

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo

- **Town:** Paphos

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

In Greek:

Διαχείριση Μηχανικής ((1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 96 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό (MS

In English:

Engineering Management (1.5 academic years, 96 ECTS, Master(MS))

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: (i) Project and Program Management (PPM), (ii) Financial and Industrial Engineering (FIE)

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)

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all four sub-areas.

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: *“After close scrutiny of the documentation provided, the in-campus visit, and online research, the EEC can confirm that AUB is compliant with respect to its policy for quality assurance, the design & monitoring processes, the publicity of the information and the management of this (and internal) information..”*

EEC highlighted the strength as:

- AUBM enjoys from the organizational procedures and knowledge gained by AUB through decades of successful operations. Processes are robust and transparent. As importantly, there exist the necessary feedback mechanisms to ensure the ongoing monitoring, review, and improvement of the relevant processes.
- What stands out is the university’s willingness to undergo scrutiny through external stakeholders (e.g., during promotions). Moreover, the university benefits from the fact that it is accredited by the NY education department. This enables AUB to keep abreast of the latest developments in organizational innovations and processes as well as be committed to a process of continuous improvement.
- The processes of assessment, unit review, faculty evaluation and policies/procedures surveys are carefully aligned with the strategic plan of the programme that reflects the university’s strategic mission. (This is secured through the Strategic VITA)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
There has not been any problem spotted. The EEC would only encourage AUBM colleagues to contemplate whether the MSc with the research-thesis option could also act as an MPhil towards a PhD programme (this issue eventually boils down to regulatory considerations that colleagues may wish to explore).	This is an excellent recommendation. Our efforts will be devoted initially to ensure the EM master program with its current structure is up and running, with its two tracks targeting professional engineering and research-oriented fresh graduates, respectively. A MPhil option will be considered in a later stage once we learn enough upon the research potential of the students, and as a step towards establishing a PhD program.	Choose an item.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
(ESG 1.3)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of the three sub-areas.

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: *“The EEC is happy with the way in which teaching and teaching-related activities such as assessment are conducted. We confirm that teaching is highly student-centered and that the processes and activities surrounding the delivery of the educational mission are consistent with international practices.*

EEC highlighted the strength as:

- What stands out in terms of innovative practices is engaging students with research practices. For example, there are PG students that have even managed to publish their research conducted during their studies.
- The students are also supported by individual tutors/mentors. Moreover, they are given opportunities to hone their academic knowledge by acting as instructors of BSc students. This innovative practice apparently helps improve student experience and strengthen the ties amongst students.
- The students enjoy a varied mix of teaching activities – gaining a fine blend of academic and practical insights.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Colleagues in charge of the Paphos campus are encouraged to ensure that students feel members of the AUB community, via common events and/or exchanges with the Beirut campus (this was deemed important due to the fact that during the first years the student population in the Paphos campus is expected to be rather low).	You make an excellent point about ties with the mother campus in Lebanon. The constituents of AUB Mediterraneo are keen on having strong ties at all levels with the mother institution. Collaboration will include students exchange, faculty exchange, joint research projects, and joint events. We also plan to encourage AUB Mediterraneo students to participate remotely in career development and research events that will take place in AUB Lebanon.	Choose an item.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all three sub-areas.

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: *“The graduate program has several strengths, including a highly qualified full-time teaching faculty with PhDs in related fields from reputable US universities, a strong emphasis on research along with teaching duties, a well-defined procedure for recruitment of new teaching staff, and a focus on academic development and continuous feedback of faculty. Additionally, the teaching load for faculty is appropriate with no more than four courses per faculty member. However, there are also areas for improvement, such as the lack of teaching staff from other European countries, and a lack of diversification in terms of faculty who have only previously held positions at AUB Lebanon. The department is taking steps to address these issues, including efforts to attract and hire faculty from other countries.”*

EEC listed the university strengths below:

- Almost all full-time teaching faculty have PhD’s in fields related to their teaching domain from well-established universities mainly in the US.
- The research experience of the faculty as it is demonstrated from their publication record fully complies and supports the domain of the program.
- Emphasis is given for the faculty to engage in active research along with their teaching duties.
- There are provisions for the recruitment of new teaching staff after the program has reached a “steady state” where international candidates will be considered. The procedure for the recruitment is well defined and is initiated by the department chair and goes through the Dean, the Faculty Advisory Committee, and the Provost (Rector) or the Board of Deans depending on the rank of the new position.
- There is a strong focus on the academic development and continuous feedback of the faculty which includes annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure as well as post-tenure review. There are also provisions for travel grants for one conference per year and incentives such as Teaching Excellence Award for recognizing exceptional teaching faculty.
- The teaching load for the faculty is deemed appropriate with no faculty member teaching more than four courses while most teach one course.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Currently in this initial phase of the newly formed department there are no teaching staff involved from higher education institutions from Cyprus or some other European country. However, there are already actions to attract and hire such faculty	An initial course offering plan has been delineated to cover the needs of the first two years of operations. That plan revealed the need for instructors that can teach general engineering and management topics, especially at the graduate level. This need will be met by 1) attempting to locally recruit part-time instructors, possibly from engineering and management professionals that hold a graduate engineering degree and have substantial experience of work in industry/academia, and 2) attempting to attract visiting professors from Cyprus and Europe. In addition, we will solicit adjunct professors from local and European universities. We have started discussions on this with our research collaborators in Europe.	Choose an item.

