



Έντυπο 300.1.2/2

Απάντηση του Ιδρύματος στην Αναβολή Λήψης Απόφασης (ESG 2.3)

Αρ. Φακ.:	07.14.112.011	Αξιολόγηση/Πιστοποίηση
		Πρόγραμμα
Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών: Τίτλος Σπουδών (Διάρκεια, ECTS, Κύκλος Σπουδών)	Computer Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))	
Ίδρυμα:	A.C American College	

Το Συμβούλιο του Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης, κατά την 82^η Σύνοδό του, η οποία πραγματοποιήθηκε στις 16/05/2022, αφού μελέτησε την αίτηση του Ιδρύματος, την έκθεση της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (ΕΕΑ), την Απάντηση του ιδρύματος στις παρατηρήσεις της ΕΕΑ και την Ανατροφοδότηση από την ΕΕΑ αποφάσισε την αναβολή λήψης απόφασης ούτως ώστε να προωθηθεί από το ίδρυμα ενημέρωση για ικανοποίηση ΟΛΩΝ των εισηγήσεων της ΕΕΑ.

Παρακαλώ να τεκμηριώσετε την απάντηση /ενέργειες του ιδρύματος **στο παρόν έντυπο** και να επισυνάψετε σε παράρτημα, ό, τι είναι αναγκαίο. Το παρόν έντυπο να αποσταλεί στον Φορέα σε μορφή *.docx και με υπογραφές σε μορφή *.pdf

Η απάντηση να αποσταλεί στον/στην αρμόδιο λειτουργό εντός δύο μηνών μέχρι 20-7-2022.



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<p>Δεν έχουν προσκομιστεί τεκμήρια για συμμόρφωση με τα ακόλουθα σχόλια της ΕΕΑ.</p> <p>Πέραν δήλωσης των προθέσεων θα πρέπει να προσκομιστούν στο Φορέα συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία που να καταδεικνύουν τις σχετικές ενέργειες και πρόοδο μέχρι 20/7/2022.</p>		
<p>1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)</p>		
1.	<p>Information about which specific courses are offered in which specific semester and year, applied to all courses of this program, is still not available to the EEC. The EEC requested this information for all courses, and instead received partial information (only for courses that are linked to each other, but not for all courses). This is a core point for assessing a program. This point has not been satisfied. This is very surprising. Most academic institutes have this information readily available in tabular form, and some even display it on their website.</p>	<p>In Annex 1 you may find an up to date table (includes the latest revisions of point 3 and 14) which shows which specific courses are offered in each semester and year.</p>
2.	<p>The content of the three elective courses in the English language is not higher than the level of the English language competence that students should have upon admission, according to the English language requirements. This point is not satisfied.</p>	<p>The content of the three elective courses in the English language has been revised to be higher than the level of the English Language admission requirements which corresponds to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Language Teaching Level B1. The revised content of ENG101 English Communication and ENG102 English Writing corresponds to CEFR Level B2, and ENG201 Advanced English corresponds to CEFR Level C1/C2. In Annexes 2-4 you may find the revised syllabuses.</p>

