as integral components of their design practice, ensuring that their work is not only informed by theory but grounded in practical application and real-world relevance.

The area which needs most immediate attention is the library which currently contains only a handful of books related to fashion design and graphic design, and almost none pertaining to fashion or graphic design research, graphic design history, or typography. The EEC recommends that everyone involved in the department help in redressing this situation by providing their own course bibliographies to the library as well as compiling a general request list for the department based on examples of other libraries if necessary. For example, here are a few titles relating to design and diversity that could be considered and included in module reading lists: *Racism Untaught: Revealing and Unlearning Racialized Design* by Lisa E. Mercer and Terresa Moses (MIT Press, 2023), *Centered: People and Ideas Diversifying Design* by Kaleena Sales (Princeton Architectural Press, 2023), *Extra Bold: A Feminist, Inclusive, Anti-Racist, Non-Binary Field Guide for Graphic Designers*, *An Anthology of Blackness: The State of Black Design*, edited by Terresa Moses and Omari Souza (MIT Press, 2023); *Design Social Change: Take Action, Work Toward Equity*, and *Challenge the Status Quo* by Lesley-Ann Noel (Stanford University d. School, 2023). There should also be a wide range of innovative print journals, zines and magazines available to support research in this department. Titles such as *Dirty Furniture*, *Cabinet*, *MacGuffin*, *Eye*, *Design Studies*, *Design & Culture*, *Design Issues*, *Journal of Design History*, *Journal of Visual Culture*, ..., *O32C*, *AnOther*, *The Gentlewoman*, *Fantastic Man*, *Index*, *A Magazine*, *Doingbird*, *Lula*, *Tank*, *The Rake* etc.



UCLan Cyprus Response: We would like to thank the EEC for the provided list of recommended books, journals, and magazines. In addition to the full list of physical titles currently available in our Library and additional titles that we are expecting to receive by September 2024 (ANNEX II), we have already proceeded to request the purchase of all the additional physical titles recommended by the EEC. We receive a positive response from our Library.

The EEC recommends that as the Department establishes its own Research Policy, that it be more specific in its goals, and that it seek to problematize the notion of 'socio economic development' which is surely not the intended destination of most research in the arts.

UCLan Cyprus Response: It is the University's practice that each Department of the University follows the University's Research Policy. It is noted that all Departments of the University inform the discussions and formation of the University's Research Policy as well as its annual review, to ensure that the needs of all the Departments are considered and reflected in the University's Research Policy. Of course, when it come to the implementation of the policy at the Departmental level, each Department has the flexibility to adjust this to the specific goals and strategy of the Department. Regardless of this, following from the EEC's recommendation, the Department will submit a request to the University Senate to be able to develop its own separate research policy.

5. Resources

EEC REPORT

7.1 The Department considers that it has sufficient financial resources to operate according to its mission and strategic plan. The central university budget covers staff recruitment, capital expenditure, library upgrade, IT hardware and software, student support and staff development services. The budget controlled by the Department is for teaching and research, Department-specific software, hardware, library resources, and specialised staff.

Referring to the Department's projected budget for 2024-25 (ANNEX 6), 180,900 euros are allotted as FTEs for the academic teaching and research staff, with an additional 5,496 for associate lecturers. 10,000 is reserved for the purchase and maintenance of lab equipment and research resources. The Department has 4,000 with which to initiate a design-specific library and a further 7,500 for student experience and miscellaneous expenses. All of these numbers are low for a departmental budget, but since the first cohorts of students will be small, it seems feasible. The provided budget is rather misleading in that it doesn't count the FTEs (covered by the university) but it does include capital expenditure as part of the expenses. The budget states that the expenses total 21,500 when in fact they should total 207,896 (if everything is added) or 11,500 (if just the library, student experience and other is included). The budget states that the net cash inflow would be 155,965, but it would in fact be 98,323. There may be some additional information missing that explains this discrepancy, but the EEC recommends that the university's accounting team take a close look to be sure.

7.2 The Department will adhere to the university procedures regarding budgeting and budget management. The plan is that the Department head (after receiving training) will manage the budget and report to the Chief Financial Officer and the Rector, which seems fine. The university's management accounts are prepared on a monthly basis so that actuals can be compared to the budgeted amounts in a timely manner.

7.3. The Department self-reports that if it makes profit, this will be distributed centrally by the university and that if the Department receives donations or in-kind donations, these will go directly to the Departmental budget. It does not reflect on the university's Consultancy and Income Generation policy, however, which allows academics and the Department to benefit from consultancy work conducted as part of research, innovation and enterprise activities. So this could be an area to develop to bring in additional funds to the Department.

7.4 The Department considers that the budget is sufficient. The EEC suggests that there may be different and unforeseen expenses that should be researched (in consultation with other university Arts Departments) and planned for in the coming years. These include things such as material costs, increased energy costs from running workshop and lab machinery, costs of staging and promoting a degree show and a fashion show, travel costs for staff and students to attend design events, exhibitions and conferences, etc. The most significant of these will be the costs associated with the recruitment of at least one dedicated graphic design staff member who can teach graphic design skills, especially typography.

