



Doc. 300.2.2

Institution Response (Institutional Evaluation)

Date: 19/06/2025

- **Higher Education Institution:** UNIC Athens U.L.E.
- **Town:** Athens
- **Institution Status:** New Institution

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.2.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the Institution in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, in the section building facilities, student welfare services, infrastructure, the HEI must respond on the comments and scoring of the EEC.*
- *Under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.2.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

INTRODUCTION

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for its professional and diligent approach in providing constructive feedback and recommendations aimed at further improving the operations of the UNIC Athens campus/branch.

We are extremely pleased to note the introductory and closing remarks of the EEC, which we consider as a recommendation for accreditation of UNIC Athens. We highlight the following two comments, especially the first, drawn from the “Conclusions and Final Remarks” Section:

“In sum, the EEC are delighted to recommend the progression of UNIC Athens as compliant under the CYQAA standards, with the strong wishes for the success of the launch of this academic venture in the coming academic year.”

“The visit and discussions went smoothly, and the EEC were impressed at the considerable operation underway to launch UNIC Athens this year.”

We also note that every area, section, and subsection of the report has been rated by the EEC as **Compliant** and **Satisfactory**, both representing the **highest** possible ratings.

Furthermore, the average numerical score across all assessment areas is **4.53** out of a maximum of **5**. In light of the EEC’s remark, *“It is important to note that some aspects of accreditation cannot be fully verified at this point as the campus and programmes are not yet in action. Where this is the case, the EEC has evaluated the application based on the proposed measures and actions but has been reluctant to award a full award of 5 points as regards the standard.”*, we believe the score would have been even higher had the campus and programmes already been in operation.

In the remainder of this report, we provide, for each section:

1. A list of the strengths noted by the EEC.
2. A list of the EEC’s recommendations together with our responses.

BUILDING FACILITIES - STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES - INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Building facilities

1.1 Plans and licenses

Already submitted with the application.

1.2 Other facilities

Already submitted with the application.

2. Student welfare services

Already submitted with the application.

3. Infrastructure

Already submitted with the application.

1. Institution's Academic Profile and Orientation

Sub-Areas

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

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

- "1) Exceptionally strong and committed visionary leadership, demonstrated through clear strategic direction, alignment with UNIC, and effective coordination across planning areas.*
- 2) Considerable resource investment in infrastructure, staffing, and academic development, ensuring a strong foundation for long-term sustainability and growth.*
- 3) Integration with the University of Nicosia's academic and quality assurance frameworks, allowing for immediate application of tested structures, procedures, and policies.*
- 4) Robust strategic and financial planning, including a detailed two-year growth budget aligned with enrolment projections and institutional goals.*
- 5) Forward-looking recruitment strategy, targeting both high-achieving local and international students through targeted outreach and digital platforms.*
- 6) Commitment to continuous improvement, with mechanisms in place for monitoring quality, staff development, and institutional effectiveness."*

Recommendations and our Response

"While the Institution has laid a solid foundation for its future operations, several areas of improvement have been identified.

- 1) Firstly, institutional information such as the mission statement and full programme details is not yet publicly accessible due to the ongoing development of the website. It is therefore recommended that the Institution ensures the timely completion and regular updating of its website to enhance transparency and accessibility for prospective students and stakeholders."*

The mission statement, together with complete programme information, admission criteria, syllabi, learning outcomes, faculty profiles, and key policies, has now been published on the UNIC Athens website. Specifically, the Mission statement is available at: <https://www.unic.ac.cy/athens/mission/>

The website can be accessed at <https://www.unic.ac.cy/el/athens/> using the password: **UNICathens25**.

Content will continue to be updated regularly so that prospective students and stakeholders have timely and comprehensive information.

- 2) *Moreover, the Institution has not yet formalised an equality and diversity policy. It is notable that there was a lack of gender diversity in the senior management, and this should be acknowledged and reflected upon in order to provide students and staff with a sense of belonging in the academic environment, as well as prospects for career progression. Developing such a policy would promote inclusive recruitment practices and support the formation of a diverse academic environment. In addition, it is recommended that the Institution implement appropriate monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its student recruitment strategies once operations commence. These steps will enhance the Institution's ability to respond dynamically to both internal goals and societal needs.*

We welcome the Committee's observation. While gender balance remains a challenge across Cyprus (a Commissioner for Gender Equality was appointed only recently) due to the short history of the Republic, the University of Nicosia has taken concrete steps to accelerate progress and will extend all measures to the Athens campus from its launch in 2025-2026.

With regards the academic hierarchy we would like to highlight that at national level only 1 of the country's 13 university Rectors and only 1 of the 20+ Vice Rectors are currently female. The University of Nicosia Rectorate, during the period 2016-2021 included a female Vice Rector. It has to be noted that all academic positions (Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans of Schools, Heads of Department) at national level and as per the existing legal framework, are elected not appointed.

We note that currently 2 out of 8 Deans of School and 8 out of 20 Heads of Department are currently female.

We also note that the Registrar (holding one of the highest Academic/Administrative position) is female. Furthermore, at middle level management, female colleagues fill key positions at the Director level (e.g. Library, Finance, International Recruiting). In summary, 26 of 41 middle-level management positions (Director, Head, Manager) are held by female colleagues.

