

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 18 March 2021

- **Higher Education Institution:** University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Γραφιστική και Ψηφιακός Σχεδιασμός (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Graphic and Digital Design (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently operating



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

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) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, 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. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

The BA in Graphic and Digital Design is considered to be fully compliant with all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified by the EEC.

The EEC members positively noted that “The quality of the teaching staff described in the application has been proven in the online meetings. As far as an online observation can see it: The working environment and the facilities seem up to the needs of the programme”.

The EEC further acknowledged that the BA in Graphic and Digital Design has the following strengths: “There are satisfactory extracurricular activities; The connection between students and tutors is close and sufficient; The students get industry insights and contacts via their tutors and the projects offered; The diversity of the project offered”.

Under “Areas of improvement and recommendations for the BA in Graphic and Digital Design “the EEC stated: “Unclear why the courses/projects come in the order they do i.e. why does figure drawing happen in the 4th semester, illustration in the 5th, and history of graphic communication in the 7th.”

As explained during the online meeting, the order and sequence of the courses, in which our BA students register, is based on a system of prerequisites. A prerequisite is a course/condition that must be completed in order for the student to be able to enrol in the next specified course. This is verified by and clearly indicated on the “Programme breakdown”, which can be found on p.31 of the document submitted. More specifically, in order for the students to be able to attend ART-290 Figure Drawing they need first to acquire the knowledge and skills from ART-135 Fundamentals of Drawing. Accumulated knowledge and skills, gained from ART-135 and ART-290, will enable them to attend DES-306 Illustration, a course in their 5th semester. Similarly, we prepare our students with courses in art history, such as ART-281 (and ART-110, ART-384), in order to be able to cope with a demanding specialised course on the history of graphic communication (4th year's DES-446). (For more information, please refer to the BA's indicative breakdown (p.31), path (p.41) and syllabi (p.44)).

The EEC's concluding sentence states: “To sharpen the strength and the profile of the programme, a more constructive balance and order between introduction, history and theory of the seminars seem to be more appropriate”. (Annex 1 – List of compulsory and elective courses, p.41) of the document submitted, clearly indicates which courses serve as introductory.

History and theory are inherent parts of all our courses, even the “practical” ones; this was discussed with and clearly explained to the EEC members during the evaluation visit. Theory, history and practice constitute essential components of our teaching philosophy. Our aim is to encourage an understanding of the workings of the creative industries and equip our students with a set of transferable creative skills and contextual abilities.

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment

(ESG 1.3)

The BA in Graphic and Digital Design has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified and there are “no specific recommendations” made by the EEC, whose members’ report states:

“The overall impression towards learning and teaching is satisfactory.”

“The teaching staff accommodates a high amount of office hours to support the students individually. The average number of students that are in a classroom or lab is good. There is a good amount and diversity of seminars offered to inform the studies extensively.”

“Areas of improvement and recommendations for the BA in Graphic and Digital Design: No issues identified”.

3. Teaching Staff

(ESG 1.5)

BA in Graphic and Digital Design has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified and there are “no specific recommendations” made by the EEC, whose members' report states:

“The recruited staff is qualified however the EC did not get any insights in the recruitment process. The number of staff in ratio to the students numbers is good. There are good synergies of research and teaching.”

“Areas of improvement and recommendations for BA in Graphic and Digital Design: None.”.

We thank the EEC for the positive comments under this section. As to the recruitment process regarding new faculty, the programme/Department comply with the University of Nicosia Internal Regulations and the procedures described in the documents submitted to the CYQAA and the EEC (Departmental Application, Recruitment and selection process for academic staff, p.42).

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

The BA in Graphic and Digital Design has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified and “no specific recommendations” were made by the EEC.

Under “Findings”, the EEC noted that: “The EC was surprised that students are being admitted without demonstrating a portfolio. However, the selection process and further evaluation of such students is convincing.” During the online meeting it was explained to the EEC members that students who enter the programme without a portfolio are placed “under probation”. This is necessary as most Cypriot students enter the 4-year BA, after they finish the Lyceum, usually without a dedicated design portfolio. Throughout the semester their progress is closely monitored and their performance is evaluated by the year tutor and the Programme Coordinator, as they are expected to prove that they are capable to successfully cope with the programme requirements.



5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

The BA in Graphic and Digital Design has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified and there are “no specific recommendations” made by the EEC, whose members' report states:

“There is extensive student support through academics and non-academics; The human support resources are clearly a strength; The academic team is enthusiastic and passionate; They accommodate a high number of office hours to advise their students; Additionally, there is qualified administrative staff supporting the learners.”.



6. Additional for distance learning programmes
(ALL ESG)



7. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)



8. Additional for joint programmes
(ALL ESG)

B. Conclusions and final remarks

We would like to thank the EEC for their professional work during the evaluation of the BA in Graphic and Digital Design programme. The discussion of issues pertinent to the programme proved to be helpful and as the EEC members noted, their suggestions and recommendations aim to the further improvement of an already fully compliant BA programme of study. Under “Conclusions and final remarks”, the EEC members stated that:

“The committee has a positive overall impression of the department. The academic staffs’ broad professional interests, expertise, and passion was particularly convinced the members of the EC.

“The committee agrees that the BA in Graphic and Digital Design, as well as the MA Digital Art and Design are both compliant to their expectations.”.

Moreover, under “D. Conclusions and final remarks” (p.27), apart from the above positive conclusions regarding our programme, the EEC provided the following suggestion: “Towards the BA: The structure of the BA program Fine Arts that weighs four projects with different amount of credit points seems useful and appropriate for other programmes. This could also be introduced to BA in Graphic and Digital Design from the 5th or 7th semester on”.

One of the many fruitful discussions for both sides during the online visit was that about the mechanics of a 4-year, 240 ECTS, BA programme of study. We tried to clarify to the EEC members all the issues regarding the above and suggested to receive more information from the TEPAK student/member of the Committee, whose programme is also a 4-year (and not a 3-year) BA programme of study. We provided information about the structure of the programme, its duration, as well as the distribution of credits and the sequence of the courses per semester (programme path and breakdown). As we explained, a Fine Art programme has different learning outcomes and objectives, which are not similar to a design (i.e., problem solving) programme; for example, the organisation, planning, and staging of an art exhibition constitutes an integral part of the Final Year course of the BA in Fine Art students. Obviously, a design course works in a different way; accordingly, we cannot adopt or apply the structure of the BA in Fine Art to the graphic design programme. Fine art studio practice is fundamentally different from design practice. Structured courses, which are of utmost importance for the education of graphic designers and visual communicators, such as Publishing, Packaging, Design for Social and Commercial Advertising, Information Design, History of Graphic Communication, Advanced Screen Typography etc. have a completely different content than the Fine Art courses. The graphic designers’ final year project, seen as the culmination of their BA education, develops through DES-436, Research Methodologies in Design (6 ECTS, 150 hrs workload, 7th semester; there, after three years of study, the students define and carry research on their final topic) to DES-486, Graphic Communication Final Project (6 ECTS, 150 hrs workload, 8th semester), where students conclude their degree programme with the submission of the practical [project] and/or theoretical [written] final work. Nevertheless, we appreciate the EEC’s discussion and kind suggestion regarding the above.

Once more, we would like to thank the Committee for the positive evaluation, the constructive comments and the fruitful discussion during the two-day virtual visit. We acknowledge that we have been constantly working towards further improving our programme since it was initially accredited and, accordingly, the suggestions for further improvement offered by the EEC are taken seriously into account.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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