7.5 The Department will follow the university's established model of continual risk assessment of their programmes. Mechanisms such as the Continuous Course Enhancement process will be employed, where a programme leader has to assess the delivery of their programme using set parameters, and indicate any risk related to the viability or sustainability of the programme. The reports are evaluated by the Department head and all issues are further addressed to the Rector and the Course Planning Committee (in which the CEO is a strategic member) as well as to the ASQAC of UCLan, UK.

7.6 The Department self-reports that its activities will be subject to audit by professionally regulated companies working with the University. The Department commits to their being conducted in full transparency and following due process. The EEC does not have sufficient information to comment on this.

7.7. The Department did not reflect on how and when support facilities and services will be reviewed, but the EEC advises that it follow university policy in this matter. The EEC does not have sufficient information to comment on this.

Findings

An overview of financial resources and a simplified projected budget for 2024-25 was provided in the documentation, but no information related to resources was presented, nor discussed during the site visit. The budget provided was hard to read since the formulas used are not made visible. At face value it appears to have a significant error—that the stated net cash flow is overstated by 57,642 euros—but the EEC does not have enough information to be able to state this categorically. Rather, it poses it as a question and a request for a closer look by an expert in financial planning.

Strengths

The small size of the Department suggests that it can be agile in how it reacts to or participates in external industry projects and/or research funding applications.

The university's management accounts are prepared on a monthly basis so that actuals can be compared to the budgeted amounts in a timely manner and any discrepancies or risk trends identified at an early stage.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC suggests that there may be different and unforeseen expenses that should be researched (in consultation with other university Arts Departments) and planned for in the coming years. These include things such as material costs, increased energy costs from running workshop- and lab machinery, costs of staging and promoting a degree show and a fashion show, travel costs for staff and students to attend design events, exhibitions and conferences, etc. **The most significant of these will be the costs associated with the recruitment of at least one dedicated graphic design staff member who can teach graphic design skills, especially typography.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE: As indicated in the Departmental application – section J. Resources (see Annex II for your reference), budgeting is handled centrally by the University and specific budget is allocated to the Department according to yearly needs. Within the overall yearly budget of the Department, there is a specific budget allocated to lab equipment and material costs, student experience (including field trips, participation to design events, exhibitions, etc), staff development (including participation to exhibitions and conferences, etc) and other unforeseen expenses.

Regarding the additional academic member of staff with expertise in Graphic Design (typography), this is already included in the budget for 2024-25 and we are in process of identifying a successful candidate to start in September 2024.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC REPORT

The EEC believes it is logical and desirable to add a Department of Arts, Media and Communications to the university's existing departments. The small size of the university, its consolidated location on one campus, and its willingness and ability to respond to shifts in industry and society means it has the potential to nurture generative exchange among the departments, in terms of student assignments and extracurricular projects as well as with staff research.

The EEC has the impression that the university is eager to welcome creative practitioners into its community, and values the contribution of the arts in its research and innovation contributions to society. What is less clear is the extent to which the university understands the implications of its initiation of the specific design programmes in this department. It speaks of how it aims to foster 'artistic expression, media literacy and effective communication' (p.159) among its student cohort, and while these are important skills, they are abstract. A student of fashion design or graphic design is likely to have some specific and concrete expectations in terms of provided resources, mentoring and teaching by practising designers, connection to industry, a Department culture that allows for idiosyncratic social and political expression and so on. Because the student numbers expected are so small, the EEC does not believe such expectations present a significant issue, but nevertheless the EEC recommends that the Department leadership continue to visit and consult with peer Departments in other universities regionally and internationally to stay informed of best practices in this regard.

The EEC met with a group of committed and (for the most part) research-active academic staff members, who are willing and eager to make a success of this Department. They have already established a range of collaborative projects within the university and with external parties and are taking a tactical and expedient approach to expanding their network of collaborating institutions. They have expertise in practising, teaching and conducting research in disciplines which fit under the general heading of this department, if not yet in the individual programmes. The EEC recommends taking a closer look at its staff's qualifications in relation to the particular needs and requirements of Graphic Design pedagogy, and to hire experts in the areas currently underrepresented such as Graphic Design fundamentals, design research, and Typography.

UCLAN CYRPUS RESPONSE

We would like to thank one more time the EEC for their constructive feedback that allows us to start the operation of this new Department on solid foundations and at high quality standards.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Christos Karpasitis	Chair of the Department of Arts, Media and Communication	
Cosmina Theodoulou	Director of Academic Quality and Compliance	
Lambros Ioannou	Course Leader of BA (Hons) Graphic Design	
Eftyhia Toumazides-Katchis	Course Leader of MA Graphic Design	

Date: 14.05.2024

