Doc. 300.3.1

Date: Date

External Evaluation Report

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  University of Nicosia (Branch Athens, Greece)

  - **Town: Athens, Greece**

  - **School/Faculty: School of Sciences and Engineering**

  - **Department: Computer Science**

- **Department's Status: New**

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

Programme 1
In Greek:
Επιστήμη Δεδομένων (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc))
In English:
Data Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc))

Programme 2
In Greek:
Πληροφορική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc))
In English:
Computer Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc))

Programme 3
In Greek:
Programme Name
In English:
Programme Name

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

DEPARTMENT	PROGRAMMES OF STUDY
Department of Computer Science Τμήμα Πληροφορικής 07.14.790.005	Data Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc)) Επιστήμη Δεδομένων (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc)) 07.14.791.005
	Computer Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc)) Πληροφορική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc)) 07.14.791.004

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The onsite visit to the Department of Compute Science (henceforth: *"the Department"*) at the University of Nicosia (henceforth: *"UNIC"*) at their Athens campus (henceforth: *"UNIC-Athens"*) took place on May 29, 2025, during which the External Evaluation Committee (henceforth: *"EEC"*) was accompanied by Ms. Natasa Kazakeou and Dr. Christiania Maki from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (henceforth: "CYQAA").

UNIC is in the process of establishing a major branch at Athens — UNIC-Athens — and within this, also establishing extensions of its existing departments at UNIC.

The EEC was tasked with evaluating the extension of the Department within UNIC-Athens, as well as evaluating the opportunity for delivery of two Bachelors programmes in Computer Science and in Data Science, already existing at UNIC, within UNIC-Athens.

The EEC wishes to recall that UNIC-Athens does not, functionally, exist yet. Specifically this means that:
- The physical building, housing the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, is still under construction — very much a construction site with no interior features. The physical locations of lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, library, etc., were therefore not visited, and its features (accessibility, adequacy, …) not assessed.
- The extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens is not yet established, thus has no history: there is no "research output", no "industrial relations", and no programmes have been delivered nor degrees conferred.

Therefore:
- The students, graduates and stakeholders whom the EEC met with were from UNIC — and, specifically, were not from UNIC-Athens
- Except for the (future) president of UNIC-Athens, all governance representatives, for both the University, the School of Science, and the Department, were from UNIC — and, specifically, were not from UNIC-Athens.
- Neither of the Director of the School of Sciences at Athens, the Director of the extension of the Department at Athens, and the Program Coordinators for the two BSc programmes have not been appointed — and, consequently, the EEC has not been able to meet with them and get their vision and feedback on any of the areas being evaluated in this report.
- The Administrative staff serving UNIC-Athens has not been recruited and, therefore, the EEC has not been able to meet with them and get their vision and feedback on any of the areas being evaluated in this report.

As a consequence:
- While the EEC is cognisant that it is evaluating the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, many of the findings and recommendations in this report are based on observations from the Department and from UNIC. The EEC notes that the unanimous message from everyone, from the leadership to faculty members and administrative personnel, was that UNIC-Athens would be operated as a "mirror" of UNIC, and that the extension of the Department would be operated as a "mirror" of the department. The EEC therefore believes that our observations and recommendations will be valid for UNIC-Athens and for the extension of the Department therein.

The EEC did meet with the representatives from UNIC to whom the Director of the School of Sciences at Athens, the Director of the extension of the Department at Athens, and the Program Coordinators for the two BSc programmes will be reporting (respectively, the Dean, the Head of the Department, and the Program directors at UNIC).

Four faculty members have been identified, who will assume positions at UNIC-Athens — and the EEC met with three of them, in person.

The EEC also met with the administrative staff (Registrar, Library, Campus and Health, Advising, Admissions) at UNIC, whose services will be "mirrored" in UNIC-Athens, once recruitments have taken place, and whose efforts will be called upon to get these mirrored services "off the ground".

The EEC appreciated the discussions that it had with members of the governing board of both UNIC and UNIC-Athens, and with members of the teaching and administration staff who assisted in the presentation and delivery of the programmes of study.

In particular, from among university, school, and Department management, the EEC met with P. Pouyioutas (Rector), P. Angelides (Vice Rector of Academic Affairs), D. Drikakis (Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering, UNIC), M. Nestoros (Associate Dean of the School of Sciences an Engineering, UNIC), A. Stassopoulou (Head of the Department, UNIC), P. Scandalakis (President UNIC-Athens), N. Ioannides (Director of Academic Affairs, UNIC), V. Stylianou (Programme director, BSc in Computer Science, UNIC), D. Trihnias (Programme director, BSc in Data Science, Athens).

