

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: February 2, 2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo
- **Town:** Paphos
- **School/Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- **Department:** Computer Science
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Τμήμα Πληροφορικής

In English:

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (4 years,
240 ECTS)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** New



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

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of this section and the quality indicators of its three sub-areas.

We first tackle the section's Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant.

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: ***“The Department is brand new. It will use initially the buildings made available by the Paphos Municipality. The initial Faculty and administrative staff are mostly seconded from AUB. To date, only one professional employee has been recruited from Cyprus. The EEC panel notes and welcomes intentions to intensify international recruitment.”***

EEC noted also that ***“The major strength is that this new Department can leverage the experience and quality of the original institution, namely AUB. Also, the new Computer Science program will be strongly based upon the one in AUB, that has approval from the US – State of New York. They intend to offer a CS degree which will be accredited from both US authorities and European authorities”.***

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations: The budget available to the CS Department should be made more transparent and detailed at least for the next 4 years. Some administrative personnel from Cyprus should be recruited, in order to improve the management of procedures and measures compliant with Cyprus and EU laws and rules.

Institution's Response: The detailed four-year department budget was included as one of the Annexes. It includes the expected revenues and all expenses derived from salaries, supplies, depreciation, travel, administrative costs and equipment etc. Ensuring compliance with Cypriot and EU regulations is being guaranteed by two of the consultants we hired: PwC Cyprus, and Chrysostomides | Advocates & Legal Consultants. PwC Cyprus has been tasked, in addition to managing the institutions accounting and payroll, to conduct our talent acquisition. Three positions are currently being recruited with priority to Cypriot nationals (<https://aubmediterraneo.cy/Mediterraneo/Pages/Jobs.aspx>).

2) Sub-areas sections comments

EEC comment Re 1.3.4 of “Development Processes”: “The Committee requires a clarification on the available budget for the Department (at least for the next 4 years, namely to how the first cohort of the Bachelor will be supported) and the origin and extent of its funding.

Institution’s Response: The detailed four-year department budget was included as one of the Annexes. It includes the expected revenues and all expenses derived from salaries, supplies, depreciation, travel, administrative costs and equipment etc.

In addition, kindly find attached two documents: (1) *Institution’s Budget* and (2) *Two-year growth budget*. Those documents highlight the 10-years, as well as the 2-years budget of the whole institution, which highlight an estimated budget of \$50M for the university.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of this section and the quality indicators of its two sub-areas.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant.

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: ***“The Quality Assurance function of the Department has been defined in detail, leveraging on the experience of the original similar Department in AUB. During the visit the EEC could appreciate the presentation of the Departmental Quality Assurance strategy and methods given by its future responsible person. Currently, as the Department is new, there are no students, there is no mentoring service and no PhD school, and this justifies the N/A marks”.***

EEC noted also that ***“The main strength is the mirroring of the Quality Assurance already used in the similar Computer Science Department in AUB. The proposal describes several cycles (every 3-years, 5-years, and 8-years) of evaluation, based on those used by the original Department in Beirut.”***

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

1. The policy for plagiarism needs to be refined and improved;
2. The Library should also be improved: relying upon electronic resources only is not enough, as students will need dedicated spaces for study and interaction, and these are usually offered by a physical library;
3. A dedicated student welfare service should be established, possibly using specialist consultants.

Institution’s Responses :

1. Appendix “07.14.690.002_appx10- Student Code of Conduct” outlines the policies related to the academic misconduct of cheating, **plagiarism**, and to a variety of academic and non-academic form of misconduct. AUBM uses Turnitin to detect plagiarism cases. Turnitin is an Internet-based service intended to help identify and prevent plagiarism cases. The tool is accessible via Moodle, which is the Learning Management System (LMS) that AUBM uses. Once student’s work is uploaded, it will be compared with an extensive database of publicly accessible writing. When a student uploads an assignment to Moodle, the assignment will also automatically be scanned through Turnitin. If the instructor has authorized Turnitin to scan the assignment on Moodle, the student must comply or risk losing credit for the assignment. More details are provided in the application in section *E. QUALITY*

ASSURANCE, subsection “5. Policy and process of preventing and dealing with plagiarism”.