In addition, in its quest to address the practice and implementation of a holistic approach towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), the University of Nicosia has put forward back in 2023 a **Strategy and Action Plan (EDI-SAP) 2024-2029** that seeks to fill in any gaps and uncertainties over how we understand and embrace every single member of our community. UNIC is dedicated to raising awareness among its staff, faculty, students, associates, and partners, by pursuing a set of strategic objectives aimed at promoting equity, safety, security, and embracing the unique qualities of each individual in our University and extended community.

Additionally, the purpose of the Strategic Action Plan 2024-2029 is to offer policy guidance and implementation strategies that address the nexus of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the University of Nicosia (UNIC). By actively pushing for equity principles, UNIC can cultivate greater equality within and beyond its community. The document thoroughly discusses the University's priorities, strategic objectives, and approach to implementing EDI policies and activities in a meaningful manner.

UNIC has also pioneered in its innovative approach, by launching back in 2022 its first **Centre for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI)**. At the same time, our institution remains fully

committed to our vision of positively shaping the world, starting with UNIC, by building bridges between our city and the wider community, engaging with partners nationwide, and sharing our knowledge, experience, and approach with the international community.

All the above-mentioned supporting documents can be found via the following link: <https://www.unic.ac.cy/unic-at-a-glance/university-of-nicosia-gender-equality-plan-gep/>

Below we list two concrete examples which demonstrate UNIC's drive for actively pushing for equity principles hence cultivating greater equality within and beyond its community.

- **NEOLAIA NEOcharter:** A White Paper "Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity" drafted in 2024 and formally ratified in May 2025 by all the Rectors of the nine members of the **NEOLAIA** European Universities Alliance <https://neolaiacampus.eu/diversity-and-inclusion/neocharter/>. The Charter has officially come into force in June 2025 and will remain in force until December 2027 indicating the strong commitment of NEOLAIA and the University of Nicosia in Diversity and Inclusion. <https://neolaiacampus.eu/neolaia-european-universities-alliance-gathered-in-ostrava-czechia-to-strengthen-cooperation-and-sign-the-neocharter-on-diversity-and-inclusion/>
- **Athena Swan Charter:** a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research. Established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment, the Charter is now being used across the globe to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women: Athena Swan Charter | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk). **Athena Swan Cyprus** is a wide initiative with other academic institutions in Cyprus and UNIC is currently in the pilot phase.

We remain fully committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion across all UNIC Athens operations. The EDI Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually, its metrics incorporated into each School's planning cycle, and progress reported to the Governing Board, ensuring that the campus not only meets but progressively raises the standard for gender balance and inclusive practice in Cyprus and beyond.

- 3) *"Although the Institution aims to attract international students, the emphasis on English- medium instruction could be further strengthened to increase global appeal and ensure alignment with international academic trends. Additionally, while external stakeholders appear to play a key role in shaping strategic direction, their ongoing involvement in quality assurance processes remains limited. The Institution is encouraged to establish structured and continuous feedback mechanisms with external partners, graduates, and employers to ensure the relevance and continuous improvement of its programmes."*

We appreciate and agree with the Committee's comment on the importance of further increasing our global appeal and aligning more closely with international academic trends by expanding our English-language programme offerings.

Of the 13 programmes planned, 9 are scheduled for immediate delivery in English, while 2, Psychology and Pharmacy, initially planned to be offered in Greek, are expected to be offered in English in the near future. At the same time, the continued offering of certain programmes in

Greek reflects the campus's commitment to meeting domestic demand and providing Greek students with the opportunity to study in their native language.

As the campus grows, we will continue to prioritise the development of additional programmes delivered in English, ensuring a balanced offering that appeals to both international and local audiences.

With regard to the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance processes, we fully acknowledge that there is room to further strengthen and formalise structured feedback mechanisms with external partners, graduates, and employers. At the same time, we would like to clarify that external stakeholder input is already embedded in our quality assurance framework through the Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP), as outlined in Chapter 3 of the UNIC Athens Internal Regulations. The IPEP is a detailed, two-year process conducted within each five-year accreditation cycle. It begins 18 months after a programme's accreditation and concludes 18 months before its reaccreditation. It is designed to evaluate the programme's performance against strategic objectives, internal KPIs, and external benchmarks.

Each IPEP involves both an Internal Team of Reviewers (ITR) and an External Team of Reviewers (ETR). The ETR consists of one academic from another university with expertise in the relevant discipline, and one expert from industry or the labour market, where applicable. The evaluation includes a review of teaching, learning, and assessment materials, programme content, student outcomes, and available resources. It also incorporates feedback collected from faculty, students, graduates, and external experts, providing a broad evidence base.

Feedback from external stakeholders is collected using structured evaluation forms provided by the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), ensuring alignment with national standards and reinforcing our commitment to a systematic, standards-based review process.

We believe these mechanisms meaningfully support programme relevance and continuous improvement, and we remain committed to enhancing them further in line with the Committee's feedback.

- 4) *"Furthermore, while academic staff recruitment and development planning are in place, the full implementation of professional development policies is still pending. Clearly articulating and operationalising these procedures will help ensure that staff receive ongoing support and training aligned with institutional priorities. Lastly, as the Institution has not yet begun full academic operations, internal mechanisms for programme delivery and quality assurance remain untested. It is therefore advisable to conduct internal audits and pilot evaluations in the early stages of implementation to identify any potential issues and support continuous quality enhancement."*

We appreciate the Committee's feedback. The faculty-recruitment, development and evaluation framework set out in Chapter 6 of UNIC Athens Internal Regulations is taken directly from the model that has supported academic staff at the University of Nicosia's main campus, giving the branch a tested foundation from the outset.

UNIC Athens therefore starts with a mature system that offers structured induction and mentoring for new hires, annual performance reviews combining self-assessment, peer

observation and student feedback, and clear opportunities for research time release, conference participation and sabbatical leave. Together, these measures create a culture of steady professional growth aligned with institutional priorities and international good practice.

Once classes commence, every programme will be subject to the Annual Programme Evaluation cycle during its first year, followed by the broader Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP) that brings in both internal reviewers and external academic or industry experts. These early reviews will show how the policies work in practice and allow any necessary adjustments to be made promptly, keeping continuous quality enhancement on track from day one.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-Areas

2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

2.2 Ensuring quality for the programmes of study

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

"1) Strong culture of quality fostered through the Campus Internal Quality Assurance Committee (CIQAC), with inclusive stakeholder participation and regular audits.

2) Academic staff will receive training in innovative teaching strategies, digital literacy, and inclusive pedagogies to ensure ongoing methodological effectiveness.

3) The provision for a comprehensive and well-resourced support across all key infrastructure and student services areas is adequate, accessible, and actively supports learning and inclusion."

Recommendations and our Response

"The EEC identified no significant problem areas. However, a number of areas of focus are provided below as constructive feedback:"

1) *"Systematise data analysis to promote its integration into regular collaboration with programme directors to support evidence-based programme improvements".*

We appreciate the Committee's comment on embedding systematic data analysis into routine programme management. According to its current policies and procedures, UNIC Athens will collect key evidence streams, student evaluations, progression statistics, graduate and employer surveys, and external-examiner reports. These inputs are summarised for Programme Coordinators and feed into each programme's Annual Evaluation cycle.

To enhance both the coverage and usability of the evidence collected, we are developing a new, AI-powered student information system called *"Evo/ve"*. The platform will interconnect all university systems, including the learning platform (Moodle), the faculty and student intranet *"UNIC Portal"*, which provides educational statistics and learning analytics, and the CRM software used to process admission forms. When live, this system will allow Programme Coordinators/Heads of Department and Deans of School to view consolidated dashboards of admissions, engagement and attainment data, feedback, ahead of each programme-board meeting, making it easier to agree evidence-based adjustments to curriculum, assessments and support services. In this way, the existing quality-assurance framework is reinforced with richer, real-time data.

- 2) *“Ensure that the training provided to academic staff in innovative teaching methodologies is effectively transferred into classroom practice, with greater implementation of active learning strategies such as problem-based learning, case studies, group work, and interactive teaching formats (it is not shown in the description of the courses).”*

We would like to clarify that we already apply diverse and innovative teaching and learning methods in all our programs, since we greatly value their importance and contribution in improving learning environments and learning outcomes. For example, Problem Based Learning (PBL) is systematically used in our Medical programme, simulation exercises and mock trials are used in our Law programme, and case studies and group work are used in all our programmes. We would also like to highlight that the above teaching methods are covered in detail in the “UNIC Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice” (a 36-hour professional development seminar for Faculty in the areas of contemporary teaching methods and new technologies in learning). Furthermore, every academic year we offer additional training sessions on the applications of innovative interactive and collaborative technologies in teaching and learning.

We also take on board the excellent recommendation of the EEC and we will engage in the process of updating our course outlines to reflect the use of project and problem-based learning, case studies, group and collaborative work, and interactive teaching formats, where appropriate.

- 3) *“Enhance feedback loops from alumni and employers to systematically inform curriculum updates and labour market alignment.”*

In response to the committee’s comment, the Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP), available in Chapter 3 of UNIC Athens Internal Regulations, has been revised so that an alumnus of the programme working in the subject area is formally embedded in the Internal Team of Reviewers (ITR) for every programme of study.

Updated IPEP - Internal Team of Reviewers (ITR)

- Two Teaching and Research Faculty members (minimum rank: Associate Professor) – one serves as Chair
- One current student enrolled in the programme
- One alumni representative (graduate of the programme working in the subject area)

This enhanced composition will apply to all IPEP cycles initiated on or after 1 September 2025, ensuring graduates’ first-hand labour-market experience informs every stage of programme evaluation and improvement.

3. Administration

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

- “1) During our conversations with academic and administrative staff on the site visit, the EEC gained the strong impression of the confident, efficient and highly competent enactment of administrative operations. Academic staff described their confidence in the administrative competence of the University of Nicosia and their expectation of smooth support and management of the opening of the campus in Athens.*
- 2) Importantly for this transnational academic enterprise, UNIC Athens operates under the strategic and operational oversight of the University of Nicosia, and this is clearly supported by charter and administrative governance.*
- 3) The well-defined participatory nature of governance supports the involvement of students in appropriate decision-making bodies. During the site visit, we got the strong impression from students and graduates of the University of Nicosia that this governance ethos was instantiated as a reality for students. The EEC were confident in that this ethos would be transferred to UNIC Athens also.*
- 4) The institution has crisis-resilient operations via disaster recovery plans, cloud-based back-ups and campus-based power back-ups. This reflects a broader forward-thinking approach to the development of administration.*
- 5) The administration supports and governs sustainable operations via green campus initiatives (energy-efficient infrastructure and waste management).”*

Recommendations and our Response

“The EEC identified no significant problem areas. However, a number of areas of focus are provided below as constructive feedback:”

- 1) “As a campus which is under construction and a university operation which is in a rapid start-up trajectory, systems and processes are at an early stage of development. The risks involved in this can be mitigated by establishing a clear timeline for full operational maturity of all administrative functions, and by the conduct of regular internal audits during the first years of operation.”*

UNIC Athens draws on the University of Nicosia's tried-and-tested administrative model: oversight remains with the parent institution, whose Governing Board and quality units retain continuous supervisory authority over the branch's decisions, data and KPIs. The campus will commence its operation with a minimum of 21-person team (President, Campus and UNIC-Health Director, Facilities Director and 18 administrative/technical officers). This baseline covers every key service, admissions, finance, HR, IT, student welfare and quality assurance, and is budgeted to grow in step with enrolments, with periodic reviews to authorise additional posts where student-to-staff ratios approach internal thresholds.

