Doc. 300.1.1

Date:16-17th May 2022 Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Aigaia School of Art & Design

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** n/a

- **Department/ Sector: Art & Design**

- **Programme of study**
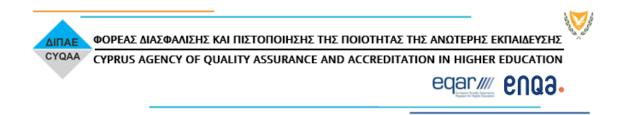
  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

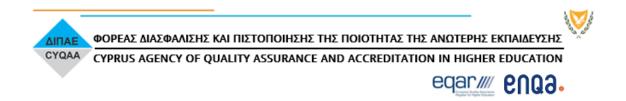 Visual Arts Diploma 120 ECTS, Short Cycle EQF 5

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: n/a
  In English: n/a

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The EEC conducted their visit onsite. We met with a wide range of academic and para-academic faculty responsible for teaching, research, quality enhancement, student support, information technology and the library.

We were also able to meet the Diploma students in their studios and in the main meeting room.

The faculty took us on a comprehensive tour that enabled us to see the studios and workshops,, the library, cafe, materials shop, gardens and the gallery/theatre spaces. We were also able to see the surrounding neighbourhood.

The School were fantastic hosts and the EEC would like to thank them for their warm and generous hospitality. ☺

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Neil Mulholland	Professor (Chair of EEC)	The University *of* Edinburgh
Professor Xenofon Bitsikas	Professor	University of Ioannina
Professor Susanne Clausen	Professor	University of Reading
Maria Agisilaou	Student	Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

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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*

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- *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*
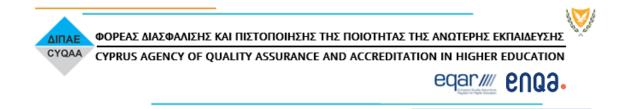
1.4 Information management

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.*

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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?*

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

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

The Pass/Merit/Distinction approach to grading is excellent and works perfectly well for a monotechnic with just one programme. The problem with it is that it's not used consistently or logically – especially given how small the School is. It really should be a *common marking schema* (CMS) - for all courses. If the Common Academic Framework has a CMS that requires only Pass/Merit/Distinction then there is no need for the % marks to be awarded (which are arbitrary and meaningless). The Programme level Pass/Merit/Distinction criteria would simply have to state how many ECTS were passed (i.e. 120).

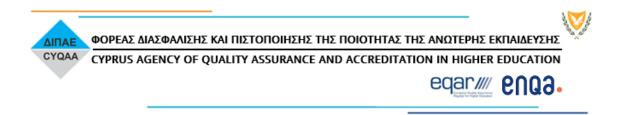*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

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

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Level 5 Second Cycle requires the same degree of clarity and care in its implementation as, say, the Pearson qualifications. Pearson is a standard - that includes a Common Marking Scheme/Rubric - that enables any institution to prove parity with another operating the same system of accreditation. Likewise, the Diploma requires that the institution understand and be able to prove parity with other institutions with validated Diploma level courses. This is where the Quality Assurance and Enhancement approach on the Diploma programme falls a little short.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy (QAE) and related processes are not clear and, as they stand, seem to produce conflicts of interest. The institution has made a start on creating a Quality Handbook and related processes (but no Policy as yet). However, as it stands, the Quality Handbook is compromised and unclear.

The Institution needs to do more to support the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations, and processes:

For example, there is a major gap around Academic Integrity – the QAE Handbook / Academic Regulations do not mention how they ensure academic integrity and freedom or how the institution is vigilant against academic fraud. There isn't a fully-fleshed Academic

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Integrity policy. Plagiarism detection relating to the submission of *practical work* (as opposed to writing) - for example - isn't mentioned. Plagiarism is rife in ADM, especially the re-submission of work that has already been assessed for credit (self-plagarism) and the submission of art/design work created by other artists and designers. This must be addressed.

The Institution must simplify and clarify the QAE process.

The Institution must <u>remove all conflicts of interest from its QAE processes;</u> consider adding external academic members of staff to its Course Review and Approval Panels.

While the Institution greatly values teaching, administrative staff and students, it needs to formally support them to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance and enhancement. Training of Staff -- and Student Representatives - in QAE should be part of every member of staff's contract and specified as a % of their workload.

The institution supports the involvement of external stakeholders. However, it has no clear answer to how they get involved in the quality processes. Given how small the institution is, and given the <u>conflicts of interest in its existing QAE processes,</u> the institution must seriously consider routinely adding external academic members of staff to its Course Review and Approval Panels – perhaps even making this Policy. It is normal procedure for small institutions to have External Examiners or, at very least, External panel members in its Exam Boards to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. Since this is a small family-run institution this is vitally important. The institution needs to include external expertise in quality assurance - such as an Academic Director from another validated University - to ensure that they can be certain that the academic standards are comparable with other institutions operating validated programmes at Level 5 Short Cycle (120 ECTS) or above.