2. In the current facility of AUBM, the physical library is small but the facility has a large multipurpose room that can easily be used as a quiet studying space. In the new facility that AUBM intends to move to in academic year 2024-25, there exists a dedicated physical library for students. Kindly find attached the file called “Library” that presents the schematic design.
3. As indicated in section B. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS / GRADUATES AND STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES of the application subsection 5. Counselling services, there exists a Counseling officer, in the Office of Student Affairs, to ensure the mental and psychological well-being within the university campus. This officer will be dedicated to providing counseling services to registered students. Other officers in the Office of Student Affairs, also as indicated in the same section of the application, provide services that include but are not limited to, student recruitment, student activities, student election, orientation, academic advising, course registration, petitions, etc. The Office also facilitates equal access for students with disabilities to academic, social, and recreational activities and programs. The office works in collaboration with students, faculty, and staff to implement services and accommodations that remove barriers to participation in a robust and well-rounded student experience.

2) Sub-areas sections comments

EEC comments Re: 2.2.12.2 “The digital library cloned from AUB is excellent, however it is not sufficient. A library is not just a database, but also a physical space that the students can use to study and interact.

Institution’s Response: The Library will be combined with student study space occupying a space of around 200 square meters, with a capacity of around 100 students. Kindly find attached the file called “Library” that presents the schematic design.

EEC comments Re: 2.2.16.19: To date, there are no students and no PhD school, so these items are not applicable”.

Institution’s Response: Proposing Ph.D. programs will surely come few years down the road. The university plans to open one new graduate program every two years. In the meantime, AUB Mediterraneo faculty members will serve as advisors or member of thesis committee and supervise graduate students at AUB Beirut and other reputable institutions.

3. Administration

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the **“Compliant”** rating of this section.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant.

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: ***“A very strong administrative team, benefiting from many years of relevant work experience at AUB. All necessary administrative functions can be covered adequately. The administrative structures are organized at University and Faculty levels, which at the moment seem to be fit for purpose. There are plans for an administrative officer at Departmental level, and some budgeting provision exists in the documentation for the accreditation of the UG degree. However, no direct budgeting is evident within the documentation for the accreditation of the Department.”***

EEC noted also that ***“An administrative team of very high quality, with a broad range of expertise, and very motivated. Everyone was very professional in their conduct.”***

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations: The plans for the dedicated Computer Science administrative officer should proceed, they will not only support the academic staff of the Department but will also improve student experience. There should be a record of training courses for the administrative staff, completed or planned. It will help organize the transition and localization of the administrative team from the operating environment of AUB in Lebanon to the operating environment of AUBM in Cyprus.

EEC also commented Re 3.1 “We encourage a more systematic approach to their formal training.”

Institution’s Response: Departmental administrative assistants are planned to be recruited before the commencement of the university operations. All staff, teaching and administrative, receive periodical training to develop their skills. Training and development activities are already part of the activities the university conducts, such as orientation for staff, faculty members, and students; mentorship program for faculty members; and career development activities. Various training activities are captured in the Application, for instance, in sections D-10 and I-4. A consolidated training manual could be developed to combine all training activities and make them more detailed.

2) Sub-areas sections comments

EEC comments Re 3.6 The Department is not operational. The planned administrative structures are simple, but appropriate for what is planned to be a small Department.

Institution’s Response: Indeed, the current structure addresses a small department. The administrative structure will be updated gradually as the department grows.

EEC comments Re 3.9 “An adequate approach to the prevention and disciplinary control of plagiarism exists. More can be done, such as a more detailed plagiarism policy to be communicated to the students (including provision for repeated offences), or use of tools for detection of code plagiarism.”

Institution's Response: Appendix “07.14.690.002_appx10- *Student Code of Conduct*” outlines the policies related to the academic misconduct of cheating, plagiarism, and to a variety of academic and non-academic form of misconduct. AUBM uses Turnitin to catch plagiarism cases. Turnitin is an Internet-based service intended to help identify and prevent plagiarism cases. The tool is accessible via Moodle, which is the Learning Management System (LMS) that AUBM uses. Once student's work is uploaded, it will be compared with an extensive database of publicly accessible writing. When a student uploads an assignment to Moodle, the assignment will also automatically be scanned through Turnitin. If the instructor has authorized Turnitin to scan the assignment on Moodle, the student must comply or risk losing credit for the assignment. More details are provided in the application is section *E. QUALITY ASSURANCE*, subsection “5. *Policy and process of preventing and dealing with plagiarism*”.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of this section and the quality indicators of its two sub-areas.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant.