- From the construction phase through 2025, parent-institution officers will be frequently visiting Athens to finalise processes, configure the student-information and related systems and train initial hires; once operations begin in 2025-26, all services will run locally while remote dashboards will be reviewed at joint Athens–Nicosia meetings. Furthermore, frequent online meetings will be taking place.
- From Year 2 onward: staff numbers and procedures will be scaled against actual enrolment and service-level data so that every unit reaches the benchmarks already achieved on the Nicosia campus.

Administrative Department Heads will remain in regular contact with the Management, the HR Office and the UNIC Athens Board, sharing key indicators, student satisfaction, response times for administrative requests and compliance observations, as they emerge. Regular internal audits in the early years will complement this monitoring, providing an extra check on progress toward service benchmarks. These operational insights, together with feedback from routine student-satisfaction surveys and staff-liaison meetings, will enable campus leadership and senior colleagues in Nicosia to identify trends promptly, arrange targeted support visits when needed and steer services smoothly from start-up to full maturity.

- 2) *“At this stage of rapid start-up and development, there is a risk that centralised budgets could lead to difficulties at the local level of action. Limited discretionary budgets for department heads could ease the risk of over-centralisation.”*

UNIC Athens acknowledges the Committee’s concern that a fully centralised model can slow local decision-making during rapid growth and has therefore adopted a hybrid framework. While the annual budget for UNIC Athens is negotiated and approved with the parent institution to ensure strategic alignment, the Athens campus retains full autonomy over its execution. Each academic and administrative unit receives a discretionary allotment of about 5% of its operating allocation for day-to-day needs, routine initiatives, minor equipment, and outreach, which department heads can authorise without further central clearance. Capital-expenditure planning and staff recruitment together with teaching consumables and similar expenses are likewise handled through decentralised budgets agreed at the start of each fiscal year, allowing units to schedule equipment upgrades and new hires as well as purchase teaching materials as their teaching and research needs evolve, subject to quarterly reporting and standard audit procedures. This arrangement preserves overall fiscal discipline while giving departments the flexibility required during the campus’s rapid growth, directly addressing the Committee’s concern about potential over-centralisation.

- 3) *“The fast start-up at UNIC Athens may be supported by additional delegation of responsibility to the UNIC Athens Governing Board where appropriate.”*

We appreciate the Committee’s suggestion. The Branch-Campus Charter already empowers the Board to oversee day-to-day operations and expressly allows the parent University to extend its remit when local decision-making speed or operational efficiency would benefit. As the campus builds momentum, the division of responsibilities between Nicosia and Athens will be reviewed at regular governance checkpoints, and additional authority will be assigned to the Governing Board wherever this supports timely decisions while preserving the University’s overarching quality-assurance and financial-control framework.

- 4) *“There is little clarity so far on how the university will manage the risks of infringement of academic integrity (staff and students) via the use of Large Language Models such as ChatGPT. This is clearly a sector-wide and international challenge. However, as the vision for the university is clearly for it to be a thought-leader as regards the role of AI in society, there is an opportunity here for the University of Nicosia and its start-up context in UNIC Athens to lead the way.”*

We agree with the committee’s comment and acknowledge that the academic-integrity risks created by large language models are a sector-wide challenge. Currently, two university-level frameworks provide a structured response. First, the Internal Regulations define cheating and plagiarism broadly enough to cover any unauthorised use of generative AI, with clear disciplinary routes that run from the initial faculty review through the Department Council to the Student Disciplinary Committee for serious cases. Second, the Senate-approved Policy for the Use of AI Tools available at: [Policy-for-the-Use-of-AI-Tools-at-the-University-of-Nicosia.pdf](#). The Policy sets explicit expectations for ethical deployment of generative technologies: students must disclose any AI assistance, and undisclosed use in assessed work is treated as academic misconduct under the existing regulations.

These provisions are applied in day-to-day practice. Coursework submitted through Moodle is scanned by plagiarism detection software, while e-invigilated examinations retain safeguards that flag suspicious behaviour. Faculty are also encouraged to favour in-class, oral or other critically oriented assessments that are less susceptible to unacknowledged AI assistance.

In addition, the University’s AI Policy and Initiatives Committee periodically reviews detection tools, pedagogical guidance, and disciplinary data. As new risks or best-practice standards emerge, the Committee can recommend adjustments that are incorporated into the existing framework, ensuring that UNIC Athens remains responsive while maintaining consistency with the parent institution’s quality assurance system.

