

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 16/04/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- Higher Education Institution:
American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo
- Town: **Paphos**
- Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)
Computer Science and Engineering, 246 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc), 4 academic years
In Greek:
Πληροφορική και Μηχανική Υπολογιστών
In English:
Computer Science and Engineering
- 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>The QA policy is described in the application submitted to CYQAA, however the description of this policy is rather general. Details on the precise regulations and procedures to be followed are missing.</p> <p>For example, what processes ensure that the strategic plan is implemented?</p> <p>How many members of the internal evaluation committee need to be present, for a meeting of this committee to take place?</p> <p>How are potential conflicts coming from various US and EU accreditation standards and regulations handled?</p> <p>These are just some examples of the type of regulations and processes that ought to be detailed precisely in the QA policy.</p>	<p>1-The QA policy is described in the application submitted to CYQAA, however the description of this policy is rather general. Details on the precise regulations and procedures to be followed are missing.</p> <p>As indicated in the application, the QA at AUB Mediterraneo touches all parts of the institution including its academic, research, and services arms. All guidelines and policies that are followed by the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon are also followed by AUB Mediterraneo in Pafos, Cyprus. This is needed to maintain the accreditation status the university has with New York State Education Department (NYSED), and Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Such guidelines and policies align perfectly with the QA requirements mandated by the EU.</p> <p>The following webpage includes all the QA guidelines for Academic Assessment: https://www.aub.edu.lb/provost/Pages/Evaluating-Academic-Assessment-Processes.aspx</p> <p>The three main pillars of these assessment guidelines include; (1) assessment of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for undergraduate and graduate programs; (2) the periodic assessment of programs either through international accrediting bodies such as ABET & AACSB, or internal assessment every 8 years; (3) and the assessment of supporting units such as student affairs, registrar, international office, etc.</p> <p>It is important to note that programs that undergo international (re)accreditation do not undergo internal assessment. This applies to Computer Science & Engineering and all professional programs if ABET or similar recognition was granted, and the business programs that are currently accredited by AACSB.</p> <p>All the above QA guidelines are overseen by the Internal Evaluation Committee as part of their mandate.</p> <p>2-For example, what processes ensure that the strategic plan is implemented?</p> <p>The Strategic Plan of AUB Mediterraneo names VITA (which means Life in Latin) represents the overarching principles and strategy that the university follows to achieve its long term goals:</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V - stands for Valuing our community and sharing our values - I - stands for Integrating a humanities, technology, and purpose based education across all disciplines - T - stands for Transforming the university experience - A - stands for Advancing a world-class research agenda <p>Attached is the VITA 2032 Roadmap, which includes the Goal, Objective, and Strategy to achieve every goal for each item in VITA. The institution will report its progress on every item in VITA every three years. This is due in 1.5 years from now. Every year though, the institution prepares a summary annual report and submits it to the Board of Trustees to report on the annual progress, and the consolidation happens every three years. Please find attached the report submitted in January 2025 for the progress during 2024.</p> <p>3-How many members of the internal evaluation committee need to be present, for a meeting of this committee to take place?</p> <p>The Internal Evaluation Committee is composed of 6 members and chaired by the Rector.</p> <p>For the meeting to proceed, a majority quorum is needed which means more than half the members have to be present; in this case 4 members [chair +3 members]. The university follows the Robert's Rules of Order to govern its meetings' rules and regulations.</p> <p>4-How are potential conflicts coming from various US and EU accreditation standards and regulations handled?</p> <p>There is a great overlap between quality assurance standards between the national, EU, and US regulatory agencies. Still, few inconsistencies might arise where we proactively engage with liaisons of various regulatory agencies to clarify expectations and resolve ambiguities, and at times reverting to legal counsel in Cyprus and New York to navigate contradictory expectations. Currently, we are (1) aligning the review cycles to meet the timelines of CYQAA and MSCHE; (2) tailoring policies to meet both requirements (for example updating the credit hour policy to meet MSCHE, CYQAA, programmatic accreditation, and NYSED using both ECTS and Credit systems); ensuring proper documentations reporting to maintain compliance with Cyprus, EU, and US regulation.</p>	
<p>The QA policy, in its entirety, is not publicly available.</p> <p>It should be made publicly and easily</p>	<p>The website is under continuous development. We are actively working on the main and the rector webpages. The faculties pages and the quality assurance websites will follow to ensure transparency and accessibility. However, for any QA guideline or QA policy that is currently missing from the AUB Mediterraneo website, the relevant guideline/policy at AUB is being adopted. To</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>accessible on the institute's website.</p>	<p>give assurance to the committee members that these guidelines/policies are in place, here is a short summary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- All policies related to faculty appointment, reappointment, and tenure are found on this webpage: https://www.aub.edu.lb/provost/Pages/resources.aspx 2- All Program Assessments guidelines are found on this webpage: https://www.aub.edu.lb/provost/Pages/Evaluating-Academic-Assessment-Processes.aspx 3- Accreditation and Quality Assurance information are found on this webpage: https://www.aub.edu.lb/accreditation/Pages/default.aspx 	
<p>There are clear guidelines in place to ensure academic integrity and vigilance against fraud. However, these guidelines appear in the student code of content, but not in the QA policy. This information should be clearly linked to the QA policy document, with accurate descriptions of the precise procedure to be followed in cases of alleged fraud and misconduct.</p>	<p>Similar to the student code of conduct, the university has clear guidelines for faculty code of conduct. These are detailed in the policy entitled "Expectations and Guidelines for Faculty Conduct". A copy of the policy is attached. It includes guidelines related to Non-Infringement of Copyright, Ethics Governing Appointment of Personnel, and Political Activity, among others.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>It is not clear what precise processes and regulations support the involvement of external stakeholders in QA. This should be described clearly in the QA policy. Currently there is no mention of external stakeholder involvement in the QA documentation submitted to QA, nor information on how employer surveys on evolving workplace demands or alumni feedback is part of the institute's QA process.</p>	<p>For programs that are being developed, similar to this one, the external stakeholders and alumni act as advisory bodies to ensure that the department or the program committee did not miss any important point during the program development process. The final decision remains to the department to implement their suggestions, if there are any. The other major role of the external stakeholders and alumni is to help the students with internships, job opportunities, and advice, and also to keep advising the department on recent industry trends.</p> <p>For existing programs, and specifically those that do not undergo professional reaccreditations such as ABET and AACSB, there are clear guidelines for periodic program reviews. To promote and maintain high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs that are effective and consistent with the mission of the department, the faculty, and the University. It will be implemented to ensure that existing programs meet or exceed international standards of academic excellence and also aid in the identification of emerging</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>This should be described clearly in the policy.</p>	<p>new areas for programmatic offerings. It is composed of internal and external review process.</p> <p>Internally: the department prepares a reflective self-study report to examine its educational programs and practices, evaluate their quality and progress, and renew their pedagogy and curriculum. Departments review all of their degree programs simultaneously and submit one self-study report. The self-study report also identifies future program needs, directions, and priorities.</p> <p>Externally: It is carefully studied by two external reviewers who submit an external review report which includes feedback on the department's action plan and suggests recommendations for improvement. The final recommendations and identified areas for improvements will be linked to departmental planning and resource allocation. The external reviewers should be acknowledged experts in the discipline(s) under review from aspirant institutions, preferably with no prior collaboration with any faculty member in the department over the past 5 years. Any current or previous collaboration between any reviewer and department members should be disclosed.</p> <p>One of the expectations of the external reviewers is to comment on program demand on the part of prospective students and employers. Projected consistency of demand for the next five years.</p>	
<p>The expected student workload of each course is specified in ECTS, but only hours for lectures, labs and in general types of interaction between students and teachers. This should be complemented with hours given to student preparation, project work, exam preparation and actual exam. Collectively, all of these define the student workload estimate and should be mapped to ECTS, not only the hours of interaction between teachers and students.</p>	<p>The University adopts a policy entitled CREDIT HOUR POLICY (attached) that governs the time a student should spend per ECTS or per course. The Dean of the faculty, through its chair, has the responsibility of ensuring that the policy is implemented and that the time spent in every course is reflective of its ECTS number.</p> <p>We note that our current course syllabi follow the official CYQAA format, which includes only the hours related to direct interaction between students and instructors (e.g., lectures, labs). As such, the detailed breakdown of independent workload components was not explicitly included in the submitted templates.</p> <p>To address the comment though, every course includes, among other activities, the following workload breakdown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent study and reading time • Time allocated for assignments and project work • Preparation time for assessments • Duration of the examination <p>The comprehensive list of potential activities can be found in the CREDIT HOUR POLICY to ensure that the total number of student effort-hours accurately aligns with the ECTS credits assigned to</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	each course (with 1 ECTS equating to approximately 25–30 hours of student work)	
Information on teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities and graduate employment is not readily available on the institute's website. This should be added.	<p>Information on teaching, learning, and assessment procedures is clearly outlined in the course syllabus, which is made available to students at the start of the term. Honor list, probations, and other regulations are currently found in the prospectus and are implemented in our student system called Jenzabar One.</p> <p>As a newly established university, we acknowledge that learning and graduate employment opportunities are not yet posted on the website, since these are needed in year 3 of study when the student goes for internship and after graduation. However, we are actively engaging local companies such as PwC, WarGaming, Murex, JetBrains, and others to secure internship opportunities for our students when the time comes.</p>	

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
It is recommended that a dedicated server with a powerful GPU is added to the computing infrastructure to allow students and research staff to carry out projects with the latest AI technology (e.g., fine tuning of LLMs).	<p>We appreciate the committee's recommendation to add a dedicated server with a powerful GPU to support AI-related student and research activities.</p> <p>We fully recognize the growing importance of high-performance computing resources, particularly in the context of machine learning, deep learning, and large language model (LLM) applications.</p> <p>The current teaching and research needs do not necessitate immediate investment in our GPU infrastructure. Therefore, for now, we provide access to AUB's GPU and/or cloud-based infrastructure (like AWS, Azure, Google Cloud, etc) to ensure that students, researchers, and faculty members have timely access to the necessary computational resources as needed.</p> <p>We are committed to aligning our infrastructure with emerging technological demands and ensuring our students and staff are equipped to engage with cutting-edge developments in artificial intelligence, as the committee recommended.</p>	Choose level of compliance:

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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For teaching assistants and research assistants, the processes of recruitment and development could not be assessed, because this information was unavailable. It is therefore recommended that these processes are specified in written form and made publicly available.	Thank you for the comment. We want to clarify that AUB Mediterraneo follows the established policies and procedures at AUB for the recruitment, appointment, and professional development of teaching assistants and research assistants. These practices ensure transparency and merit-based selection. AUB Mediterraneo is in the process of compiling and adapting these processes for local implementation. Once finalized, these will be made public and accessible on the institutional policies and procedures website.	Choose level of compliance:
The institute offers opportunities for teaching skill development, in the form of seminars and workshops. This is an excellent initiative. However, these are not compulsory to new staff, or staff with limited teaching experience. It is therefore recommended that a basic package of pedagogical training is made compulsory to all newly hired staff. This applies also to staff with shorter-term contracts. This will ensure that no teacher, of any rank, interacts with students without some basic training in pedagogy and didactics.	<p>Thank you for this constructive recommendation. We fully agree that ensuring all teaching staff, regardless of rank or contract duration, are equipped with basic pedagogical training is essential to maintaining high teaching standards.</p> <p>The university currently offers optional seminars and workshops focused on teaching skill development; we recognize the value of making a foundational training package compulsory for all newly hired staff, including those with limited teaching experience or shorter-term contracts. To this end, the basic package of pedagogical training is now compulsory for all newly hired staff.</p>	Choose level of compliance:

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

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Student mobility opportunities (e.g. participation in Erasmus programmes) are currently limited to the main campus in Beirut, while participation in the Erasmus exchange programme is under development by the university. It will be a significant contribution to the students when such mobility opportunities will be available and students can visit universities abroad.	<p>We fully agree with the committee's comment regarding the importance of providing students with international mobility opportunities.</p> <p>We are pleased to share that the university has already taken concrete steps in this direction. AUB Mediterraneo has submitted its application for the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and has recently applied for funding under Key Action 131 – Mobility of students and staff in higher education and Key Action 171 – Mobility with partner countries to support both intra-European and global exchange opportunities. In parallel, we are actively establishing Erasmus+ Inter-Institutional Agreements with universities across Europe to ensure that our students and faculty benefit from a wide range of academic and cultural experiences abroad.</p> <p>In alignment with our international strategic plan, we will officially launch mobility activities starting in the Summer of 2026, enabling AUB Mediterraneo students to participate in exchange programs with partner institutions abroad.</p> <p>Expanding access to Erasmus+ programmes is a strategic priority for AUB Mediterraneo, and we are committed to ensuring that our students are fully integrated into the internationalization efforts of the university.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
The institute is encouraged to implement recognition of non-formal and informal learning activities, such as hackathons or competitions. Such activities can offer a broad range of learning opportunities that are outside the formal grading structures of the programme. When implemented, such activities should lead to alternative forms of recognition. Such activities are highly encouraged, as they are generally interesting and useful to students.	<p>We appreciate the committee's recommendation regarding recognizing non-formal and informal learning activities such as hackathons and competitions. We fully agree that such initiatives provide valuable learning opportunities beyond the formal grading structures.</p> <p>As was presented during the accreditation process, our departmental strategy explicitly includes the integration of such activities in the short term. In alignment with this strategy, we are already planning the first institutional hackathon for the academic year 2025-2026, focusing on smart city applications. This event will be organized in collaboration with the Municipality of Pafos, providing students with the</p>	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>opportunity to engage with real-world urban challenges and develop practical, impactful solutions.</p> <p>We are also working toward establishing a framework for recognizing participation and achievements in such activities, which may include certificates and digital badges.</p> <p>We are also exploring the possibility of linking participation to ECTS credits through grading components of the courses, where appropriate.</p>	
<p>The EEC recommends that the Greek Apolyterion is also considered to the admission requirement specifications, as it is very closely aligned to the Cyprus Apolyterion. More generally, it would be advantageous for the institute to accept all major EU educational qualifications that are equivalent and suitable for admission to EU HEIs, thereby broadening the pool of candidates and strengthening the European identity of the university.</p>	<p>Thank you for the valuable recommendation. We want to highlight that 2025 marks the first year we have officially began accepting students holding the Cypriot Apolyterion for admission. This initiative serves as a pilot, and if proven successful, we fully intend to extend this policy to include other major EU educational qualifications, including the Greek Apolyterion.</p> <p>We aim to broaden access and enhance the university's European identity by aligning our admissions with widely recognized qualifications across EU member states.</p>	<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
Further appointments have been planned and will help to improve T&L aspects. It would be useful that the plan to appoint academic staff includes a strategic vision for research in key areas of computer science and AI.	<p>We thank the committee for highlighting the importance of aligning academic appointments with a strategic vision for research. As noted, further faculty appointments have already been planned and are expected to significantly enhance the teaching and learning (T&L) aspects of the program.</p> <p>In parallel, we are actively working to ensure that these appointments align with a broader strategic vision for research development. This vision focuses on strengthening our presence in key areas of Computer Science and Engineering, including but not limited to artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, smart systems, and cybersecurity.</p> <p>The appointment plan prioritizes candidates who demonstrate strong research potential or a proven research track record in these areas and who can contribute to both high-quality teaching and the establishment of competitive research outputs. This dual focus aims to cultivate a research-informed teaching environment, foster industry and academic collaborations, and support the development of interdisciplinary and externally funded research projects.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
The AI Ethics course could be offered as compulsory to the students of this programme.	<p>We thank the committee for its valuable suggestion to make an AI Ethics course a compulsory component of the programme.</p> <p>We confirm that students already take a compulsory Ethics course as part of the General Education requirements. This course is updated in terms of content and learning outcomes to incorporate material specifically related to the ethical, legal, and societal implications of Artificial Intelligence and related technologies. This ensures that students develop a solid foundation in both general ethical principles and those specifically pertaining to AI.</p> <p>The appropriate appendices of the programme documentation have been modified to reflect this</p>	Choose level of compliance:

	update. Furthermore, the updated syllabus of the Ethics course, now including the AI-related content and learning outcomes, is added in the syllabus Annex for the committee's reference.	
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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
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The EEC kindly included only positive remarks in their Conclusion section	There are no comments to address.	Choose level of compliance:
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C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Wassim El Hajj	Rector	
Zinon Zinonos	Program Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: April 16, 2025