The ECC also met with L. Agathokleous (Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs), A. Antonaras (VP of Student Services, UNIC), N. Gkonis (Campus and Health Director, UNIC), C. Theocleous (Director of Academic Advicing, UNIC), M. Charalambous (Director of Library, UNIC), M. Panayiotou (Registrar, UNIC), P. Lyroni (Senior Admissions Officer, UNIC), E. Aloizou (Senior Admissions Officer, UNIC) .

From among the network of industrial partners of UNIC, the ECC met with M. Agathocleous (Director of AI and Data Science, AC Goldman Solutuins and services), E. Erodotou (Business Analysis and Optimisation, Hellenic Bank Cyprus), D. Kotzias (Software Engineer, Google Brain), I. Partalas (Principal ML Scientist, Expedia), N. Louloudes (CTO TRG Research and Development), and K. Kosta (Head of Security, ISFX Financian).

The EEC wishes to express its gratitude to these staff members and external stakeholders for having made themselves available, and for engaging in intense, deep, and constructive discussions and exchanges.

Finally, the EEC had the privilege to meet with a set of students and graduates from the BSc programmes in Computer Science and Data Science at UNIC — respectively. This provided us with — in additional to insights on the programme structure and "academic" attractiveness — valuable insights in the experience of being a student in a programme in the Department at UNIC.

Another team from the CYQAA were visiting the construction site of the future building being home to UNIC-Athens — and were providing photos of the construction site. In view of the state of the construction site, the EEC determined that the site visit would be superflorous at this stage as one could not evaluate the adequacy of the facilities, and therefore requested that this site visit be removed from the agenda.

Two days prior to the site visit, and by way of the Ms. Kazakaiu from CYQAA, the EEC shared an extensive list of requested information and documents with UNIC/UNIC-Athens. The EEC wishes to express its gratitude to the presenters during the sessions of the site-visit, who had made last-minute changes to their presentations, to provide us with the information requested.

The EEC was granted access to all the information, and to all the people/stakeholders, that we requested, from UNIC-Athens. The students and graduates, from the programmes being assessed, were thoughtful and respectful in their comments — and patience with the numerous questions, whose answers greatly helped in writing this report.

The EEC wishes to thank both the officers from the CYQAA and the personnel from UNIC-Athens, for making the site visit both pleasant and informative.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Thomas Heide Clausen	Professor (Chair)	Ecole Polytechnique, FR
Damal K. Arvind	Professor (Member)	University of Edinburgh, UK
Mykola Pechenizkiy	Professor (Member)	Eindhoven University of Technology, NL
Yiannis Zapitis	Professional Body Representative (Member)	Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK)
Elina Mavrikiou	Student (Student Member)	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:	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:*
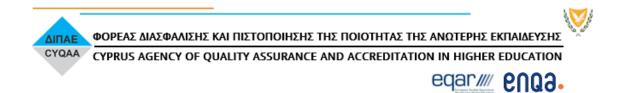
<u>Findings</u>

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

<u>Strengths</u>

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

<u>Areas of improvement and recommendations</u>

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

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- *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. **Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)**
2. **Connecting with society**
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.	4
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	3
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	3
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.	4
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

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.	5
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.	5

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

Click to enter text.

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.	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.	4

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

Click to enter text.

Additionally, write:
- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

The programmes expect, each, to take 50 students — for a steady-state of 400 students once both programmes have been running for 4 years. The distribution of students among countries-of-origin is unknown since the first cohort has yet to be recruited.

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Findings

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

- The Department has existed, and has offered successful courses in Computer Science, since 2007
- The faculty members of the Department are energetic, dedicated, enthusiastic, and committed
- Being a small Department, decisions are made in a collegial and democratic manner- although not always consensual
- The Department describes its mission statement in high-level terms: to deliver quality education, to engage in high-impact research, to attract grant funding, and to contribute to society.
- The Department counts a balanced number of full professors, and faculty members of junior ranks
- The extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens counts 4 faculty members, with a projected recruitment of another 6 over the next years.
- The Department has a group of industry professionals associated, whom it calls upon in an ad-hoc fashion, for ensuring the relevance of the programmes that it delivers. Some of them also lecture at the university.
- Faculty members talk regularly, but informally, with this group of industry professionals. One of the stakeholders that the EEC met expressed *"I think I was on an advisory board, but I am not sure if I still am, since I haven't been called to meet with them for a year or so."*
- The Department organises hackathons and delivers webinars on "hot topics" for non-specialist audiences.
- The Department counts 17 faculty member, including 7 full professors.
- The Department counts 4 female faculty members, 2 of whom are full professors (who also assure the Department leadership), and one experienced associate professor.