4. Learning and Teaching

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

- "1) The institution fosters a student-centred learning environment that prioritises meaningful interaction between staff and students, supported by small group teaching, and seminar formats that enable direct communication and personalised feedback".*
- 2) Academic Advisors and Programme Coordinators who guide students from initial enrolment through to graduation."*

Recommendations and our Response

Sub-Areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study**
4.2 Organisation of teaching

"The EEC identified no significant problem areas. However, a number of areas of focus are provided below as constructive feedback:"

- 1) "Structures and policies are in place, but the practical transference of stakeholder feedback, student survey data, and pedagogical training into curricular redesign and teaching delivery needs to be more explicitly demonstrated. The impact of employer input and student voice on curriculum innovation appears to be acknowledged, but not yet fully evidenced in terms of curricular adjustments or pedagogical change. More transparent evidence of stakeholder impact and professional alignment in practice would strengthen the design of new programmes."*

We appreciate the EEC's comment. As highlighted before, the strong involvement, feedback and suggestions of all stakeholders in programmes quality reviews and assurance, as clearly specified in our processes, result in curricula updates that can be implemented within the legal and regulatory frameworks pertaining to our National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (DIPAE). We will ensure that the due followed processes record how curricula updates reflect the stakeholders' feedback.

- 2) "It is recommended that the institution provides detailed data on the number of students per teaching room, particularly for theoretical, practical, and laboratory lessons, to demonstrate the adequacy and suitability of learning environments, and the adequacy of the methodologies the UNIC Athens want to implement."*

UNIC Athens will adhere to the class-size parameters set by the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education available at: <https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/el/nea-ekdiloseis/anakoinoseis-el/85-elachistos-arithmos-foititon>.

Under these guidelines, undergraduate core courses may not run with fewer than eight students and Master's-level cores with fewer than five.

Laboratory classes are capped at twenty-five students per instructor with an average of 15, subject to floor-space and safety calculations.

Theoretical courses limits normally average 30-50 students. This average is calculated excluding few amphitheatre classes which can accommodate larger number of students. Our aim is to keep a low student-faculty ratio not only to better serve our students but also ensure that our ranking positions are improved and not worsen.

- 3) *“The institutional documents do not provide detailed information on how the feedback should be designed and promoted. It would be useful to have a general strategy of feedback at an institutional/departmental level to promote formative feedback and consistency across staff/programmes.”*

The University of Nicosia already operates a structured, institution-wide process that supports formative improvement and consistency across programmes. Each semester, at the 75% point, the Vice-Rector for Faculty and Research (VRFR) launches the anonymous student-evaluation cycle, announces activation and closing dates, and coordinates promotional activities with Student Services, Academic Advising, the Distance Learning Administrative Unit, and IT. Students receive targeted emails, SMS messages, portal banners, and advisor phone calls to maximise participation, while real-time completion data are shared with stakeholders to prompt follow-up action if needed. Twenty-one days after the examination period, aggregated results are released to individual faculty through the Faculty Portal and simultaneously to Heads of Department and Deans of School.

The VRFR informs the Senate and Student Representatives that the results of the Student Evaluations for the semester have been released through the Faculty Portal. Additionally, the VRFR reports that the evaluation questionnaires have been analysed, and the results have been communicated to the lecturers, Heads of Department, and Deans of School. Based on these results, faculty, Departments, and Schools take corrective action and further communicate these to the Student Representatives at the School and/or Department level.

5. Teaching Staff

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

"1) There is clear emphasis on full-time staff which will ensure a cohesive staff body and a sense of commitment to the development of UNIC Athens. The students will benefit in terms of committed teachers who are invested in this new institution."

Recommendations and our Response

- 1) *"Explicit description of plans for visiting staff would be helpful - currently unable to verify the % of PT or visiting staff."*

Most positions will be full-time. The Greek legal framework stipulates that one-third of the required faculty must be hired before Year 1, two-thirds before Year 2, and the full complement by the end of Year 3. Each programme has developed a four-year hiring plan that aligns with this requirement. Staffing levels will be reviewed regularly, and adjunct or visiting faculty will be engaged as needed, with head-count and FTE ratios complying with any requirements in Cyprus and Greece.

6. Research

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

"1) Based on discussions with the CEO, much thought has been put into how UNIC Athens can provide a unique societal contribution (e.g. genotyping location population for medicine, or genotyping local food types to contribute to healthy living) and part of this relies on the location in Ellinikon.

2) It is clear that the research strategy is different from other institutions and can be realized with both the design of the new site and its location in the new development.

3) A clear and unique vision from the CEO of how UNIC Athens will contribute to society, in terms of novel areas of research for the 21st century."

Recommendations and our Response

1) "An explicit research statement would be helpful, in line with the details articulated by the CEO."

Attached as Annex 1 is the full UNIC Athens Research Statement, which consolidates the vision presented during the evaluation visit and translates it into an operational framework. The document sets out the campus's long-term research mission, the thematic priorities that will guide project development, and the governance architecture, Research and Innovation Office, Campus Research Committee and School-level coordinators, responsible for implementation.

2) "There is a clear investment in medicine and finance-related fields, but less is discussed for other areas of study. It would be beneficial to consider the broader overview of fields, and how they can feed into one another. Of particular note, the committee felt that there is an exciting opportunity to give more thought to how the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of Social Sciences could benefit (and benefit from) the significant strategic initiatives focussed around medicine. There is considerable relevance within some areas of psychology (e.g. cognitive science) for development of AI and this could be harnessed more strategically in the research policy of the university. To fully realize its potential, UNIC Athens should think not only about how medicine can be unique at UNIC Athens, but how each of its programmes will fulfil the needs of a rapidly changing society, and how these programmes will do this together, rather than in isolation."

We thank the committee for its observations and agree that structured, cross-disciplinary collaboration will strengthen the University's strategic goals. The UNIC Athens Research Statement (Annex 1) addresses this point directly. Regarding the Department of Social Sciences and the Psychology programme, we have prepared the following plan. It lists specific actions, deliverables, and timelines to ensure that Medicine-focused initiatives engage the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) and all other academic units.

1. Interdisciplinary Steering Council (Q1 2025)

- Composed of the Dean of Medicine, Dean of SHSS, the Psychology Head of Department, and representatives from Computing, Business, and Engineering.
- Mandate: identify annual cross-faculty priorities, approve joint funding calls, monitor key performance indicators (KPIs).

2. Psychology as a Bridge Between Medicine and AI

2.1. Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence Cluster (CSAI) (Q2 2025)

- Co-led by Psychology, Medicine, Computer Science and Engineering; focuses on human-AI interaction, neuro-inspired algorithms, and ethical AI frameworks.
- Outputs: joint MSc track, annual conference, and industry partnerships with local health-tech firms.

2.2. Neuropsychology–Neurology Joint Lab (NNJL) (Q4 2025)

- Shared MRI/fNIRS facility enabling research on neurodegenerative diseases and brain-computer interfaces.
- Dual-supervised doctoral projects and clinical internship rotations for Psychology students at the Medical Centre.

2.3. Behavioural Data Science Certificate (pilot AY 2025-26)

- 20-ECTS micro-credential open to students from Medicine, Business, and Social Sciences.
- Modules: Experimental Design, Large-Scale Behavioural Data, Machine Learning for Health Outcomes.

3. Curriculum Renewal for Societal Impact

3.1. Common Core on “Health, Society, Technology” (launch AY 2026-27)

- Required undergraduate module co-taught by Medicine, Psychology, and Economics faculty; examines demographic shifts, digital health, and policy implications.

3.2. Service-Learning Clinics (expanded AY 2025-26)

- Multidisciplinary student teams deliver mental-health screening and financial literacy workshops in underserved communities, supervised by faculty from Psychology, Nursing, and Accounting.

4. Resource Allocation and Incentives

4.1. Seed Funding Scheme (2025-2028)

- Competitive grants for projects that include at least one SHSS and one STEM/Medicine co-investigator.

4.2. Shared Infrastructure

- Establish a Behavioural Science Laboratory to add eye-tracking and immersive VR suites that can be booked by Medicine, Psychology, Engineering, and Design programmes.

4.3. Recognition and Promotion

- Revised promotion criteria (effective 2025) explicitly reward interdisciplinary outputs such as co-authored publications and cross-faculty supervision.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement

5.1. KPIs (reported annually to Senate)

- Number of interdisciplinary grants submitted/awarded.
- Joint publications in high-impact journals.

5.2. External Advisory Board Review (every two years)

- International experts in psychology, cognitive neuroscience, digital health, and public policy provide independent assessment and recommendations.

We are confident that these steps will embed Psychology, and the wider SHSS community, at the core of the University's strategic initiatives, ensuring that all programmes evolve collaboratively to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society.

- 3) *“Finally, while the research output is clearly strong and internationally engaged, the lack of articulated OA policy for UNIC Athens produced output that is aligned with European standards should be rectified.”*

The Senate of the University of Nicosia has formally adopted the revised National Open Access (OA) Policy on Scientific Information in the Republic of Cyprus, signalling the University's clear commitment to an open, transparent, and collaborative research culture. This updated framework replaces the 2016 policy and widens its scope to include research outputs funded through both public and private resources across the country's universities and research organisations.

Anchored in European legislation and best practice, the policy aligns with:

- the European Commission's 2012 Recommendation on access to and preservation of scientific information and its 2018 update,

- Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe, the associated Council Decision (EU) 2021/764, and the programme's rules for participation and dissemination,
- Plan S and the work of cOAlition S,
- strategic developments surrounding the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda,
- the action lines of the European Open Science Policy Platform,
- the Communication "A new ERA for Research and Innovation", and
- the 2019 EU Directive on open data and the re-use of public sector information, transposed into Cypriot law through N. 142(I)/2021.

At the same time, the revised policy reflects global guidance drawn from the UNESCO Open Access policy development guidelines, MedOANet, the PASTEUR4OA Toolkit, RECODE project recommendations, the LEARN Model Research Data Management Policy, SPARC Europe analyses of Open Science policies, and the European Commission's report on Open Science and intellectual property rights.

Four priority areas frame the new approach: (a) immediate open access to peer-reviewed publications, (b) responsible management and, wherever possible, open sharing of research data, (c) wider use of interoperable infrastructures, tools, and services that support open science, and (d) promotion of additional open science practices such as citizen science, open peer review, and transparent metrics.

By endorsing the policy, the University of Nicosia not only supports national harmonisation with European Research Area objectives, but also provides its researchers with a clear roadmap for compliance with funder mandates, improved visibility of scholarship, and broader societal impact. Implementation will be accompanied by targeted training, monitoring of compliance, and the integration of institutional repositories and data-management support services, ensuring that the University remains at the forefront of the open science movement.

UNIC Athens being a campus of the University of Nicosia will adopt the parent institution OA policy.

7. Resources

We appreciate the EEC's constructive feedback and recommendations. Below, we outline the strengths the committee highlighted and present our responses to its comments and suggestions.