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3.	<p>About the point of 13 out of 20 elective courses being unrelated to the topic of the program, the College offers the explanation that it follows the US educational system. However this practice clearly contradicts the programs of the universities that the College drew inspiration from when designing the program, as well as the curricula recommendations of professional organisations in Computer Science, such as ACM and IEEE. The College has taken steps to address this issue, by increasing the amount of major requirements to 132 ECTS and decreasing the amount of general education electives to 54 ECTS (from 66 ECTS previously). This point is therefore partially satisfied.</p>	<p>Following EEC further comments/recommendations we have revised the curriculum of the program. In Annex 5 you may find the revised curriculum. General Education ECTS Requirements were further reduced from 54 to 42 and Major ECTS Requirements were further increased from 132 to 144. In addition, the number of ECTS credits for the Computer Science Project I and II were increased from 6 to 12 credits each. Therefore, the total number of ECTS credits carried by the Thesis of this program is 24.</p>
4.	<p>Regarding the point about collecting, monitoring and analysing information on the career path of students, the College states that they will intensify their efforts to do so. No information is provided as to how and when this will be done. Therefore this point is partially satisfied.</p>	<p>In our Response report of 11/3/2022 we wrote that we will intensify our efforts to effectively collect, monitor and analyse information on the career paths of our graduates.</p> <p>Specifically, we decided the following actions with the aim to collect the necessary information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biannually email-based surveys to our graduates regarding their employment; • Ask graduates to complete online surveys regarding their employment status and details (such as via Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, Jotform) • Frequent communications with graduates through Social Media platforms to keep in contact with graduates and develop a friendly relationship to enable us to expand our network of graduates and collect information more easily;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use LinkedIn to find College graduates and to track their career paths; • Send multiple scheduled emails to graduates 3, 6, and 12-months after graduation asking our graduates to provide information regarding their employment status and details; and • Text message and telephone (whenever possible) those we have not responded to our emails to reach out non-responders.
5.	Regarding the point about collecting, monitoring and analysing information on the student population, information on nationality has been provided, but not on gender. Therefore this point is partially satisfied.	In Annex 6 you may find a table with a breakdown of students who progressed, withdrew or graduated, by year and gender (both raw numbers and total percentages) for the past 4 academic years.
6.	Regarding the point about collecting, monitoring and analysing information on student progression, success and drop-out rates, some information has been provided for the last 4 years, despite the program operating for more than 20 years. This point is therefore partially satisfied.	In Annex 7 you may find a table with a breakdown of students who progressed, withdrew or graduated, by year and gender (both raw numbers and total percentages) for the academic years 2013-2014 to 2016-2017. It was difficult to collect accurate information for the years prior to 2013-2014. With this table and the table in Annex 6 we have provided the requested statistical data for the past 8 academic years.
2. Student - centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)		
7.	The point about the competence in Computer Science of the instructors has not been satisfied , as the answer only mentions Table 4 of the original proposal where we see only 5 instructors (out 17) with degrees in Computer Science or similar.	In Table 4 of the original proposal there are 6 instructors who have qualifications in computer science or qualifications closely related to computer science (e.g. Computer Engineering). In addition, as explained in our Response report of 11/3/2022 we have agreed to employ Dr. Ioannis Filippopoulos (Computer Science instructor) and following your recommendations in point 10 (see below) we have agreed to employ another Computer Science instructor, Mr Michael Savva.

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8.	The point about visiting guest speakers has not been satisfied (admittedly, it will be in future after the pandemic terminates).	<p>As stated in our Response report of 11/3/2022, adequate number of guest speakers will be invited to give speeches and lectures at the College upon lessened Covid-19 measures. Despite the difficulties created by Covid-19 recently the following guest lectures took place at our College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Anastasia Apostolidou, the Marketing Manager of G. Charalambous Ltd has given an online lecture on the 22nd of March 2022, titled ‘Marketing during COVID’, presenting a real-life case study combining marketing principles and marketing practices; • Mr Angelos Louis, the Director of RedHR Solutions, has given a lecture at the College premises, on the 6th of May, 2022. Mr Louis presented the latest trends in the labour market and provided insights in regard to all steps of the recruitment process; and • Mr Panayiotis Xenofontos, the Technical Manager of AceNetworks, has given a seminar at the College premises, on the 18th of May, 2022. The seminar was about promoting Cyber Security among participants and to changing participants’ perception in regards to cyber-threats. During the seminar participants were provided with up to date security information and examples of good practices in the area of Cyber Security.
9.	The point about students’ activities in class has been partially satisfied , as personalized learning experience should create a specific experience based on personal traits.	In addition to the blend of contemporary and innovating methods explained in our Response report of 11/3/2022 (Section 2, pages 9 and 11), based on your recommendation the following students’ in class activities and practices agreed with our teaching personnel to be applied so to provide a more personalised learning experience to students in class:

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop pre-tests so to find out the levels of students or the knowledge they possess on various topics; • encourage students to be active learners on their own pace and search for online material related to the course and based on their interests through the College’s online library and ask to report on their findings; • urge students to meet instructors during office hours or via emails for questions and feedback if they feel more comfortable than doing it during lectures; • provide the learning material in multiple forms, such as in Handouts, videos, PowerPoint presentations, Moodle activities, and others; • adjust seating and class layout when possible to support different learning styles; • develop both group and individual activities; • look for common student interests and traits as to develop activities that fit to these individual characteristics; and • provide frequent and constructive feedback.
(on EEC recommendations)		
10.	<p>The recommendation about the scarcity of expert instructors in Computer Science has been partially satisfied, as a new expert instructor has been recruited, but adding at least another would be very useful (aiming at reaching a majority of instructors with degrees in CS).</p>	<p>Based on your recommendation for adding at least another expert instructor we have agreed to employ Mr Michael Savva (Annex 8 – Pre-employment Agreement), to strengthen our Computer Science Department. Mr Savva holds a BSc in Business Planning and Information Systems (Technological Educational Institute, Patra - Greece), an MSc in Information and Communication Systems Security (Open University of Cyprus) and an MSc in Wireless Communication Systems (Open University of Cyprus). In addition, Mr Savva is at the final stage of completing a PhD in Security in the Internet of Things (University of Cyprus). He specializes</p>

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		in Data Communications, Computer Networks, Network Security and Internet of Things.
11.	The recommendation about team-based projects has been recorded but not yet satisfied .	In Annex 9 you can find examples of team-based projects assigned to students during Spring 2022.
12.	The recommendation about introducing best practices from other well reputed schools has been recorded but not yet satisfied .	<p>The Director of Academic Affairs with the Department Heads and Program Coordinators look for best practices in a variety of areas such as quality management, teaching methods, student support, student assessment, faculty training and development, faculty assessment, organizational structure, and various policies (equality, student feedback, etc). The above faculty members look for best practices applied by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher education institutions in Cyprus, such as the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology; and • International/ European higher education institutions, such as The University of Edinburgh, the Technical University of Munich, the University of Manchester, the Technical University of Catalonia, and The National (Metsovian) Technical University of Athens. <p>Additionally the above faculty members find best practices by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtaining the input of our external partners and stakeholders; • analysing the reports and guidelines issued by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA); • analysing the study findings and guidelines issued by European Associations, such as the European Association of Institutions in



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		<p>Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Education Area (EEA); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analysing the study findings and guidelines issued by international organizations such as HEA (Higher Education Academy, UK) and Advance HE (US). <p>Some of the recent practices we have implemented at American College are:</p> <p>(a) the establishment of an Equality Diversion Inclusion (EDI) Committee aiming at eliminating prejudice and any form of discrimination because of individual characteristics;</p> <p>(b) the implementation of ‘Peer Mentoring for students’; students on the 3rd or final year act as mentors to 1st year students to help them settle and familiarize with the College and the City. Student mentors went through an orientation meeting so to get acquainted with their new role’s tasks and activities to ensure effective support to newcomers. Orientation meetings for new Student Mentors will be held biannually, prior to the commence of a new semester; and</p> <p>(c) the assignment of a secondary advisor to students to help them get multiple insights on their academic and professional targets. Secondary advisors can be faculty members or administrative staff, and students were informed and encouraged to consult their secondary advisors. Primary Academic advisors already informed students on the role of their secondary advisor and the benefits gained by consulting both their advisors.</p>



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13.	The recommendation about inviting external experts has been recorded but not yet implemented , as it will be at the end of the pandemic.	See point 8 above.
14.	The recommendation about introducing an explicit thesis activity has not been satisfied . A typical thesis for a 4-years BSc in Computer Science should be at least 30 ECTS. For instance, at the University of Edinburgh (one of the Schools quoted as a model by the American College answer) the 4th year Honors project takes 40 ECTS. See: https://www.ed.ac.uk/informatics/undergraduate/our-degrees/degree-overview	Following EEC further comments/recommendations we have revised the Thesis component of the program. In Annexes 10 and 11 you may find the revised syllabuses of CSC414 Computer Science Project I and CSC415 Computer Science Project II. The amount of work needed for completion of the Thesis component has doubled and the number of ECTS credits for the Computer Science Project I and II were increased from 6 to 12 credits each. Therefore, the total number of ECTS credits carried by the Thesis of this program is 24. The University of Edinburgh has a 40 UK credits Thesis which is equivalent to 20 ECTS credits. We believe that the revised number of ECTS credits allocated to our Thesis (24 ECTS) and the amount of required work are now adequate.
3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)		
15.	The College has an ambitious growth plan after obtaining the accreditation. This is not reflected in staff recruitment planning, that is as student numbers multiply only 2 members of staff will be added 3 years after accreditation. The College's response does not sufficiently address EEC's concern on staffing.	Based on your recommendation we have revised our staff recruitment planning to the following: 1 year after accreditation we will employ 1 Full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching personnel to satisfy the additional teaching needs of Year 1. 2 years after accreditation we will employ another 1 FTE equivalent teaching personnel to satisfy the additional teaching needs of Year 2, 3 years after accreditation we will employ another 1 FTE equivalent teaching personnel to satisfy the additional teaching needs of Year 3 and 4 years after accreditation we will employ another 1 FTE