- Faculty members and students reported that students carrying a full course-load have 15 hours of courses "contact hours" per week — to which the students reported working, on average, about 10h out-of-class on homework, exercises, assignments, and self-study. A semester is 14 weeks, therefore a total number for completing a Bachelors degree involves:
  - Contact Hours: 15h * 14 weeks * 2 semesters * 4 years = 1680h
  - Student-Work-Hours: 25h * 14 weeks *2 semesters * 4 years = 2800 h

- The course listings in the material submitted for the two Bachelors programmes detail the number of contact hours (in class) for each of the programmes thus:
  - BSc-DS: ((31 * 35 * 56) + (6 * 49 * 56))/ 60 = 1287 h
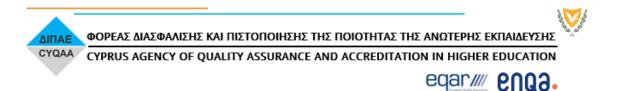 - BSc-CS: ((34 * 35 * 56) + (6 * 49 * 56))/60   = 1385 h

Strengths

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

- By way of its outreach activities targeting high-schools, the Department is making active efforts at attracting future students to its programmes.
- The website of the Department is clear and informative about its activities (both research and teaching).
- The EEC appreciates that the Department has several senior associate and full professors ensuring intellectual leadership, and is particularly encouraged to see that it manages to attract and promote female faculty members.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- While the EEC appreciates that the Department has several senior associate and full professors ensuring intellectual leadership, and is particularly encouraged to see that it manages to attract and promote female faculty members, it strongly encourages that recruitments / promotions into positions at UNIC-Athens maintains that trajectory towards gender balance.

- The Department mission statement is somewhat generic — thus, difficult to disagree with, but also impossible to measure the Department performance against. The EEC would recommend that the department collectively reflects on a more specific, ambitious, and quantifiable strategic vision for the next 5+ years. This could, for example, include ambitions of increasing visibility through organising a major international conference on one of the campuses ; of ensuring that at least 30% of the faculty members spend a semester on sabbatical abroad over the next 5 years, so as to widen your international academic network ; of establishing an "industrial PhD programme" to increase joint academic/industrial research; or ensuring that 20% of your BSc-graduates participate in research as evidenced by joint authorship with faculty. The EEC insists that this list of suggestions is not prescriptive, but intended to inspire reflections among the colleagues within the Department on *"where you want to be in 5 years time"?*

- The Department has not structured its industry representatives into a formal "industrial advisory board" and does not call upon them in a structured and regular fashion. The EEC suggests that organising a formal advisory board, convening them regularly and more frequently than when re-accreditation is needed, and proactively soliciting their input, would be beneficial.

- In view of the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, the EEC suggests that formally establishing an UNIC-Athens-specific "Industrial Advisory Board" may be an efficient way of creating and fostering strong connections with local industry (thus, employers/sponsors, and potential research collaborations) — especially if it is convened regularly (say, once per semester or year).

- The EEC has examined the ECTS credit assignments for the courses in the programme. As a reminder, one ECTS credit corresponds to, on average, 27.5h of "student work hours". This includes lectures, labs, homework, and reading/studying before/after class.

  o A 4-year programme that amounts to 240 ECTS credits corresponds to about 6600 hours of "student-work-time". This, according to the findings listed (number of self-study hours reported by the students, the number of hours/week, and the number of total hours reported in the tables in the documents submitted for accreditation of the respective programmes) leads to the following inconsistencies:

    ▪ Students reported to spend 2800h of "student-work-hours" to complete the program — which corresponds to only about 42% of the required number of student-work-hours required for a Bachelors degree

    ▪ Assuming that for each "contact hour", a student also spends 1 hour on "studying outside of class" (which is 50% more than the students that the EEC met reported), that would mean that the total number of student-work-hours to obtain a Bachelors degree would be:
      • For the BSc-DS: 2575h — which corresponds to only 39% of the hours required.
      • For the BSc-CS: 2768 h — which,, corresponds to only 42% of the hours required.

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o The EEC has also examined closely the descriptions of a selection of courses offered in the two programmes in detail. Each of these courses grants 6 ECTS credits — and which, therefore should correspond to 165h of student-work-hours. For the courses examined, and in comparison to what the ECC has seen in other institutions in Europe for courses of similar or identical content, the number of ECTS credits assigned appear inconsistent. This observation is in agreement with the previous calculations.

o With this in mind, the EEC *__strongly__* recommends that the Department re-evaluates each of the courses and their descriptions in the two programmes, and ensure stronger alignment between the course contents and the number of ECTS credits that they contribute to the degree, according to European standards.

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

Sub-area	*Non-compliant /* *Partially Compliant / Compliant*
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Partially 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
1. System and quality assurance strategy **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.	3
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	4
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	4
	2.1.4.2 Research	4
	2.1.4.3 The connection with society	4
	2.1.4.4 Management and support services	4
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	5

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

Click to enter text.