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: ***“Discussions with academic staff, both from the Department of Computer Science and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (which will teach the general electives) exposed a high level of motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm for their work. Discussions with a panel of students and alumni of the corresponding Computer Science degree offered by AUB in Lebanon evidenced that the students had an overall positive experience, and that they had been very well-integrated in the life of the Department.”***

EEC noted also that ***“The academic quality of the academic staff is excellent, they are esteemed experts in their respective areas. The system of assigning to each student a personal tutor seems to be working very well in AUB, receiving very positive feedback for it from our discussion with the students. More generally, the feedback from the students was that the staff are very approachable, regularly going beyond their formal duties when their students need help. The structures that will be put in place, and some of the Department’s characteristics (including its small size) will help the integration of the students in the life of the University, increasing student satisfaction.”***

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

1. As the Department grows a more systematic approach to the administration of the teaching should evolve, with distinct roles and responsibilities being allocated to various members of staff. Tasks such as assignment deadline extensions, plagiarism control ought to be carried out more consistently if a more centralized approach is adopted.
2. The provision of a limited number of compulsory labs (together with the provision of additional labs and recitations) will result in: little control over the final student timetable; the total number of contact hours; and workload inconsistency.
3. As a minor point, a policy on when feedback should be returned to the students would ensure timely feedback to the students and in the long run it could also help the staff with the management of their time.

Institution’s Responses:

1. The workload of each course is carefully computed and stated in the syllabus that is published online before the registration. The syllabus should include the course description,

the learning outcomes, resources, policies (related to attendance, withdrawal, integrity), the outline of the course, course assessment, grading policy, requirements for the course, etc. The quizzes, assignments, and other activities will be graded one week at the latest after their submissions. The total number of hours required for every course will be computed and added to the syllabus.

2. The use of labs and recitations are solely for the benefit of the students to give them more practice and hands-on experience. AUBM adopted this model which is currently being used at AUB, and proved to be a successful model. We shall however monitor it after we commence operations and ensure that the load on the students is reasonable.
3. As of now, there is no policy on when feedback should be returned to the students, even at AUB (Beirut Campus). The unwritten rule, is that students get feedback on their assessments after one week. In certain cases, when the course for example is writing intensive, correcting papers take more time than a week. Hence, if a policy is to exist, it should tailor for various types of courses.

2) Sub-areas sections comments

EEC comments Re: 4.2 Organisation of teaching- 4.1.4 The EEC found little evidence that the Department made any compliance analysis of its programme with existing legislation in Cyprus or in Europe. However, paradoxically evidence is provided regarding the compliance with Middle States legislation and US accreditation was mentioned.

Institution's Response: The proposed program was designed after a thorough survey of similar international Computer Science (CS) programs. This was provided in the application in subsection 16. *International dimension of the programme of study*. We compared the curriculum of the proposed program with other similar international programs and the results were provided in the rubric table below. In addition, the learning outcome of the program aligns very well with the European qualification learning outcome of a BS in computer science as listed in <https://europa.eu/euopass/no/courses/qualification/a3f73540-2de8-4725-949e-08a629eb1ab9>

CS Program	GE Requirements	Math Requirements	Major Requirements	Electives	Total Requirements
AUB Mediterraneo	90	18	90	42	240 ECTS
European University of Cyprus	12	42	168	18	240 ECTS
University of Cyprus	10	22	143	65	240 ECTS
University of Nicosia	12	54	120	54	240 ECTS
Stanford University	15	78	129	66	288 ECTS
MIT	17	12	93	78	200 ECTS

CMU	72	32	86	50	240 ECTS
Cornell University	90	24	48	78	240 ECTS
Georgia Tech	68	42	126	16	252 ECTS
ETH	-	18	150	12	180 ECTS
Oxford University		12	78	150	240 ECTS

EEC comments Re: 4.2.6 The Department is not operational yet. The staff are aware of the importance of effective and timely feedback to the student, however no detailed Departmental policy has been formulated yet.

