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External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** Cyprus College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Τεχνικός Η/Υ και Δικτύων

In English:

Computer and Network Technician (2 academic years/ 120 ECTS, Diploma)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

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

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) reviewed and examined the materials provided by the Cyprus College pertaining to the program 'Computer and Network Technician' (2 academic years/ 120 ECTS, Diploma). The program is currently operating with 43 students (29 in the first year and 14 in the second year) and was previously evaluated and accredited by SEKAP.

The EEC had a preliminary remote meeting on 8.12.2021 to discuss the program evaluation process. A one-day virtual site visit was held on 9.12.2021. The EEC work was facilitated by digital collaborative tools for preparing for the site visit and the writing of the evaluation report.

The EEC was presented with detailed information about the College and the diploma programme. During the site visit, the EEC met representatives of the College, the leadership team for the programme, teaching and administration staff and students.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met. The EEC panel was particularly impressed by the quality of the programme and the College facilities.

The present assessment report describes how the standards are met and provides recommendations and suggestions for improving the programme under evaluation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof. Giuseppe Di Fatta	Professor, Department of Computer Science	University of Reading, United Kingdom
Prof. Christina Lioma	Professor, Department of Computer Science	University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Prof. Zhiguo Ding	Professor, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering	University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Mr. Michail Michail	Final year student, BSc Computer Science	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The committee found that the evaluated programme, the two-year diploma in Computer and Network Technician, has been well structured and delivered. In particular, the Cyprus College has a clear quality assurance policy which has been well carried out. For example, the evaluated programme has been evaluated every two years by the internal quality assurance committee. The structure of the programme is appropriate to the overall objective, where the content about theory and practice is well balanced. The content of those courses for this programme is also appropriate and updated, and has been well taught by the teaching staff in the College.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

There is a clear consistency for the assessments of those courses taught on the evaluated programme.

The content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other, where the teaching staff has ensured that there is sufficient difference between the content delivered in different courses.

The evaluated study programme can effectively support the development of the student general competencies, where the students receive training not only in their technical areas, but also in foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills.

The EEC is praising the adoption of external professionals from industry (...) in the advisory board as an excellent practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Regarding the internal quality assurance committee, it is important to ensure that the student member of the committee is elected, instead of being appointed by the college, in order to keep the academic integrity. While the internal quality assurance committee has provided an informative report for the evaluated programme, it is not clear whether any follow-ups have been carried out by the department, and therefore it will be important for the department to provide a formal response in written form for those issues raised by the internal quality assurance committee.

The college may also want to carry out more formalized moderation activities for the evaluated programme. For example, for the exam papers, it will be useful to carry out internal/external moderation in order to avoid any simple typos and ambiguous exam questions. If possible, moderation towards the students' marks should be also carried out.

Furthermore, the Programme Director is suggested to closely monitor performance indices, such as progression rate, continuation, drop out rate and attainment. In addition, the coverage of Programming also needs to be regularly reviewed as students seemed torn between their initial reluctance and their wish to learn more.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC found that the process of teaching and learning of this programme is appropriate to the topics covered by the programme, and the delivery of the programme is also appropriate for the expected learning outcomes. Students are provided the chance to offer their suggestions to the programme. The Department provides a supportive and encouraging learning environment to students, where students are not only supported by faculty members but also by the well organized administrative team. In addition, the Department has also provided an encouraging environment to the teaching faculty members. The structure of the programme reflects well the student needs for both what concerns education and personal wellbeing. The Department implements a flexible process of teaching and learning which ensures the quality of the provided programme. The carried out teaching methods are appropriate to ensure that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The programme is delivered at an international standard. The students on the programme have been well looked after, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, during the pandemic, the students were offered well organized online teaching, where both lectures and lab sessions have been carried out online. The Department has provided good online learning facilities to support such online learning. For example, students on the programme have access to the computer servers and are provided remote access and licences for those software used in the programme. These good practices have been well acknowledged and appreciated by the students on the programme. The programme enjoys a good staff-student ratio, which means that each student can get sufficient support.

The College has demonstrated a particular attention to special-needs students. For example, a sign language translator was employed to support the learning activities of a particular student.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Currently, students receive their grades and usually written feedback as well as discussion in class on more general feedback issues. The EEC recommends that student feedback is always written and private to each student.

Students' feedback is crucial to the development of any teaching programme. Currently, the Department has provided opportunities to students for feeding their suggestions back to the department, by asking each student to complete a questionnaire about each course at the end of each semester. This questionnaire contains both the suggestions to the course as well as to faculty members who deliver the course. Additional feedback mechanisms could be provided to students if they want to provide suggestions at the programme level. In addition, regular student-staff meetings can also be useful for the interaction between the Department and students, where a few student representatives can be elected from the student body (not by the management of the institution) and asked

to attend such meetings. Currently, student representatives are selected by the Department management according to academic achievement. It is a better practice to have the student body electing its own representatives.

Furthermore, staff-student meetings can also be used as venues to inform the students of what actions have been taken by the Department following the students' feedback. Currently, the results of the student feedback about the programme and of the actions to be taken are not communicated widely to the student body. There is no discussion in which the student body at large can take part in. The EEC recommends that this point is addressed, by establishing open staff-student meetings.

This programme is closely related to industry. Because of the nature of this programme, students enrolled on this programme can benefit a lot if formal partnerships between the Department and industries can be established. As such, students can have more opportunities for carrying out their placement and internship. More interactions between the Department and the enterprise and career office of the College can also be helpful towards this purpose. Currently, internship opportunities are offered *after* graduation. This is not an internship as such, but rather employment after graduation. The EEC recommends that internships or industrial stays are interwoven carefully into the programme.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

There are formal and informal arrangements to support staff induction and development.

There is a good student-staff ratio and a very positive relation between teachers and students. During the visit, the teaching staff was praised by the students for both the quality of the teaching and the level of support received.

Some teaching staff members do not have a doctoral degree and some are in the process to obtain one. Research activities could be promoted and supported more explicitly and directly.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The teaching staff have been praised by the students as they provide an excellent learning experience.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

A scheme for peer-review of teaching could be considered to promote and share good teaching practices. In relation to this, exam material should also be moderated by peers, before it is released to students. Currently exam material



is not moderated; instead, it has to be aligned with the course outline, which is in itself moderated. This is a good practice, but it should be accompanied by explicit exam material moderation. Some didactic & pedagogical training should be compulsory to all newly appointed junior staff. Research activities could be promoted and supported more explicitly.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The programme attracts a healthy number of students and there has been a recent increase of the students intake. This should be monitored closely to avoid a degradation of the student experience due to an increase of the student-staff ratio.

The programme is linked to industry Certifications (e.g., from CISCO), which provide an excellent opportunity to the students to improve their employability.

Additional information on progression and drop-out rates was provided to the EEC. This shows figures in line with an international standard.

The EEC found evidence that the course content is regularly updated according to the trends in related industry, advances in technology and the job market demands.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Currently the programme offers an excellent training opportunity, which is appropriately placed between the job market and the local higher education demands.

It is commendable that the College has agreed with CISCO to provide their Certification test to students at a discounted price.

Student progression is supported by the flexibility of the Department in offering dedicated tutorials to students who may fail an exam. This will help those students to successfully retake the exam without waiting to attend the course a second time in the following year.

The students of the College have access to academic advisors from the European University in Cyprus.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Additional admission requirements could be considered and introduced to improve the average quality and attainment of the student cohorts.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC was virtually guided through the Department, observing the resources and facilities, and asking questions from the members of academic and administrative staff and students. The overall perception is that the Department has adequate resources and infrastructure to meet the present requirements of the programme. The Department is effective and professional in its learning and teaching activities.

As the student number in the programme is still relatively small, the teaching rooms are suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons. The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students. The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study. Physical resources and support services to the students are definitely adequate. It is worth noting that during the pandemic period when the College premises were closed, the teaching was not influenced as a proper infrastructure was in place to support the remote teaching.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Overall, the EEC was positively impressed.

The programme has a very good structure and support. Administrative staff is well organised and provides high quality support. The Department is well managed and resources are adequately used to provide excellent quality of services and outputs. The academic faculty is a united and cohesive group working together to advance the quality of research and teaching in the department. The small size of the department allows for effective informal solutions to operations issues. Students are satisfied with the quality of learning and teaching resources. Staff expertise is relevant to the programme of study and to the Department. A key strength in the department's learning and teaching activities is the academic support given to students throughout their studies.

Examples of impressive practices include the lifelong account that students of this programme get, which consists of 1TB of space, email account, and access to all software needed for this programme, to name but a few.

The EEC was further impressed by the Career Support services offered to students, which include an online platform where student CVs are stored and both students and employers can try to find interesting matches to their needs.

The EEC was also impressed by the library facilities, which contain state of the art equipment, allowing teachers to design curricula for their courses based on chapters from books that are available online in the library. The library is also part of the Cyprus library consortium, and has through it access to valuable top-tier subscriptions and academic material relevant to this programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

It is important to improve teaching with external visiting staff and guest speakers to enrich teaching and connect it with the industry.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
- 6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

NA

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

NA

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

NA

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC reviewed and examined the materials provided by the Cyprus College pertaining to the Diploma programme under evaluation. The one-day site virtual visit was held on 09.12.2021.

The EEC was presented with detailed information about the degree programme. During the site visit, the EEC met the college representatives, the programme director, the academic and administration staff. It also met two students, one from each year of the programme.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met.


The EEC identified a number of key strengths that make the programme successful in attracting a good number of applicants and able to provide valuable graduates to the industry of the sector. Overall, the programme has a consistent design with clear aim and objectives to meet job market demands. The level of support available to the students and the quality of the infrastructure are both excellent.

The EEC also identified a number of key areas for improvement and therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- Student intake should be carefully monitored. A further increase may endanger the quality of the student learning experience and create difficulties with the current infrastructure. The introduction of additional admission requirements could be considered and introduced.
- The programme Director should systematically monitor some performance indices, such as progression, continuation and drop out rates as well as attainment.
- Links to industry could be better exploited. For example, with more regular meetings with the advisory board in order to maintain and strengthen the excellent job prospects of the graduates. Internships could be offered during the studies and not only afterwards.
- The coverage and extent of Programming courses could be reconsidered: the current students seemed torn between their initial reluctance to study programming extensively and their wish to refine their programming skills that may give them access to other career and study options.
- A report from the Internal Quality Assurance Committee should be followed by an action plan report from the Department.
- The student representative in the Internal Quality Assurance Committee should be elected by the student cohort.
- The results of the student survey should be communicated to the students.
- The exam scripts should always be formally moderated at least internally and, possibly, externally.
- A scheme for peer-review of teaching could be considered to promote and share good teaching practices.
- Research activities could be promoted and supported more explicitly.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof. Giuseppe Di Fatta	
Prof. Christina Lioma	
Prof. Zhiguo Ding	
Mr. Michail Michail	

Date: 22/12/2021