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.	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.	4
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.	4
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.	4

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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	N/A
	2.2.12.2 Library	N/A
	2.2.12.3 Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	N/A
	2.2.12.4 Technological infrastructure	N/A
	2.2.12.5 Academic support	N/A
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.	4

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

The UNIC-Athens building is still being constructed, and the EEC was therefore unable to examine sub-area 2.2.13. The EEC was also not invited to evaluate the doctoral programmes, which explain the N/A for subareas 2.2.17-2.2.18-2.2.19.

Findings

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

- The UNIC-Athens University, School and Department have QA documentation for each of the 3 levels, inherited from UNIC.
- Faculty members at UNIC-Athens have no representation in the Faculty Senate of UNIC — however are subject to the decisions of the Faculty Senate of UNIC.
- New faculty members undergo a 12-week onboarding programme, offering training in pedagogics, teaching operations, etc.
- The Department leadership, as well as programme leadership includes a strong female representation.

- The curriculum change and update process of the Department is ad-hoc, and is largely taking place over email.
- As indicated in the introduction, the EEC cannot offer comment on the physical infrastructure and facilities such as libraries, computer systems, laboratory spaces, recreational spaces, catering facilities and conformance with disability regulations as the building was still under construction at the time of the site visit.
- No incidents of intolerance, bullying, etc., were reported. Furthermore, when questioned on the topic, students indicated no hesitation as to what processes to engage with, and where to find relevant information and assistance, should they be victim or witness such incidents.
- Exams, and their markings by junior or Adjunct faculty members are systematically reviewed by a senior faculty members.
- Exams are marked by the instructors and course leaders for a given course — except in the case of a grade appeal, where they are also marked by an independent faculty member. The exams are not anonymised.
- Courses clearly indicate significant information such as the name of the instructor, the syllabus, the division of marks between coursework, mid-term and final exams. Students indicated that this meant that they generally did not have any doubts as to their expected performances and grades at the finals in a course.
- Students were appreciative that grades and feedback for assignments and exams were provided within two weeks of the assignment/exam.

Strengths

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

- The EEC finds the commitment to teaching proficiency evidenced by the faculty on-boarding programme for incoming faculty members.
- The Head of the Department of Computer Science and others in leadership roles such as Degree Co-ordinators are female — which is commendable as role models for gender balance in STEM subjects.
- During our conversations with stakeholders, the EEC was reassured that the QA policy of the department, in terms of grade fairness and predictability of student outcomes, is effective. The EEC is reassured that the policy ensured no reported incidents of intolerance, or bullying against students or staff.

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 finds the proposed structure for the relationship between UNIC-Athens and UNIC with respect to Senate representation to be inherently unfair. The EEC recommends that they reflect on how UNIC-Athens faculty members be granted representation on the Faculty Senate. Without being prescriptive this can, for example, allowing the Academic Council of UNIC-Athens to nominate or elect representatives or observers
- The EEC notes that while an ad-hoc curriculum change process over email may be passable in a small and tightly-knit department, it has both scalability and tractability issues. As the Department is creating an extension at UNIC-Athens that will be delivering the same programmes, a formalisation of the curriculum change processes is recommended. The EEC notes that rather than being an ad-hoc process, curriculum updates be done at regular and scheduled intervals (for example: at the end of a semester) for programs that need it , and be done in a more formal process through submission of a written proposal by the course leader, for approval by a given date. The EEC further recommends that mechanisms be put in place to record curriculum updates and ensure that all courses be examined and reviewed regularly. The EEC suggests that this, for example, can be through formalising feedback to all courses by stakeholders (graduates, students, industrial partners, faculty members) by soliciting at least every 3 years on a rolling schedule.

- The EEC suggests that it would increase fairness and further reduce potential biases, if exams and assignments were anonymised, and/or graded by a 2nd grader.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
1. System and quality assurance strategy	Compliant
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.	4
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.	4
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.	4
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	4
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.	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.	4

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

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.

- The teaching faculty have regular Departmental meetings in which academic decisions are reached collectively.
- The Department is run in a collegiate fashion and works as a cohesive unit.
- The teaching staff and students are supported by centralised administrative units which provide support for Admissions, Library, Computing infrastructure, Human Resources, Mental wellbeing
- The Department has a well-defined procedure in place for dealing with plagiarism with the involvement of the Head of department in serious cases.
- Support is provided for international matters such as Erasmus mobility programmes and recruitment of overseas students.
- The University has established links with the Greek Ministry of Migration to support overseas students with visa issues.

Strengths

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

- The Department takes pride that decisions are reached in meetings in a democratic fashion after due discussion (see Areas of Improvement).
- The Department has a petition system in place for students who wish their performance in examinations to be reviewed within one month of the release of the marks. Students have access to their scripts and can discuss the marking decisions with their instructors.