	<p>Once AUB Mediterraneo is granted the official license to operate in Cyprus, recruiting locals and Europeans will be much easier, especially that the license will give assurance to the potential recruits that the university will definitely commence operations in the fall of 2023-24 and they can seriously consider an offer from</p>	
<p>There are no visiting teaching staff planned from universities in Cyprus or abroad.</p>	<p>We thank the reviewers for their valuable feedback. The institution highly encourages the use of visiting professors at all levels, through the existing EU programs, MoU's, or any other means. The department will be welcoming both research as well as teaching visiting faculty, to provide workshops, summer and winter schools, research seminars, and teaching duties. Visiting faculty members will be hired on a regular basis. AUBM is currently in advanced discussions with Trinity College to establish student and faculty exchange programs. More such collaboration will be established with other esteemed institutions in Cyprus and Europe.</p>	

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
 (ESG 1.4)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all four sub-areas.

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: *“The institution has clearly defined admission criteria. The institution defines clear educational objectives and learning outcomes that are clearly supported by the curriculum.”*

EEC listed the university strengths below:

The degree is split into a thesis options and non-thesis option. Both of the routes are valuable for the appropriate students. The thesis option allows full time students that start the degree after their bachelor to conduct research supervised by academics to the standard of a journal published paper. The non-thesis option is more flexible and it is catered to students that might be working part-time or full-time.”

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
A bit more clarity on details of student progression rules would be helpful.	We understand that our student progression and promotion rules may be difficult to follow given the multiple study tracks. To alleviate this, easy-to-follow flowcharts will be developed and posted on the department’s website that will illustrate the study plan, the milestones, and the student advancement assessment processes for each path of study.	Choose an item.

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all four sub-areas.

The university underlines the findings of the EEC: “*The evaluation of a newly formed graduate program of study has identified several strengths and areas for improvement regarding learning resources and student support. The program has a large volume of electronic resources for the library and the technological infrastructure in place for the AUB Lebanon will also be available for the new program. The department has appropriate building facilities allocated, which are currently being completed with a deadline of August 2023. In case of any building delays, backup facilities are also in place. There are classrooms and computer laboratories to meet the needs of teaching, and provisions have been made with the municipality of Paphos for extra lots given for expansion. Additionally, the program has well-designed student support and counseling, including a university psychologist, as well as a career office for assisting students. The administrative staff will come from AUB Lebanon with experience in dealing with the special circumstances that concern international students.*

Although the electronic resources of the library are excellent, the library is very small, and provisions should be made to have enough reading and studying spaces for students. This lack of adequate reading and studying spaces may impact the students' ability to perform to their fullest potential, especially during peak times such as midterms and finals. Nonetheless, the program has several strengths, and addressing this issue should be a priority for the department to provide the best possible learning environment for students.”

EEC also noted the strengths below:

- There is a large volume of electronic resources for the library and technological infrastructure already in place for the AUB Lebanon which will also be available for the new program.
- The department has appropriate building facilities allocated. They are currently being completed with a deadline of August 2023.
- backup facilities in place in case of any building delays.
- There are classrooms and computer laboratories to satisfy the needs for teaching.
- There are provisions made with the municipality of Paphos for extra lots given for expansion.
- Well-designed student support and counselling with a university psychologist as well as a career office for assisting students.
- The administrative staff will come from AUB Lebanon with experience in dealing with the special circumstances that concern international students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Although the electronic resources of the library are excellent, the	In addition to the online library, the current facility of AUBM includes a small physical library but the facility has a large	Choose an item.

<p>library building itself is very small and provisions should be made to have enough reading and studying spaces for students.</p>	<p>multipurpose room that can easily be used as a library extension and quiet studying space.</p> <p>In the new facility that AUBM intends to move to in academic year 2024-25, there exists a dedicated large-enough physical library for students. Kindly find attached the file called "07.14.690.004_Annx4- Library.pdf" that presents the schematic design.</p>	
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA	NA	Choose an item.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA`	NA	Choose an item.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC can confirm that the MSc Engineering Management is compliant on all fronts. The programme complies with the EFQ framework and aligns with standard international practice of HEIs in the US and the EU. Although this MSc degree is fairly new, it already enjoys a successful operation in the Beirut campus. Yet as importantly, the introduction in the Cypriot market is dovetailed with the right adjustments meant to make the programme compliant with the EU institutional context. Student projections are reasonable and the financial planning is robust. Last but not least, the programme is well-aligned with the university's mission to service the local community and we trust that it can deliver value to the Cypriot society as well as economy.

Institution's Response: The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their time and effort in this thoughtful review. The university welcomes the EEC's suggested areas for improvements in its Evaluation Report that aim for the assurance of continuous improvement.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA	NA	

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>	
Wassim El Hajj	Rector		
Bacel Maddah	Department Head		
Boushra Rahal	Quality Assurance and Institutional Improvement		
Rania Hussein	Strategy and Risk		

Date: February 27, 2023