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		<p>equivalent teaching personnel to satisfy the additional teaching needs of Year 4.</p> <p>The employment of Dr. Ioannis Filippopoulos and Mr Michael Savva (see points 7 and 10 above) together with the above revised staff recruitment planning will result in a total of 6 new FTE just 4 years after accreditation.</p>
16.	<p>The issue that EEC raised in regard to academic job advertisement has not been satisfactorily addressed. In fact, the revised example of advert as shown in Annex 11 is woefully inadequate. It does not even contain the minimum amount of information on job description, career pathway, and it has no information on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity.</p>	<p>Based on your recommendation we have revised our academic job advertisement template. In Annex 12 you may find the revised template.</p>
17.	<p>The revised staff handbook regarding faculty ranks, promotion, and procedure contain some further information. However, criteria are still not sufficiently explained. Generic texts are used to accompany criteria 4-7; there is no actual explanation of what is expected from staff. Appeal information is not provided. Hence, this issue is only partially addressed.</p>	<p>Criteria 4-7 in the faculty handbook were revised in order to provide clearer information to faculty, regarding faculty ranks and promotion. The revised criteria can be found in Annex 13. In addition an appeal procedure provision has been added in the Organization, Administration and Faculty Handbook. An extract of this section is found in Annex 14.</p>
18.	<p>The 12 hours teaching delivery per week is for research focused faculty and additional 3 hours will be added for “Less Research” track staff, according to the handbook. The EEC maintains that this load is too high to accommodate research and other activities, considering commonly twice as much time is required to prepare for teaching delivery, marking and dealing with student queries. This effectively leaves hardly any time for research during the two teaching blocks. The issue is more pronounced when taking into account that the members of the Computer Science Department have to cover a wide range of topics due to low staffing</p>	<p>In Annex 15 you may find the revised teaching load policy of the College based on the recommendation of the EEC. With the revised policy the teaching load of research focused faculty members has been reduced. The revised policy encourages research and empowers staff to collaborate with other institutions on research.</p>

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19.	The College states, in the response, that “research is essential” to the College. However, with this high teaching load and low staffing, EEC remains concerned about the College’s commitment to create an environment that encourages research and empower staff to collaborate with other institutions on research.	See point 18 above.
(on EEC recommendations)		
20.	Starting to increase staffing 2 years after accreditation is not considered sufficient in addressing the issue. Staffing resources should be in place first before the expansion.	See point 15 above.
21.	Research budget increase is welcomed by EEC. However, EEC is concerned about 12 hours per week teaching delivery for research focused staff and 15 hours per week for less research focused staff.	See point 18 above.
22.	On staffing, EEC is still concerned about the business planning.	See point 15 above.
23.	On the issue of promotion, procedure and criteria, the College provided some further information and amended the handbook somewhat. However, the staff handbook still contains limited information on criteria, for instance, as explained above.	See point 17 above.
4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)		
24.	The point about the gender ratio of the students has not been satisfactorily addressed.	See point 5 above.
5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)		
All EEC’s final recommendations and comments on the HEI’s response have been satisfactorily addressed		

The present document adheres to the European Standards and Guidelines, in particular Standards 2.3 (Implementing Processes) and its guidelines, which provide that “Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution”.



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



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