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

- Whereas it is a virtue that academic matters are deliberated in open meetings, it could also result in decisions being stalled due to lack of agreement. For example, the introduction of Machine Learning as a compulsory course in the early years has been debated but a decision to implement this move has been postponed. On occasions the department needs to be decisive in reaching decisions promptly based on academic merit, especially when the Department is distributed in different locations.

- The Department should consider appointing a Departmental Academic Misconduct Officer who will review issues of academic misconduct such as plagiarism and free the Head to concentrate on strategic decisions.

- The Department should consider marketing their courses more widely to attract overseas students from Europe, Middle East and Africa to augment student numbers on the course.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
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**

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

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.	3
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	3
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).	3
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.	4
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	3
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	
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.	N/A
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.	4
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.	4

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

- A curriculum committee exists within the department, which is consulted when designing, and changing, program curricula. With respect to these two programmes, curriculum sub-committees exist. This "curriculum committee" monitors the ACM curriculum models, monitor the "competition" from other programmes within the field, and seeks input — in an ad-hoc fashion — from external stakeholders and alumni.

- Proposed changes to specific program or course curricula are reviewed by at least 2 relevant full-time faculty members. There are no documented, formal, format for submitting proposals for changes to the curriculum committee.

- Any programmes delivered by the Department are evaluated and approved by this curriculum committee.

- Any programmes delivered by the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens will be "mirrors" of programs delivered by the Department at UNIC, and therefore will have been subject to the curriculum committee

- Programmes are reviewed and refreshed on a schedule synchronised to the (re)accreditation processes, i.e., every ~2 years (when submitting a CYQAA accreditation application, and when responding to a CYQAA EEC report).

- The EEC found that some courses in the programmes were not obviously at their place, at least not as described in the provided material: they didn't appear to build upon prerequisites from previous courses ; they did not provide prerequisites for subsequent courses; or they did not contribute to learning objectives for the programmes.

- The EEC found that other courses appeared — for want of a better word — outdated and of less relevance in 2025. Students and external stakeholders brought up — unprompted — concordant observations.

- In discussions with the faculty members present, the EEC learned that some concepts that we had thought missing from the programs were, in fact, covered — sometimes scattered among several courses, sometimes within a single course without being explicitly indicated.

- Through discussions with students and graduates, the EEC learned that some courses were too "unbalanced": providing a good theoretical coverage, but less exercises and "hands on" experiences that would have been helpful. As an example, some courses which have a high degree of practical applicability were reportedly comprising just a single hour of "lab exercises".

- While not a finding directly related to this particular area, the EEC wants to insist both external stakeholders, graduates, and students, affirmed that the faculty members were extremely attentive and reactive to the students.

Strengths

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

- Students appreciate receiving timely elaborate feedback on their work.

- Students appreciate availability of teaching staff for face-to-face meetings.

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 would like to start by insisting that it is convinced that the faculty members are committed to delivering quality education, as confirmed by students, graduates, and stakeholders. These "areas of improvement" are, therefore intended to be collegial and friendly suggestions from peers who wish to see the programmes at UNIC-Athens succeed as much as the current faculty members.

- The EEC observes that it is normal for courses to evolve over time: new concepts emerge and take priority, and the relevance of others may fade. In some topics, for courses that have been long-running, it is almost inevitable that their content currently has little to do with what the original course description stipulated.

  To accommodate this, the EEC strongly suggests putting in place a systematic and periodic process, which: (i) updates course descriptions to be authentic to the content being delivered, including the learning outcomes and key concepts, (ii) internally within the department audits that the descriptions are accurate, (iii) solicit external stakeholder feedback for these course description — for example, using a two-phased approach by first asking "For a course with the title XXXX, what content/concepts/buzz-words would you expect to see

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that would be applicable in your lab/company/organisation?", and then asking "does this course description match your expectations for the course XXXX?". And, of course, (iv) finally take the feedback into account in updating the course description and/or the course, in a tractable way.

- The EEC would also recommend that, as part of that process, the department considers the proportions of "theory" and "hands-on/lab exercises" for each course. While we fully recognise that it is much more time-consuming to construct, and execute, practicals than it is to "teach theory", we believe that it would add immense value to the programmes of the department — and, in any event, was strongly solicited by students and external stakeholders.

In its evaluation of the Department, the EEC does not provide specific guidance or suggestions for which courses/ programmes are in most in need of revisions. Rather, the EEC recommends that the department establishes a process for systematically reviewing the courses as indicated above — as well as a periodic process for maintaining the courses current and with sufficient coverage, in order to address the "partially compliant" evaluation for sub-area 4.1.

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

Sub-area	*Non-compliant /* *Partially Compliant / Compliant*
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	Partially 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.	3
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.	NA
5.5 The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	N/A
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.	3
5.8 Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5

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

Click to enter text.

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.

