



Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus University of Technology

- **Town:** Limassol

- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Experiential Digital Marketing Communications

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report without any interference in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>1</p> <p>Position and Present Modules: The modules should be explicitly positioned and presented in relation to the "experiential" dimension of the program. This goes beyond revising module titles. It is important to clearly communicate how each module contributes to the experiential learning approach and how it aligns with the overall programme goals.</p>	<p>Thank you for this recommendation. We will indeed present a clearer organization and communication of the various modules, ensuring that the 'experiential' nature of this program is reflected in each module thus aligning with the overall program goals.</p> <p>Specifically, in all promotional material and PG programme presentation we will stress the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) In all courses there will be guest professors from universities outside Cyprus (b) In all courses there will be industry speakers from a variety of industries and countries. (c) It is also envisaged that the programme will attract international students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. from the MENA area b. the EUT+ institutions c. the universities with which CUT has Erasmus and other exchange agreements. <p>Profiles and success stories of the international students will also be promoted, and they will be invited to talk to and network with the students to add richness and nuance to their learning experiences which will be characterized by variety and liveliness.</p> <p>Moreover, we will stress the fact, that the teaching methodology of all courses is not restricted to traditional methods, such as lectures, but will devote time to extensive class discussions of the students' work experiences in order to position them vis-à-vis theory and best practices. This cross-fertilisation through sharing experiences enhances the experiential learning component. All courses will provide students with guidance on how to carry out hands-on group projects based on corporate intelligence and real data which they will collect from the industry using the extensive network of collaborating organisations. Finally, all courses will be enhanced with the analysis of realistic, cutting-edge case studies. We thank you most sincerely for this very valuable suggestion for improving the communication of our programme's uniqueness and its deeply ingrained and pervasive experiential learning approach.</p> <p>Finally, in all promotional material we will stress the fact that many of the modules include a significant lab component, demonstrations by industry collaborators and visits to corporate premises for real-life interactions with professionals in their 'natural' environment.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>To ensure that it is clear to prospective students and employers of our graduates how each module aligns with the overall programme goals we will stress the linkages during promotional events (as it would be too much information to convey in print promotional material). For example, we will explicitly demonstrate that in order to meet the program goals of promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and enhancing the students' ability to apply scientific knowledge to solve practical problems with precision, integrity, and empathy we have placed the Agile and sustainable marketing strategies module, which deals with business ethics and social responsibility in the beginning of the course. Thus, we will make it clear that the core objective of the course is to cultivate reflective and responsible scientists and/or professionals.</p> <p>Similarly, to meet the goal of training high-calibre professionals and scientists for an increasingly Digital World the programme provides state-of-the-art knowledge in emerging fields such as IoT (Course code XDM103) which builds the basis of understanding the role of technology in MarComs thus supporting Data Analytics and AI (Course code XDM203) and the practical course utilising the knowledge gained and skills developed to design and implement strategies to enhance the Phygital Customer Experience (XDM201).</p>	
<p>2 Articulate Progression and Linkage: The progression from one semester to the next and the connection among modules should be more clearly articulated. Students should be able to understand how the knowledge and skills acquired in one module build upon and complement those in previous and subsequent modules and how everything comes together to form a coherent learning offering.</p>	<p>We are greatly indebted to the EEC members for this comment which pointed out to us the need to make explicit and clear to a wider audience the theoretical underpinnings of the programme without assuming that what was obvious to us, when we collaboratively codesigned the programme, is clear to a wider academic and marketing practitioner audience.</p> <p>Following upon the points made above, regarding the EEC Area of improvement and recommendation #1, both in our promotional material and presentations, during the interviews with prospective students and the applicants, <u>and most emphatically in the induction phase of the PG programme</u>, we will introduce Batat's (2019) 7Es (Experience, Exchange, Extension, Emphasis, Empathy, Emotional touchpoints, Emic/Etic process) experiential marketing framework as an alternative to the outdated 4/7/8Ps with which all students and prospective students would be very familiar.</p> <p>The modules of Semester 1. will lay the foundations for the integration of all of the 7Es into a coherent learning and practice outcome in Experiential Marketing (XDM201) as follows:</p> <p>Agile and sustainable marketing strategies (XDM101) <i>Empathy, Emotional touchpoints</i> Value-based marketing (XDM104) <i>Exchange, Experience, Extension, Emphasis</i></p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>Establishing early in the learning journey an “experience marketing framework” to which all modules relate and contribute could be helpful for both students and staff.</p>	<p>To ensure adequate depth of understanding of the technical aspects of experiential marketing in the digital domain the modules Data and Digital literacy (XDM102) and Internet-of-Things (IoT) in Marketing (XDM103) in the 1st Semester will prepare students for the 2nd Semester module Data Analytics and AI (XDM203) and the practical aspects of Content Creation and Management (XDM204) which goes in depth on the <i>Emphasis and Emotional touchpoints</i> dimensions of experiential marketing and the quasi-capstone module Experiential Marketing (XDM201).