Institution's Response: Students' assessment is detailed in every single course syllabus. Also the policy and procedures for each course is described in section 6 of the programme application. This policy is made known to students before they begin their studies. If there are certain practices that impede the learning process, we will reconsider those practices to make them clearer to the students. Also, we put explicit deadlines to give feedback to students for each activity. The unwritten rule though is that students get feedback on their assessments after one week.

5. Teaching Staff

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of this section and the quality indicators of its three sub-areas.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: “**Overall the Department seems to have a credible incremental plan for staff expansion; • This plan involves secondment of a first cohort of faculty from AUB. Thereafter these staff are expected to become permanent AUB Mediterraneo staff. • Subsequent staff will be recruited by international recruitment exercises. Internal policies for recruitment seem robust and democratic. • The ratio of full-time to part time staff seems reasonable. However the reporting of such within the documentation and the numbers presented when questioned were divergent. • It was surprising that some more senior staff seemed somewhat less familiar with the submission documentation detail.**”

EEC noted also that

- “**Staff are passionate about the development of AUB Mediterraneo;**
- **Teaching practices seem to embrace innovative hybrid teaching methods. It is noted that totally online courses are not permitted within Cyprus.**
- **Teaching materials seem of an appropriate standard. Recorded sample lectures examined were of an appropriate standard in terms of delivery, material and format”.**

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

1. Evidence of visiting professors and intension to facilitate occasional short-term visits of leading experts was not apparent. This generally helps with international collaborations and exposure to state-of-the-art practices in terms of research and teaching. Provision for such ought to be included.
2. Further provision of *special teaching staff* would be worthwhile. The EEC panel notes and welcomes the special teaching around ethics and research practices. However, some adjunct Professor in Practice type teaching may be useful to ground educational materials with commercial relevance.
3. The staff student ratio would seem to be 20:1. This seems toward the higher end of acceptable. The EEC panel would encourage that this be reduced as operations consolidate.

Institution’s Responses:

1. We thank the reviewers for their valuable feedback. The institution highly encourages the use of visiting professors at all levels, through the existing EU programs, MoU’s, or any other means. The department will be welcoming both research as well as teaching visiting faculty, to provide workshops, summer and winter schools, research seminars, and teaching duties. Visiting faculty members will be hired on a regular basis. AUBM is currently

in advanced discussions with Trinity College to establish student and faculty exchange programs. More such collaboration will be established with other esteemed institutions in Cyprus and Europe.

2. We welcome the suggestion of the EEC for their valuable feedback. The university will consider hiring special teaching staff and professors in practice.
3. Staff student ratio will be initially high but the staff will fill critical areas for student support and guidance, counseling and orientation, among other areas that is not initially commensurate with the number of students.

6. Research

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of this section and the quality indicators of its four sub-areas.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant.

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: “**Overall, the University and Department have a clear vested interest in research and the conduct of such. There is a clear understanding as to the symbiosis of research and quality teaching. There is a clear plan and policy for translating research into teaching materials.**”

EEC noted also that “

- **Overall, there is a clear understanding of and appreciation for research from those staff that the panel met;**
- **Faculty were research active and seemed disposed to continue to be so;**
- **Research outputs from staff are appropriate in terms of quantity and quality;**
- **Promotional regimes, tenure track procedures and annual review practices all seem appropriately aligned with promoting the importance of research;**
- **Provisions and policy around research management and reporting is adequate (see Annex 5 of the proposal).**
- **The Faculty Research Board promotes research quality and principles.”**

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

1. While an IP policy exists, greater consideration ought to be given to paid internships and a clear policy be formulated. Where a student is an employee often any IP developed during paid employment hours is deemed the ownership of the employer;
2. The composition and governance of the University Research Board ought to be made clearer. Additionally the number and value of faculty research grants (preferably expressed as a % of University income) ought to be declared explicitly together with associated application calls and dispersal/award procedures;
3. In time there will need to be a larger better staffed research office function to support the growing staff and student numbers. It is noted that in the first instance this will only comprise of one individual;
4. In time a more robust ethical approval process will need to be put in place which will additionally consider all research including M.Sc dissertations and capstone projects;
5. The policy for external review of Appendix 8 is noted. The EEC panel would encourage external review. Such processes are important for quality and oversight. Appendix 7 does not seem to state the frequency of such: the panel would recommend every 3 years.

Institution’s Response:

1. The university's IP policy presented in Appendix "07.14.690.002_appx15- *Intellectual Property Policy*" is detailed enough and captures most of the cases where disputes on IP might occur. The IP policy can always be updated to cover arising potential IP disputes.
2. The University Research Board (URB) Faculty Research Grants Program is a research growth driver for the University and provides grant support on a competitive basis for novel research projects submitted by full-time faculty members in the professorial ranks. URB provides details on eligibility, budget categories, proposal preparation, submission process, and review process. The grant can be up to \$18,000 in annual funding for a research project period of one or two years, with funding approved on a yearly basis. We envision that in the first few years, the budget for URB Grants will fund proposals of half the professorial rank faculty members.
3. At the start-up phase, we believe that one experienced research officer is sufficient. Staffing for the research office will be scaled up as the size of the faculties grow.
4. We agree with the reviewers, and in time the institution will draft such a process.
5. Periodic program review for all undergraduate and graduate programs in an academic departments without professional accreditation are reviewed at least once every eight years. However, Program learning outcomes assessment is mandatory and is conducted every 2 years.

2) Sub-areas sections comments

EEC comments Further details around supports for faculty in terms of research grants, travel grants, student stipends etc are required. Such things are imperative in bootstrapping the research efforts of early career faculty.

Institution's Response: The university gives faculty members the following research benefits: sabbatical, summer research leaves, internal funding, and extra incentives for those receiving external funding. Quality research is a requirement for promotion and tenure for all faculty members, and hence faculty members would be keen to enhance their research profile and consequently that of the institution. Tapping into EU funding and tackling local and EU priorities will be the driver of the university's research direction.

7. Resources

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is highly appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the **“Compliant”** rating [scores of 4-5] of this section and the quality indicators of its three sub-areas.

We first tackle the section’s Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, and then address the comments in the sub-areas sections even when all the scores are compliant

1) Findings, Strengths, and Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

The university underlines the findings of the EEC:

- ***Overall, the built environment and associated facilities were appropriate and offered an environment conducive to learning;***
- ***The library infrastructure provides access to the AUB digital library resources which are substantive. However, Annex 4 speaks of journals being in microfilm format and 75% in Arabic. This represents a problem in terms of accessibility for students at AUB Mediterraneo;***
- ***Notwithstanding the digital library resources the panel believes that a library provides more than supported access to digital resources. The view of the panel is that a physical library with key physical texts and resources is required. The panel note that 200 square metres of space is apportioned to a library. This however is in effect a classroom which does not have the function and form of a library. University libraries provide physical resources, quiet spaces, small group work bookable pods and so forth.”***

EEC noted also that

- ***“The Department/University has clear measured incremental plans to develop the campus. This ought to provide measured expansion of resources to reflect onboarding of year cohorts;***
- ***Realistic strategic planning is clearly evident for consolidation of the University footprint with adjoining land parcels identified and acquired and detailed designs (drawings walk/fly throughs already available);***
- ***Phase 1 of the campus is due to complete early 2024. This will complement the already existing building stock. Were there to be construction delays adequate contingency (space) is available within existing buildings.”***

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

- More detailed provision around Department budget is required. Specifically it is not clear from the budget Annex 6 as to Department budget lines for staff equipment, staff travel and conference support, discretionary budget to support small equipment needs for teaching etc.;
- The panel notes the provision of travel and subsistence budget lines within the Faculty budget but this would seem insufficient if one were to be truly supporting research outputs (conference travel) and international collaborations;

- In terms of the Department budget it is noted that there are no explicit non academic support staff. One might expect have expected that there would be a secretary that would support the Department activity and provide a go to point of reference for the student cohort;
- The budget provision for the Department seems to be disproportion when compared to that of the Faculty and Chief Business Officer. The leanness of these budgets at Department level is noted and somewhat troublesome and does not imbue Departmental autonomy;
- The level of depreciation of equipment is we believe too low given intended roll out of computer labs. Indeed depreciation of the already existing computing laboratory is not obviously present from this year.
- It is unclear what budget line items 55600 “NY Allocation” circa €300,000 and 55700 “Beirut Allocation” circa €1.53 Million represent. In discussion it seemed that monies and payment for services were not being redirected to either AUB or New York. This needs clarification;
- The EEC panel would recommend a reflection upon Department budget.

Institution's Response:

Kindly find attached two documents: (1) *Institution's Budget* and (2) *Two-year growth budget*. Those documents highlight the 10-years, as well as the 2-years budget of the whole institution, which highlight an estimated budget of \$50M for the university. At AUBM, the academic budget is centralized at the Rector's office (combined with VC office), where every faculty at the beginning of every fiscal year submits through its Dean its budget requests to the Rector. The budgets are then allocated to each faculty. Each faculty in turn distributes the budget to its departments based on the department's request and needs. Hence, internal research grants, conference budgets, sabbatical budget, etc. are not included in the department budget and are requested from the Rector through the Deans. The “NY Allocation” and “Beirut Allocation” are budget lines reserved for services that might be provided by the New York office and Beirut Campus to AUBM; such services include, communications, infrastructure design, IT support, and admissions support among other services. AUBM might not be using these services, but they are being accounted for in the budget.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC conclusions and final remarks: *“The Computer Science Department is a new Department in a new University (American University of Beirut, Mediterraneo) founded recently in Paphos. This University has been created as an independent branch of the American University of Beirut (AUB), a well established institution existing for more than 150 years in Lebanon.*

The high positive scores of our evaluation reflect the fact that the new Department is leveraging the long experience and success of the pre-existing Department in Beirut in terms of research and teaching culture, administrative structures, and personnel. The recommendations and the constructive criticism in the report primarily seeks to highlight the challenges that should be expected during the transition from the operating environment in Lebanon to that of Cyprus.”

In particular, the Department has:

- a clear mission statement;
- a detailed Quality Assurance function, leveraging on the experience of the original similar Department in AUB;
- the support of an excellent administrative team, benefiting from many years of relevant work experience at AUB;
- a highly motivated teaching staff demonstrating at all levels their commitment, and enthusiasm for their work;
- research active academic staff with research profiles that are internationally recognized as high quality;
- benefits from a built environment and associated facilities that are fit for purpose and create an environment conducive to learning.

Institution's Response: The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their time and effort in this thoughtful review. The university welcomes the EEC's suggested areas for improvements in its Evaluation Report that aim for the assurance of continuous improvement. The university is particularly pleased/satisfied by getting “Compliant” rating by the EEC in the 7 areas. The University has accepted the constructive comments and suggested areas for improvements put forward, and will address them during the implementation phase.

EEC stated that “We recommend the production of a more detailed plan that specifically addresses provisions around Departmental budget and Departmental recruitment. This plan should address a 4-year period. We thank the Faculty and administrative staff of AUBM for their help and cooperation, and George Aletraris from CYQAA for the organization of the process.”

The university's response to the EEC comments: The four-year department budget was included as one of the Annexes. It includes the expected revenues and all expenses derived from salaries, supplies, depreciation, travel, administrative costs and equipment etc. In addition, kindly find attached two documents: (1) *Institution's Budget* and (2) *Two-year growth budget*. Those documents highlight the 10-years, as well as the 2-years budget of the whole institution, which highlight an estimated budget of \$50M for the university.

The institution received a permission from CYQAA to secure the teaching staff that are needed for the first year or two, as it is not reasonable to hire academic and admin staff for all the 4 years of study from year 1. The teaching staff that the university will start with in September 2023 will be seconded from AUB. They will move and reside in Cyprus and have all their duties performed at AUB Mediterraneo. The first teaching staff cohort will run the recruitment process for the following years following the process that is included in the program application section *B. PROGRAMME'S CONTENT*, subsection 7. *Policy for recruitment and promotion of teaching staff*.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Wassim El Hajj	Rector	
Haidar Safa	Professor, chair	
Ali Chehab	Professor	
Shady Elbassuoni	Associate Professor, program co-ordinator	
Boushra Rahal	Quality Assurance and Institutional Improvement	
Rania Hussein	Strategy and Risk	

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