- The Department extension at UNIC-Athens is currently composed by four faculty members. This includes one full professor, one assistant professor and two currently unranked faculty members. They cover several expertise areas such as data mining, machine learning, biostatistics, time series modelling, and data management.
- The EEC observes that the current plan is to hire two additional member every year, growing the Athens branch to 10 faculty members in support of the BSc in CS and the BSc in DS.
- EEC estimates that the current faculty members of the Department, both within UNIC and UNIC-Athens, have the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects.

- The EEC identified several apparent inconsistencies between the presentations during the visit and the material submitted in requesting the evaluation and accreditation. As such, the EEC is not sure what specialised courses will be offered in the proposed programmes, and how those are mapped to the expertise areas of the to be hired faculty members, for example:
  o In the submitted material for the BSc-DS programme, there is a confusion about the NLP course appearing under both the codes COMP-448 and COMP-348.
  o More precisely, in the submitted material for the BSc-DS programme, on page 44, COMP-448 Natural Language Processing appears to be linked to the competencies of hire F9 — which is a profile with with expertise in Machine Learning / Deep Learning / NLP. However on p. 49 COMP-448 corresponds to Computer Vision (Elective). On p 48, Natural Language Processing appears under COMP-348.

- The EEC also identified several apparent inconsistencies between the profiles of the projected faculty member recruitment for the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, and the profiles of the programmes that the extension of the Department will be proposing, for example:
  o In the presentation of the BSc-DS programme given during the site visit, NLP was listed as one of the Specialised cross-domain major electives. However, it does not appear in the competences of the to be hired faculty F9 (or anyone else's). Instead, the Computer vision course under 448 is linked to the expertise of F9.
  o Neither NLP nor Computer vision are listed in the Curriculum Alignment Matrix making it difficult to disambiguate what electives will be effectively offered to students, in person, by a faculty member in UNIC-Athens.
- It was not clear to EEC whether new hires should be strong in, for example, the theory of machine learning or their applications to real-world problems.

- The EEC observed that there is no plan in place for visiting and adjunct Professors, special teaching staff and special scientists.
- The EEC observed, from the presentations given, examples of guest lecturers from industry for specific applicative topics.
- The EEC notes that in a steady-state situation after the first three years there will be about 400 students actively enrolled in the two programmes (BSc-CS and BSc-DS) at UNIC-Athens — supported by 10 faculty members. This would result in a Student-to-Staff-Ratio (SSR) of 40:1.

- The EEC detected an ambiguity regarding the program management, notably whether the two programmes will be managed by, and the faculty supported by, by programme coordinators physically at UNIC-Athens:
    o In the written material submitted in requesting the evaluation and accreditation, the two positions as "program coordinators" for the BSc-CS and BSc-DS programmes were listed as "not yet appointed"
    o During the site-visit, the presentations of the two programmes were given by the current programme coordinators for the programmes at UNIC — who were also part of the session of the site-visit otherwise labeled "**ONLY** with <u>members of the teaching staff</u> **on each course**" (emphasis from the site-visit agenda), suggesting that the two programme coordinators would be part of the full-time and permanent UNIC-Athens faculty.
    o Yet, in the presentations of the department and of the programmes, these two programme coordinators were not listed as faculty members at UNIC-Athens.

Strengths

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

- The currently identified UNIC-Athens faculty members are active researchers in their fields. They conduct application-inspired research aiming to make societal impact. They contribute to Open Science, e.g., by publishing open datasets that can foster research development on societally important topics notably, in healthcare.
- There are indicators of a very good faculty–student engagement within the Department
- There are indicators of a very good engagement between Alumni and the Department
- Faculty members are well-informed about quality assurance aspects including individual course improvement, and with how to deal with potential misconduct of students.
- Faculty members is well-informed about the student safety aspects.
- The Department provides mentorship for new hires, and informs them about expectation for promotion to higher ranks.
- New hires may apply for, and can obtain, an UNIC Seed-grant.

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 estimates that the current plan to start with 4 faculty members at UNIC-Athens, and to then hire two additional faculty members annually until reaching 10, is risky — especially in terms of ensuring timely and sufficient support for the the two BSc programmes that are opening, and with the projected student intake of 50/year/programme. While the EEC recognises that this staffing plan may satisfy legal requirements, the EEC considers that there are clear risks to not having enough well-qualified staff in place to deliver the programmes at the quality that is expected, and to contribute to evolving the programme as the state-of-the-art advances. Consequently, the EEC recommends — and recognising that the financial aspects are a factor — that insofar as it is possible, the faculty recruitment be accelerated in order to mitigate these risks.

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- The EEC considers the SSR of 40:1 that will result after 3 years of operation to be unreasonably high by European standards. It is also EEC's understanding that the CYQAA recommends to aspire to maintain a much lower (single-digit) SSR. Consequently, the EEC recommends reflections on how to ameliorate the SSR.

- The EEC recommends that the faculty profiles sought, in view of the teaching requirements and the inconsistencies in the presentation indicated under findings, be clarified, and the profiles clearly described.

- Cognisant of the realities of the labour market, and the profiles that make for attractive hires both for academia and from industry, the EEC notes that it may be difficult to hire experts in deep learning, generative AI, and modern NLP with short notice. The EEC urges UNIC-Athens to consider opening positions and to start scouting for qualified educators (with PhD and publication track record in deep learning, generative AI, and modern NLP) as soon as the financial situation allows. An alternative plan could be to grow local talent at UNIC (*e.g.,* through proposing PhD fellowships within these fields), specifically targeting recruitment at UNIC-Athens.

- The EEC also recommends inviting experienced Visiting Professors to help develop an effective strategy implementing the research strategy and educational vision of the department, within these areas. Such a personality may also be a vehicle to attract qualified faculty for specialised courses, and to boost research productivity through international collaboration.

- In the experience of the EEC members, it takes time to develop a robust and vibrant ecosystem within a department, including postdocs, PhDs, teaching assistants. The EEC recommends taking full advantage of the incredible chance that it has to recruit 6 new faculty members over the next years, to establish an ambitious vision for how to develop this vibrant ecosystem over the next five year period. Such an ambitious vision could, for example, include a plan for establishing well-equipped labs and shared facilities (possibly in partnership with industrial partners) ; support grant acquisition (via your European network) ; foster a strong research culture from faculty and students alike and encourage/reward publication in top-tier venues — and facilitate active conference participation. Aligning such a vision with the recruitment strategy for these new colleagues — the EEC humbly suggests — may increase the chances of hiring faculty with strong research records and/or high potential.

- Aligned with the recommendations to develop a vibrant research ecosystem, the EEC suggests that a new university branch may also be an opportunity to develop trailblazing pedagogies and a rich portfolio of teaching methods — and to this end, respectfully suggests providing pedagogical training beyond the current requirement (*e.g.,* flipped classrooms, challenged-based learning, research-based education, …).

- Finally, the EEC strongly recommends that the situation of the program coordinators be clarified and that the teaching staff in the BSc-CS and BSc-DS programmes be supported by program coordinators, who are members of, and located at, the faculty at UNIC-Athens.

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

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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.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	4
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.	N/A

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

- The research policy of the department is: 40-40-20 for teaching-research-admin by default. 40% teaching translates to 12-15 contact hours of teaching per week.
- The department mission is to engage in high-impact research in the fields that drive the 4th Industrial revolution. The department has three key research areas and three corresponding labs: AI Lab, Mobile Systems Lab, and Informatics Security Lab. Based on the discussion, the EEC understands that the recruitment strategy for UNIC Athens is aligned with these three areas to maintain focus and facilitate mentorship.
- Despite the considerable teaching load, the faculty members are all active researchers in their fields. They are also active in their research communities through serving on editorial boards, organizing workshops, and participating in various program/organizing/advisory committees at the national and European levels.
- They participate in the outreach activities. They contribute to open science.

- The EEC could not inspect whether the department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities as the building had not been finished yet by the time of the visit and laboratories not equipped. There were also no plans presented for what and how the labs would be equipped.
- The department management and support staff demonstrated confidence that the facilities will be ready some weeks before the start of the semester. The EEC did not see any contingency plans for what to do if this is not the case.

- The faculty members publish to a satisfactory extent in peer reviewed international journals and conference proceedings. It is commendable, that at UNIC faculty members also publish regularly jointly with BSc and MSc students they supervise, and the EEC assumes that this will be strongly encouraged and supported at UNIC-Athens.
- The department encourages students and staff to follow the open access policy – where possible, publications are put in open access formally or to arXiv. Digital copies of students' theses are made publicly available through the library.

- Incorporating research findings into the curriculum to provide students with up-to-date knowledge and practical experience is part of the departments mission statement. The EEC was not presented with concrete evidence that the Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching. Based on the analysis of the current educational program curricula and course syllabi the EEC observed that the students might be exposed to the recent research advances in the area only occasionally as the courses offered are mostly at a fundamentals/introductory level.

- The EEC could not assess the external, non-governmental funding of research activities of teaching staff at UNIC-Athens, as the department is not yet in place. However the funding attracted by the corresponding department UNIC-Athens, is exclusively public/governmental. Similarly, the EEC could not assess the policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff. The home department

established a seed grant for which newly appointed faculty members can apply. So far only one member applied and got it (in Nicosia).

Strengths

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

- The academic staff is active in research, serves on the relevant committee and engages into outreach activities, despite of the heavy teaching load.
- The faculty members are moderately successful in attracting European funding.
- The faculty members published jointly with MSc and BSc students at UNIC. (And EEC encourages to transfer this practice to UNIC-Athens).