</p> <p>Our extensive market research and SWOT analysis as well as the findings of the feasibility study showed that a three-semester, 90 ECTS programme is the optimal duration and depth for such a specialised programme. This restricts the scope of detailed progression and gradients of linkages. Thus, the following 2nd Semester courses will go into greater depth, more detailed elaboration, and application of the 7Es framework as follows:</p> <p>Content Creation and Management (XDM204) <i>Emphasis, Emotional touchpoints</i> Academic Research Design – leading to Dissertation (XDM205) <i>Emic/Etic process</i> Consulting practice – leading to Industry-based project (XDM206) <i>Emic/Etic process</i> Reputation and Media Management (XDM202) <i>Exchange, Extension, Emphasis</i></p> <p>Culminating in Experiential Marketing (XDM201) <i>Experience, Exchange, Extension, Emphasis, Empathy, Emotional touchpoints, Emic/Etic process</i> which is the module that completes the experiential marketing framework to which all modules relate and contribute.</p> <p>Reference Batat, W. (2019). <i>Experiential Marketing: Consumer Behaviour, Customer Experience and the 7Es</i>. Routledge.</p>	
<p>3 Mapping of Objectives and Skills Development: It is recommended to develop a mapping of programme objectives and skills development against the modules offered.</p>	<p>We understand this very helpful recommendation as an elaboration and strengthening of #1 & 2. We have provided a sample of objectives vs modules in #1 and the skill development mapping in #2. To ensure full compliance with EEC recommendation #3 we will include the detailed map with which we worked in designing the programme (which is too large to fit in the space of this document) in the programme handbook for both students and the external and guest lecturers who were not fully involved in the design of the modules.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>This mapping will help students and programme staff understand how each module contributes to the overall programme goals and the acquisition of specific skills. It can also guide the programme team in identifying any gaps or redundancies in the curriculum.</p>		
<p>4 Optional Modules for Career/Industry Specialisation: The programme team could consider adding optional modules that offer students the opportunity to tailor their learning to future career or industry sectors. For example, offering modules that explore experiential marketing in the context of tourism or retail, since these are significant business sectors nationally and internationally, can provide students with specialised knowledge and skills relevant to their specific career goals. This flexibility will</p>	<p>Our extensive market research and SWOT analysis as well as the findings of the feasibility study showed that a three-semester, 90 ECTS programme is the optimal duration and depth for such a specialised programme. This, combined with the elite targeting, commitment to fully personalised learning experience, and specialised nature of this state-of-the-art programme restricts the scope for offering full-semester industry-orientated courses.</p> <p>To overcome this inherent limitation, we have designed Special Topics (XDM301) which will be tailored to current issues and state of the art research carried out by the teaching staff, the composition of the student body, etc. As the CUT PG portfolio grows, students will be offered the option of substituting this with a module from other PG programmes in our or other Faculties with the approval of their academic advisor. This will be stressed in promotional materials and presented in detail in the induction to the programme.</p> <p>To address the need to provide students with specialised knowledge and skills relevant to their specific career goals, highlight the flexibility and inclusivity of students' individual interests and aspirations which will enhance their employability prospects we have incorporated the following into the design of the program</p> <p>The teaching methodology of all courses is designed to stimulate extensive class discussions of the students' work experiences and to provide students with guidance on how to carry out hands-on group projects based on corporate intelligence and real data which they will collect from the industry using the extensive network of collaborating organisations. Finally, all courses will be enhanced with the analysis of realistic, cutting-edge case studies.</p> <p>The choice of Dissertation (XDM302) or Industry-based project</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>enhance the program's appeal and enable students to align their studies with their individual interests and aspirations. It can also enhance their employability prospects.</p>	<p>(XDM303) as well as of the topic for the dissertation or project and the methodological approach also provides students with an opportunity to delve deeper into a specific business sector and prepare themselves for employment in industry or academia as well as a career in consulting.</p> <p>We thank you for pointing out attention towards highlighting this USP of our programme in the promotional material we are preparing to enhance the program's appeal even further and wider.</p> <p>..</p>	
<p>5 The teaching staff and the administrators of the programme seem interested and committed to connect the courses and learning experience with the industry necessary for a true "experiential" flavour. Nonetheless, the way this was presented to the EEC committee, this seems to be left to ad hoc connections of the staff / students with various businesses. For such relationships to be successful and sustainable, a coordination between the institution's relevant office and the teaching staff is required</p>	<p>We apologise for creating the wrong impression during the presentation. Our links with the industry are anything but personal and ad-hoc. Even though it is true that some staff members have very close links and long-standing collaborative relationships with various major industry players and institutions there is full institutional support and a multilayered structure for managing these relationships on a large scale. More specifically: CUT has an Enterprise Liaison Office (https://www.cut.ac.cy/research/international-collaboration-partnerships/enterprise-liaison-office/?languageId=1) which is fully staffed with experts in technology and innovation management, relationship management and career advisory and support services. They have an extensive network of institutionalised and formally delineated relationships with a variety of organisations. The Faculty of Communication has a long-standing and very successful internship programme and the network of relationships with local businesses is both organised and formalised with agreements and contact points in place. The Department of Communications and Marketing (formerly Public Communication) has a designated staff member building the database of collaborating organisations and working on establishing an institutional network.