Strengths

- "1) The strong strategic leadership of the development of the institution with investments in key areas puts UNIC Athens in a strong position to succeed in its mission. This is evident particularly in the modern campus design strategically located in the Elliniko–Argyroupolis smart city with proximity to major redevelopments and public transport.*
- 2) The well-resourced plans for the library (410m2) with strong e-book and online journal resources via OpenAthens put the resourcing of student learning and student experience on a strong footing.*
- 3) It is heartening to see the strong emphasis on accessibility in the modern campus building under development.*
- 4) The emphasis on resourcing of student support for careers development, wellbeing, mobility and inclusion studentships is also an area of good practice."*

Recommendations and our Response

"The EEC identified no significant problem areas. However, a number of areas of focus are provided below as constructive feedback:"

- 1) "As a private university, UNIC will not receive state funding. Additional diversification of income streams can be supported by the acquisition of research funding via EU Horizon, Erasmus+, Philanthropic donations, and integration of collaboration with external industry partners. There is a clear plan to obtain these, demonstrated by the institution's strategic leadership. However, on our visit, it was evident that a school/departmental level strategy for defining and exploiting a local disciplinary funding landscape was not yet fully fleshed out. These are opportunities for the investment of academic staff and academic leaders in the resourcing of the university's research mission."*

UNIC Athens welcomes the Committee's comment. The University deliberately selected the Ellinikon site and established partnerships with universities, hospitals, and research institutes in order to create a European-level centre of excellence for AI-enabled health and life-sciences research. This cluster will pursue non-tuition income through competitive research grants and corporate sponsorship, and an interdisciplinary funding strategy is already in preparation to secure these resources.

Close integration with Schools and Departments will be central to this endeavour, and the development of the strategy will remain a major focus for UNIC Athens over the coming years, in close coordination with the parent University. In the meantime, UNIC and its partners have committed more than €70 million to support the campus during its initial years, ensuring a smooth, high-quality, and resilient launch.

2) *“The consideration of campus accessibility focussed, in documentation, largely on wheelchair access. There are other features of accessibility which are increasingly acknowledged to be important, including inclusive and accessible signage and software (e.g., in the context of neurodiversity). The EEC would encourage the development of a more wide-ranging policy on campus accessibility.”*

We appreciate the Committee’s observation that accessibility must reach beyond wheelchair provision. The campus design brief already incorporates a broad range of features referenced in ISO 21542 and detailed in our internal health-and-safety schedule: automatic sliding doors and ≤ 1:20 ramps at every public entrance; lifts large enough for powered wheelchairs and a companion; 1.8-metre corridors with passing bays; dual handrails and colour-contrasted stair nosings; tactile and Braille room numbers beside door handles; evacuation chairs and designated rescue-assistance areas on each level; fully accessible unisex WCs with alarms; high-contrast signage with ISO 7001 pictograms; audible-plus-visual alarms; slip-resistant external paths with benches that have backs and arm-rests; and accessible parking bays within 50 metres of each entrance.

A Campus Accessibility Policy aligned with ISO 21542 is being drafted for submission to the Governing Board before the building is occupied. The policy sets mandatory disability-awareness training for academic and support staff, provides an online portal through which users can report barriers and track their resolution, and institutes annual walkthrough audits with user-group representatives to verify compliance and highlight further improvements. Through this rolling review, UNIC Athens will continually update and enhance both its physical and digital environments, ensuring that accessibility evolves in step with best practice and the needs of its diverse community.

B. Conclusions and Final Remarks

We would like to extend, once more, our sincere thanks to the EEC for its thoughtful and constructive feedback. The recommendations offered provide both validation of our current trajectory and a valuable framework for further development. As UNIC Athens prepares to welcome its first student cohort, we are firmly committed to realising the vision of a forward-thinking, globally engaged academic institution

We note again the comment by the EEC in the Conclusion and Final Remarks which indicates a recommendation for the accreditation of UNIC Athens.

“In sum, the EEC are delighted to recommend the progression of UNIC Athens as compliant under the CYQAA standards, with the strong wishes for the success of the launch of this academic venture in the coming academic year.”

Below we respond to the EEC’s concluding recommendations which summarize the more detailed responses provided in the various sections.

“1) Embracing the opportunity for academics in schools and departments to engage fully with the institutional mission and vision for UNIC Athens as a thought-leading institution in the realms of data science, AI and their applications across the scope of academic, scientific, and industrial activity. “

UNIC Athens will embed data-science and artificial-intelligence priorities at every tier of its academic framework. The UNIC Athens Research Statement (available as Annex 1) establishes AI-enabled health, behavioural data science and ethical-AI practice as flagship themes and translates them into measurable objectives: each academic will submit two competitive grant proposals per year, overall success rates will be driven towards ten per cent, and forty research memoranda of understanding are to be concluded by 2026. These targets are written into annual workload plans so that individual research agendas, mentoring allocations and professional-development opportunities align directly with the institutional mission.

Progress will be overseen by the Campus Research Committee, working in tandem with the University’s Research and Research and Innovation Office, which circulates quarterly dashboards to Deans and School Directors. Early outcomes include the Cognitive Science and AI Cluster, the Neuropsychology–Neurology Joint Lab and a Behavioural Data Science micro-credential, initiatives approved by the Interdisciplinary Steering Council in late 2024 and jointly led by Medicine, Psychology, Computing, Business and Engineering. A dedicated Research Support Unit, modelled on the parent-campus service, will provide end-to-end assistance with consortium building, proposal drafting and post-award management, allowing academics to focus on scholarship while ensuring that every School engages fully with UNIC Athens’s vision of thought leadership in AI-driven science, industry and society.