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 encourages the Department to develop their research mission and vision — and a strategy for achieving them.
- The EEC encourages faculty members to engage stronger in research collaborations with industry, including co-publications with industrial partners and bring this research collaboration more actively into education.
- The EEC encourages a stronger reflection on the alignment between research policy and recruitment policy. This can help to increase synergies between research and teaching.
- The EEC encourages the Department to develop a strategy for helping students to acquire research skills .
- The EEC encourages the Department to stimulate top quality research and targeting A/A* ranked venues in computer science and data science and/or venues with higher visibility in application domains for its dissemination.
- The EEC strongly encourages the Department in Athens, when established, to actively seek industrial research funding sources, to be comparable to international CS departments.
- The EEC encourages to establish PhD-TA program and/or internal funding of the research activities such that faculty members have more time and support for research, establishing research collaboration nationally and internationally with other faculty and with industry. In a longer term this should become self-sustained through project development and attracting funding.
- The EEC encourages to establish support for enabling visiting researchers (both incoming and outgoing).

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
Research mechanisms and regulations	Compliant
External and internal funding	N/A
Motives for research	Compliant
Publications	N/A

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

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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.	N/A
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	N/A
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	N/A
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	N/A
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.	N/A
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

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

The department being evaluated at UNIC-Athens does not yet exist.

Findings

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

- The extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens is not yet established, thus is is not possible to give an adequate assessment of the ressources that are available — since they, presently, are non-existent.
- Assuming that the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens will mirror the Department at UNIC, the EEC observed:
  o That the department does have budget-autonomy over research project funding

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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o That the department otherwise does not have an independent budget over which it exercises autonomy

o That expenses outside of those that can be imputed to a research project, are subject to approval centrally through UNIC, via a process that is perceived as bureaucratic.

Strengths

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

- As the extension of the Department is not presently established, no specific strengths can be enumerated

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- As part of the establishment of the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, as it entails yet another layer of bureaucracy between the faculty members and university management, it might be worth considering if a budget, under the authority of the director of the Department at UNIC-Athens, could be provisioned.

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
7. Resources	N/A

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 project of creating a new university branch, and with that extensions of departments and programs, clearly is exciting — and the faculty and admin personnel that the EEC met with during the site visit were all enthusiastic about being part of the project, despite the complications, overhead, and disturbances that it will impose on their professional (and, in view of the transitioning / moving personnel for training new colleagues in Athens, also personal) lives.

The faculty members from the Department at UNIC were committed to accompany and help their future colleagues at the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens succeed — and the future faculty members at UNIC-Athens that we met were likewise optimistic.

In short, the EEC observed, and appreciated, a shared ambition and enthusiasm for this project.

With that being said, the EEC has some hesitations and reservations. First about the people who will commence and carry this adventure at UNIC-Athens. Their quality, enthusiasm, and excellence, are not in question — but their numbers make us worry.

While 4–5 faculty members may appear sufficient to deliver number of classes immediately required the first year of the two BSc programmes, it is suboptimal for creating an academic and scientific environment for initiating a "research university branch", and for providing a "boutique" and "deluxe" environment for the initial cohorts of students. It also does not allow to absorb incidents (for example, if a faculty member becoming incapacitated in some way) without impact on program quality.

Likewise for the technical and administrative staff. As part of the scalability of the administrative processes and systems from UNIC to UNIC-Athens hinges on automation via IT systems, a single full-time IT officer is an unfortunate single point of failure, operationally. This, especially, since the branch will occupy brand new facilities with new IT infrastructure — and the inevitable teething problems.

The two Bachelors programmes that the extension of the Department will deliver at UNIC-Athens already exist at UNIC, where they are well appreciated — by students, external stakeholders, and of course the staff.

The programmes are successful, in as much as that the graduates are employable — however the EEC cautions against that being used as evidence for the programs being ideal: as the presentations made by the Department observed, demand for graduates in CS and DS outstrips the supply. The EEC notes that both the programmes, are in need of refreshing, in order to be comparable to European and internationals standards, both in terms of content, and form — and, to this end, notes that the Department processes for reviewing and updating the programs, and courses, would benefit from being formalised, and regular in place of ad-hoc.

To that end, the external stakeholders expressed a desire to be more regularly involved in the program evolution, formalised through official memberships of the advisory board, and formalisation of periodic review meetings, for example on a 6-month schedule.

The EEC sees the programmes as having clear opportunities for making them more competitive, and more attractive. We found evidence for this from both our instruction of the provided document, and confirmation by the external stakeholders and the students.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Thomas Heide Clausen (chair)	
Damal K. Arvind (member)	
Mykola Pechenizkiy (member)	
Yiannis Zapitis (member)	
Elina Mavrikiou (student member)	
FullName	

Date: 2025-05-31