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>6 An Industrial Advisory Board can be created to facilitate the program's communication and cooperation with industry in Cyprus and abroad and achieve the goal of developing high-level graduates that the market demands. The members of the Board can identify the market's changing needs and determine the way these changes can be addressed by the programme. Members of the board can provide recommendations for the knowledge and skills that the programme should provide. Finally, the Industrial Advisory Board can promote opportunities and cooperation at the level of research and transfer of knowledge and technology</p>	<p>Following upon #5 above, we are happy to inform you that we are in the final phase of negotiations with carefully selected experts in the field and working towards institutionalising our Industrial Advisory Board with the exact terms of engagement and mandate the EEC described in this recommendation. It is envisaged that the process will be completed before the call for applications for the programme.</p>	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>1</p> <p>Mapping of Assessment Types: Similarly, to the mapping proposed for the programme objectives and skills, a mapping of assessment types can be conducted to formulate a program-level assessment strategy. This mapping will ensure that assessments across modules are aligned with the intended learning outcomes and provide a comprehensive evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. It can also support the programme team in diversifying assessment methods to foster a holistic and authentic assessment approach</p>	<p>This is a valuable suggestion for which we are grateful. We have shared the suggestion with all academics involved and we will be working on this map collaboratively as part of the process of designing the final lesson plans and curricula items in preparation for the first intake of students. To support a holistic and authentic assessment approach, this mapping requires extensive consolidation of the actual assessment items and teaching materials not only pre- but also post – use. Moreover, it requires the examination of assessment items vis-à-vis grades and student feedback as well as the outcomes of the teaching staff self-assessment and peer review. All these will be an integral part of the mapping of assessment types process which will be incorporated into our quality control processes as an ongoing process to ensure adjustments and fine grain alignments as the programme evolves.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>2</p> <p>The EEC would like to encourage the programme team to exploring alternative assessment approaches that align with the program's experiential / experience objectives and provide students with practical opportunities to develop relevant skills and competencies.</p>	<p>CUT has a very active and highly specialised Learning Enhancement and Development (e.g. https://www.cut.ac.cy/news/article/?contentId=497380) which has as its main mission the enhancement of the educational experience of the University's students and the promotion of innovation in teaching and learning. In this context, the Network plans and implements a series of seminars and workshops based on innovative teaching practices and the promotion of exchanges of good teaching practices. The Network for the Enhancement and Development of Learning runs regular seminars and provides ad-hoc advice and support to staff and has also introduced the institution of distinguished speakers in the context of which eminent speakers, such as Andria Zafirakou, winner of the World Educator Award, are invited to promote teaching and academic excellence.</p> <p>Teaching staff of the Experiential Digital Marketing Communications (XDMarComs) regularly and actively participate in the Network for the Enhancement and</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>Development of Learning events and activities. Moreover, all of us follow developments in the field of adult learning and HE teaching methodologies and bring our learning and experiences for discussion in the Department.</p> <p>CUT, the Faculty, the Department, and each and every one of the programme team are fully committed to providing high-quality, engaging and innovative learning experiences through continuously exploring alternative assessment approaches in order to provide students with practical opportunities to develop relevant skills and competencies</p>	
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>1 Concerning academic workload, it is recommended that the University/department considers a wider and more explicit approach. This should not only state the minimum number of teaching hours but also define what constitutes a reasonable teaching load. In addition, it is important to consider the inclusion of leadership/management duties and research tasks explicitly in the workload considerations. By providing clear guidelines on workload expectations, the department can ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities among the teaching staff and promote a conducive work environment.</p>	<p>CUT has a clear policy concerning academic workload consistent with both legal requirements and HEI best practice standards. Not only leadership/management duties and research tasks but also committee work, administration, consulting, and community service activities are explicitly included in the workload calculations. Moreover, there is a clear policy (including not only guidelines on what constitutes a reasonable teaching load but also mandatory lower and specific upper limits which cannot be exceeded) and an institution-wide set of procedures for monitoring the teaching load not only in CUT but also in other HEI. Policies and procedures are very strict because CUT is a public university, and all academics are in essence civil servants of the Republic of Cyprus and are not allowed to work for more than 1,720 hours in every calendar year. All these ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities among the teaching staff. The large numbers of academics who are leaving HEIs in other EU countries to work in CUT is a plain testament to the fact that CUT academic staff policies promote a conducive work environment.