

Doc. 300.3.1

Date: Date

External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Beirut Mediterraneo
- **Town:** Paphos
- **School/Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- **Department:** Computer Science
- **Department's Status:** New

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Bachelor 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



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

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following an invitation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had the opportunity to evaluate the Department of Computer Science of the American University of Beirut in Paphos (Cyprus), and the BSc Programme in Computer Science offered by this new department in this new university. The committee including Prof. Paolo Ciancarini, Prof. Gregory O’Hare, Prof. Ioannis Ivrisimtzis, Mr. Christos Charalambous (professional representative), and Miss Niki Makri (student representative) travelled to Paphos on Dec 14 2022 and was received in the building where is currently located the “American University of Beirut Mediterraneo” (AUBM). The EEC was met by: the Rector, the Head of the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of the Department, and by the administrative staff. The committee attended a series of meetings as defined in the agenda (with the rector, with the head of CS Department, with the Faculty, with the administrative staff). In addition, an online meeting was arranged with some Computer Science students and alumni from the American University of Beirut (AUB). The Committee also visited the main building of the AUBM University, which includes some spaces to be used initially by the Department of CS for teaching and research. Prior to the visit, the EEC was supplied with relevant documentation. On the day of the visit, the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions and request further information, which was provided promptly. The meetings and provision of the material requested by the EEC was professionally facilitated by George Aletraris from CYQAA. A final meeting to aggregate the contributions of the EEC members to this evaluation report and to finalize the findings of the report was held on 15 and 16 December 2022. This report contains the findings of the online visit and the resultant evaluation of the EEC. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation material and the online visit, the EEC concludes that the required Departmental standards are met.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Paolo Ciancarini	Professor	University of Bologna, Italy
Gregory O'Hare	Professor	Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Ioannis Ivriissimtzis	Associate Professor	Durham University, UK
Christos Charalambous	Professional	Technical Chamber of Cyprus
Niki Makri	StudentPosition	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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:	<i>Non-compliant</i>
3:	<i>Partially compliant</i>
4 or 5:	<i>Compliant</i>

- *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.	4
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	5
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	5
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the 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.	5
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.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

The CS Department is a new Department in a new University (AUB 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 from more than 150 years in Lebanon. The positive scores reflect the fact that the new Department can leverage the long experience and success of the pre-existing Department in Beirut. Both the Rector and the Head of Department stressed the relevance of their original university and the fact that some initial personnel and resources will come from AUB. The participation to the development of the Department strategy by stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations cannot be assessed at this time.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.
2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

The Department will offer just one program, a 4-year long Bachelor in Computer Science, that is coherent with its mission. The Department is inserted in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the AUB Mediterraneo University, and the other Departments in this Faculty are compatible among themselves and able to offer a coherent variety of programmes.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Click to enter text.

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.	5
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	N/A
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	5
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	N/A

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The Department has a clear mission statement and is oriented to create and develop strong relationships with the region and the society in which it is inserted. The N/A ratings are justified because the Department is new and has not yet obtained the permission of advertising its activities.

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.	5
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	4
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.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The new Department mirrors the established and good procedures and measures of the original Department of CS in Beirut. Concerning the mark given at 1.3.4, 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.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

The expected number of students, per year, is 50, predominatly from abroad. By the end of the first 4-year period 200 students are expected to be attending the programme.

Findings

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

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.

Strengths

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

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

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

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.

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

Sub-area	Compliant
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	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.	4
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	4
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	N/A
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	N/A
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Quality assurance strategies are good, mirroring similar activities established in AUB.

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 and is effective, which have been presented and discussed.	4
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	N/A
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	3
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	4
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.	N/A
2.2.8	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	N/A
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.	N/A
2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	N/A

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.		3
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.		4
2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.		N/A
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.		4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

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.

2.2.14 The welfare service for students should be provided by specialists. 2.2.16.19 To date, there are no students and no PhD school, so these items are not applicable

Findings

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

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.

Strengths

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

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

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

The areas of improvement are: 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.

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

Sub-area	Compliant
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.	3
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.	4
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	4
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	N/A
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.	4
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.	4
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	4

3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5
3.11	Internationalization of the Department and external collaborations.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

3.1 The administrative structures at University and Faculty levels are appropriate and fit for purpose, benefitting from years of experience with university administration. The plans for an administrative officer at Departmental level seem to still be at an early stage. The administrative staff are aware of the need to learn and adapt to their new operating environment. We encourage a more systematic approach to their formal training.

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

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.

Findings

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

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.

Strengths

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

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

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

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.

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.	N/A
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).	4
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.	3
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	5
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>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.</p>		
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.	4
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	4
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.	N/A
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	4
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

4.2.1 The Department is not operational and has no students yet. Appropriate plans for collecting student input for the review and the development of the degrees are described. We recommend the initiation of contacts with local businesses as soon as a credible presence in the area is established.

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.

Findings

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

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.

Strengths

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Sub-area	<i>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.	5
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	3
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.	4
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.	4
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.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

5.3 Evidence of visiting professors and intension to facilitate occasional short term visits of leading experts was not apparent.

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work.
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work
- Number of visiting Professors
- Number of special scientists on lease services

Click to enter text.

Findings

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

- 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.

Strengths

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

- 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

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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Compliant
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	Compliant
Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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.	5
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.	5
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.	5
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.	N/A
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.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

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 and ultimately provide the research lifeblood for a Department.

Findings

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

- 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.

Strengths

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

- 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

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

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>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		
7. Resources		1 – 5
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.	4
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	N/A
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>Given the this is a new Department the fitness of purpose of certain services, functions cannot be judged as yet.</p> <p>7.4 Concerns exist with the budgetary provisions around certain areas, overall the cost versus income margins are small and this compromises the funding of certain support functions.</p>		

Findings

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

- 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.

Strengths

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

- 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

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

There are a number of improvements that would be recommended. These include:

- 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.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
7. Resources	Partially 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 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.

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.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Paolo Ciancarini	
Gregory O'Hare	
Ioannis Ivrisimtzis	
Christos Charalambous	
Niki Makri	
FullName	

Date: December 16, 2022