“2) Embracing the opportunity for academics in schools and departments to scope and engage with the local Athens funding and external stakeholder landscape in order to optimise the exploitation of collaborative and financial potential.”

UNIC Athens will embed a systematic, outward-facing culture in which every School will scan the Athens funding and stakeholder landscape as part of its annual planning cycle. Each academic will be expected to flag at least two competitive calls or partnership opportunities, whether Horizon Europe clusters, municipal smart-city pilots or NGO social-impact funds, and will log the resulting bids in a campus research dashboard. A newly created Research Support Unit will maintain a live map of regional schemes, run matchmaking workshops with industry and civic bodies, and provide end-to-end bid-development support, so that ideas generated in departments will move quickly to contract stage. Quarterly summaries will flow to the Campus Research Committee and then to School Councils, keeping opportunity-scoping, workload and resource allocation tightly aligned.

Early pipelines already illustrate the approach: a long-term collaboration agreement with the Hellenic Healthcare Group will channel infrastructural support and joint clinical-research projects to the campus, while the Centre for Lifelong Learning will co-design employer-led micro-credentials. Together, these measures will ensure that local partnerships generate diversified, mission-aligned funding without diluting academic priorities.

“3) To provide a framework for teaching innovation across campuses in Nicosia and Athens. The establishment of the branch campus offers the opportunity to develop and update pedagogical techniques and delivery methods whilst transferring over the programmes and courses from Nicosia. This is an exciting opportunity for educational enhancement, which the campus in Nicosia can also benefit from.”

Innovative teaching methodologies (such as project and problem-based learning, case studies, group and collaborative work, and interactive teaching formats), are already included in our faculty trainings (such as the “UNIC Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice”) will also be reflected in our course outlines and effectively transferred into classroom practice. We fully agree with the EEC that we have a unique and exciting opportunity to employ at the campus innovative learning methodologies and we will do so.

“4) Considering the opportunity for the integration of programmes across the institution, and the ways in which the vision for UNIC and UNIC Athens can provide distinctive and unique programme offerings for potential students, and graduates to local and global societies.”

We fully agree with the EEC and we will be following their recommendation. We will start first with the provision of relevant executive, short cycle, professional and micro credentials programmes. Within the legal framework for programme changes we will be enriching our existing programmes with courses in line with the vision and ultimately developing and offering new programmes of study.

“5) A careful consideration of how diversity of people and backgrounds can be fostered and taken advantage of across the university community. Key actions in this area can include policies for recruitment and promotion/progression which ensure that the university fosters the staff with the best potential to make the institution flourish via a careful consideration of their background and circumstances, and by taking care to develop an academic body and leadership which reflects the diversity of the student body.”

We fully recognise that institutional excellence depends on cultivating a community whose staff profile mirrors the diversity of its student body. The University of Nicosia's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy & Action Plan (EDI-SAP 2024-29), already in force on the parent institution and extended to Athens from launch, sets the overarching framework: inclusive recruitment advertising, balanced short-listing and interview panels, transparent evaluation criteria, and annual monitoring of gender and wider diversity metrics across all grades.

Progress will be supported by the Centre for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI) through mandatory awareness training for hiring committees, mentoring schemes for under-represented groups, and targeted leadership workshops that prepare high-potential colleagues for senior roles. Diversity indicators will be incorporated into each School's annual planning cycle, reviewed by the Governing Board, and benchmarked against the NEOLAiA EDI NEOCharter and Athena SWAN pilot commitments, ensuring continuous improvement and a leadership culture that authentically reflects the breadth of backgrounds and perspectives within the UNIC Athens community.

C. Building and Facilities

We would like to thank Mr. Alexis Valiantis for his detailed and comprehensive evaluation report. And for his important contribution and support throughout this process. We note that all requirements were found to be satisfied (assessed as “Yes”) and reported so in the comments as we highlight below.

“The building is well served by public transportation (Vouliagmeni Metro Station, Buses and Tram).

The above parking spaces are according to the requirements of the Greek legislation and the total number of these spaces has been approved by permits Praxis 1131683 (23/07/2024) and Renewal Praxis 1358128 (27/02/2025).”




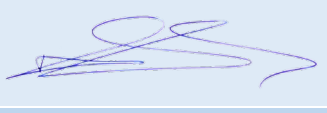


“It is the opinion of the Committee’s Buildings Expert that the above procedure is equal and covers the requirement of the E.O.E. 102.”

“It is the opinion of the Committee’s Buildings Expert that, based on the special nature of the current evaluation, the above procedure is equal and covers the requirements of the E.O.E. 103.”

“It is the opinion of the Committee’s Buildings Expert that, based on the special nature of the current evaluation, the above procedure is equal and covers the requirements of the E.O.E. 104.”“It is the opinion of the Committee’s Buildings Expert that, based on the special nature of the current evaluation, the above procedure is equal and covers the requirements of the Fire Inspection Certificate.”

“It is the opinion of the Committee’s Buildings Expert that, based on the special nature of the current evaluation, the above procedure is equal and covers the requirements of the EandM Installations Certificate.”

D. Higher Education Institution Academic Representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Nicos Kartakoullis	President of the Council	
Prof. Philippos Pouyioutas	Rector	
Mr Antonis Polemitis	CEO	
Prof. Andreas Charalambous	Executive Vice President for Health	
Prof. Panayiotis Angelides	Vice Rector for Academic Affairs	
Dr Alexandros Antonaras	Vice President for Student Affairs	

Date: 19/06/2025