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>2 The EEC appreciates the Department's plans to engage external international staff. They can add value to the learning process. Still, such engagement can also create logistical issues and inherit risk when it comes to the delivery of the proposed programme. Such risks are</p>	<p>We sincerely appreciate both the recommendation for recruiting additional members of staff (which we will use in our arguments to institutional bodies regulating staff numbers) and the planning of "international teaching" periods in which external staff will be offering sessions on specific state-of-the-art topics of interest.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>identified in the analysis undertaken by the Department, noting that "timetables of teaching staff cannot be easily managed, especially for professors from abroad". Similarly, the Department acknowledges the need to grow faster, and that workload needs to be managed more effectively. The EEC would recommend that the Department rethinks its approach to external engagement in a way that it adds value, can be managed more efficiently and can help contain risks. This could be done by recruiting additional members of staff, limiting the number of sessions per module that can be delivered by external staff and offering such sessions within a specific "international teaching" period and on specific state-of-the-art topics of interest.</p>		
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>1. While the current admission criteria are broadly in line with expectations, it is noted that closer alignment with the program's specific expectations would be beneficial, particularly for a specialised programme like the Masters in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications. To ensure that the programme admits students who have the necessary academic background and qualifications, it would be advantageous to explicitly state the required areas of study for the "academic" pathway. By specifying the relevant degree fields, prospective students will have a clear understanding of the academic prerequisites and can make informed decisions regarding their eligibility and suitability for the program.</p>	<p>Following the extremely enlightening discussion with the EEC members, we discussed the issue of alignment of prospective students' academic background and qualifications with the program's specific expectations and agreed to specify the following relevant degree fields as the preferred ones in the programme promotional materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing, Public Relations, Marketing Communications. 2. Business Studies, Economics and Management. 3. Communication and Media Studies 4. Social Sciences such as Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, Politics, Public Administration, Regional Studies, International Relations, EU, Asian and African, Balkan studies etc. 5. Information and Communication Technologies, Business Information Systems, Informatics. 6. Data Science, Statistics etc. 7. Graphic Arts, Cinema, Performing Arts, Visual and Fine Arts etc. 8. Humanities and Languages. 9. Sectoral studies such as Tourism, Retailing, Manufacturing, Logistics etc. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>1. The Department acknowledges the need for faster growth and recognises that effective workload management is essential for its success. Expediting the recruitment process and increasing the number of staff can have a positive impact not only on the proposed program, but also on all the other activities undertaken by the Department. With a bigger team, the Department will be better equipped to fulfil its academic commitments, enhance the learning experience of students, and further develop its research and scholarly endeavours.</p>	<p>We sincerely appreciate the repeated recommendation for recruiting additional members of staff which we will use in our arguments to institutional bodies regulating staff numbers. We are in the process of finalising the hiring of a Lecturer specialising in Consumer Behaviour / Advertising, we have advertised for a Lecturer / Assistant Professor in Political Communication, and we expect to advertise for additional teaching and academic staff before the launch of the programme. Although we are moving in the right direction, we thoroughly concur that with a bigger team, the Department will be better equipped to fulfil its academic commitments, enhance the learning experience of students, and further develop its research and scholarly endeavours.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	Choose level of compliance:



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	Choose level of compliance:

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Based on the evaluation conducted by the External Evaluation Committee, a number of aspects regarding the programme have been identified. While recognising the potential of the proposed Masters in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications, the EEC has identified areas that require attention and improvement. By implementing these recommendations, the programme team can further strengthen the programme by providing a more coherent and purposeful learning journey for students, enhancing the alignment between modules and programme objectives, and offering greater flexibility for specialisation in relevant industry sectors.	<p>We would like to thank the EEC members for their insightful questions and comments during the evaluation of the program and their recommendations in this report. We would also like to note that we appreciate greatly the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted their evaluation.</p> <p>The EEC report is very positive with high scores and favourable comments on all sections and categories. Overall, the description 'compliant' was given to 17 quality indicators only one assessed as 'partially compliant'. The members of the EEC made several positive comments including the enthusiasm exhibited by our high academic quality faculty in creating a distinctive programme offered within a conducive learning environment which enhances the overall student experience and is further enriched by including recognized visiting faculty and prominent industry experts.</p> <p>We appreciate the suggestions and recommendations for improvement which we will act upon to further enhance the quality of our program as detailed above.</p>	Choose level of compliance: