

External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

Doc. 300.3.1

Date: April 10, 2024

- **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Central Lancashire Cyprus

- **Town:** Larnaca

- **School/Faculty:** Department of Arts, Media and Communication

- **Department:** Department of Arts, Media & Communication

- **Department's Status:** New Department

- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation:**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

BA (Hons) Graphic Design (4 years, 240 ECTS, 1st Cycle)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MA Graphic Design (1 year, 240 ECTS, 2nd Cycle)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MSc User Experience Design

Programme 4

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

BA (Hons) Fashion Design (4 years, 240 ECTS, 1st Cycle)



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].



Department's programmes (to be filled by the CYQAA officer and verified by the EEC):

DEPARTMENT	PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

A. Introduction

The onsite visit:

The visit took place on 8 April 2024. The meetings were held at the UCLan Cyprus campus. The University shared presentations during the day and the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) received paperwork in advance. The day started with a short welcome by the university rector, Professor Irene Polycarpou, followed by a presentation of the university and a consecutive discussion.

The private licensed university was established in 2012 in Cyprus. All programmes are accredited by CY-QAA and validated by UCLan, UK. The degrees are double-awarded and conferred by UCLan Cyprus and UCLan, UK. Despite this close connection between the institutions, it was highlighted that UCLan Cyprus is an independent university, and not a franchise of UCLan UK.

Including the proposed Department of Arts, Media and Communication, with its two undergraduate (UG) and two postgraduate (PG) programmes, the university will offer 16 UG and 14 PG programmes across four departments. The institution is populated by more than 1.5k students, of which the largest proportion (45%) are from Cyprus (and even more specifically from the Pyla area local to the campus). 12% are EU citizens and 43% are from other countries.

The visit was well organised, with a series of informative meetings with university stakeholders: Prof. Irene Polycarpou (Rector of UCLan Cyprus), Dr. Christos Karpasitis (Head of the Department of Arts, Media and Communication), Dr. Nearchos Paspallis (Head of the Department of Sciences), Dr. Cosmina Theodoulou (Director of the Academic Quality and Compliance Office), Dr. Effie Toumazides-Katchis (Course leader of MA in Graphic Design), Mr. Lambros Ioannou (Course leader of BA in Graphic Design) and Ms Antri Yerasimou Makri (Academic and Quality Assurance officer). Further meetings were held, separately, with the teaching staff, including: Ms Christiana Varda, Ms Vesela Popova, Dr. Antri Kanikli, Dr. Andria Michael, Dr. Olga Kvasova and Ms Rafaella Maria Lakeridou; students/alumni, and main administrative staff. The order of meetings made sense and the presentations were clear. All staff of the Department were helpful and attentive to questions. However, on occasion, the EEC needed to repeat and rephrase some of their questions until they received substantial answers. Due to the required extra time to get the information the EEC was looking for, the planned timing to carry out the discussion with all relevant people was sometimes too short.

The moderation by the Cyprus QAA officer, Ms Emily Mouskou, was well-managed and appropriate. All documents were made accessible within a sufficient time frame before the actual site visit, while further documents the EEC required were shared instantly after the visit. We would like to thank the officer for their responsiveness and diligence.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Alexander Tibus	Professor of Visual Communication Design	Berlin International University of Applied Sciences
Alessandro Colizzi	Associate Professor, Graphic design history, Typography and Type design	Politecnico di Milano
Alice Twemlow	Professor, Graphic Design History, Theory & Sociology	University of Amsterdam
Styliani Zintili	Student, Graphic Design	Cyprus University of Technology

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report refers to the Department as a whole (programmes offered, teaching staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, resources, etc.).*
- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*
- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:	Non-compliant	
3:	Partially	compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant	

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*
- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*
- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), **which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report.***
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)		1 - 5
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	N/A
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	3
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	4
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with European and international practice.	4
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	4
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	N/A
1.1.7	The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective.	4

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.**

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

N/A

1. Department’s academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society

1 - 5

1.2.1	The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.	4
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	4
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	4
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	N/A

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. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.3 Development processes		1 - 5
1.3.1	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.	4
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	5
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	5
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	N/A

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.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	PARTLY COMPLIANT
1.2 Connecting with society	COMPLIANT
1.3 Development processes	COMPLIANT

2. Quality Assurance

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
2. Quality Assurance		
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy		1 - 5
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	5
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	5
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	5
2.1.4	The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1	Teaching and learning	5
2.1.4.2	Research	5
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	5
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	5
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	5
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	5

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. Quality Assurance

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study		1 - 5
2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	5
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	5
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators, which have been presented and discussed, and is effective	5
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	4
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	5
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	5
2.2.7	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.	5
2.2.8	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	5

2.2.9	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	5
2.2.10	The Department flexibly uses a variety of teaching methods.	5
2.2.11	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	5
2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	5
2.2.13	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
2.2.12.1	Building facilities	4
2.2.12.2	Library	3
2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	4
2.2.12.4	Technological infrastructure	4
2.2.12.5	Academic support	5
2.2.14	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
2.2.15	The Department's mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.	5
2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	5
2.2.17	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	N/A
2.2.18	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	N/A
2.2.19	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	N/A
2.2.20	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	5

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.**

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	COMPLIANT
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	COMPLIANT

3. Administration

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
3. Administration		1 - 5
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	5
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	5
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	5
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	5
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	5
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	5
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	5
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	5
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5
3.11	Internationalization of the Department and external collaborations.	5
<p>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.</p>		

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.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Compliant</i>
3. Administration	COMPLIANT

4. Learning and Teaching

(ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*

3: *Partially compliant*

4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.1 Planning the programmes of study		1 - 5
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	5
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	5
4.1.3	Intended learning outcomes, the content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	5
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	5
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.2 Organisation of teaching		1 - 5
4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	5

4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	5
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	5
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	5
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	5
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	5
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	5
<i>Please see below</i>		

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.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	COMPLIANT
4.2 Organisation of teaching	COMPLIANT

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
 3: *Partially compliant*
 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
5.	Teaching Staff	1 - 5
5.1	The number of teaching staff – full-time and exclusive work – and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	4
5.2	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.	4
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	N/A
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	4
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	5
5.6	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.	5
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	5
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5
<i>See below</i>		

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.**

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

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	COMPLIANT
Teaching staff recruitment and development	PARTLY COMPLIANT
Synergies of teaching and research	COMPLIANT

6. Research

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
6. Research		1 - 5
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	4
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	4
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	4
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	4
6.5	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.	4
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	4
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	5
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	4
6.9	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.	5

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://clock.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.

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

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Research mechanisms and regulations	COMPLIANT
External and internal funding	COMPLIANT
Motives for research	COMPLIANT
Publications	COMPLIANT

7. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
7. Resources		
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	4
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	4
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	4
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	3
7.5	The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	N/A
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	N/A

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.**

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.

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.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Alice Twemlow	<i>Alice Twemlow</i>
Alessandro Colizzi	<i>Alessandro Colizzi</i>
Alexander Tibus	<i>A. Tibus</i>
Styliani Zintili	<i>Styliani Zintili</i>

Date: 10 April