Once the institution has reviewed and successfully reformed its QAE process, it should, as a matter of urgency, *review its Common Marking Scheme* to create a Common Academic Framework (singular) and place the outcome in the institution's Academic Regulations.

A key issue here is that the Programme has to clarify how many of the 120 ECTS credits are required to pass with a Diploma. Second Cycle Level 5 would suggest *all 120 credits* and not (only) the final capstone (as currently appears to be the case).
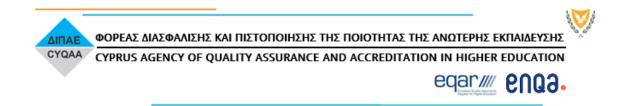
1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==*Strengths*== and ==*Areas of improvement and recommendations*== below:

==*Strengths*==

The programme involves students in the design of the courses.

Some of the courses benefit from external expertise - this is evident in the workshops that are organised through the institution (e.g. textiles).

The programme makes good use of placement opportunities where appropriate, for example staff Erasmus+ training (workshop in Seville).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The programme of study needs to demonstrate improvement in the following areas:

Designing overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes.

> This really needs a clearer and more dynamic institutional strategy (or Mission) to happen. The intended learning outcomes should be made explicit at PROGRAMME level - in the Programme Handbook and on the website - and align clearly with Short Cycle EQF Level 5. The PROGRAMME level outcomes should also incorporate 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).
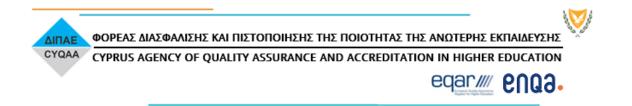
> For example - "preparation for sustainable employment" would mean attending carefully to how the programme does two things - a) post Diploma professional practice working as a freelancer or as an employee b) transition to a BA programme.

The programme *appears* to enable smooth student progression; but the programme design must ensure this. Only the implementation of an institutional level Common Academic Framework will enable this to happen.

The programme curriculum, the exams and assignments - generally speaking - correspond to the level of the programme (Short Cycle EQF Level 5). There are issues with some courses not corresponding to the level of the programme (History of Art) that we will outline later in this document.

The programme curriculum does not correspond to the number of ECTS (120). The courses are too small (3 ECTS on average) and ask too much of students in the short amount of learning time this affords them. The courses need to accurately reflect not just what is taught, but how it is taught. For example, if the small 3 ECTS *Introductory Courses* are taught and assessed holistically, then they should be combined into one single 15 ECTS course: e.g. *Introduction to Visual Arts*. An *Introductory* course that takes up half of the semester is one that allows flexibility with the briefs and the content.

ECTS: While the courses *are* described in ECTS terms currently - the ECTS are not correlated to the expected student workload. Students would have to work far longer than the amount of time

allocated to each course - an *average* of 60hrs per course in Semester 1 - to complete the coursework they are given. Consolidation of courses (e.g. creating a 15 ECTS *Introductory Courses* would likely resolve this issue).
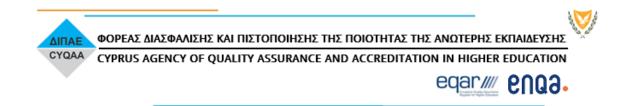
The programme (Diploma) has been subject to a formal institutional approval process. However, the process itself is highly complex, convoluted, and confusing. There are multiple cases of conflict of interest that could easily emerge from the composition of the various committees. Given the varied standards presented in the course documentation submitted to the Cypriot QA Agency, the EEC do not *quite* yet have *full* confidence in the current formal institutional approval process. To fix this, the Institution must simplify and clarify its internal QAE process.

The validated Diploma programme results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated and refers to the correct level of the Cypriot National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (Diploma). It does not follow that it, consequently, relates clearly to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area mainly since it does not refer to these terms specifically. The EEC note that the programme (and institution) would benefit also from describing itself as Short Cycle EQF 5 since the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area are going to be increasingly important when recruiting non-Cypriot students (re: Strategic Planning).

While the programme is regularly monitored, it is not monitored consistently (in all courses) <u>in the light of the latest research in the given discipline</u>. The EEC cannot be certain that the monitoring processes ensure that the programme is up to date, at least not, in relation to other Level 5 ADM Diplomas in EHEA.

For example, *History of Art I* course design simply does not correspond with the current provision in the Art History Discipline at the Diploma level within Art & Design/Media (ADM) in the EHEA or beyond. The 'survey course' approach is no longer used in ADM programmes; herein the focus is on contemporary art and emerging art historiography methods. Drawing on the conversations we had with students, the EEC unanimously felt that the 'survey course' approach is <u>very evidently</u> ***not*** preparing the students to understand and engage with either. An Introduction to visual culture that uses contemporary art historical tools and examples of current art and art theory should be pursued. (e.g. Rampley, M. Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts, Edinburgh University Press, 2005 is an example of a 101 approach appropriate to this level of ADM.) Within the ADM field, *Introduction* to visual culture courses always include Design and Media (not just archaeology and Fine Art), present global (*rather* than an Italian Renaissance-bias) perspective and are more centred on art historical and visual culture analytical tools than on the ill-perceived need for 'coverage'.

For example, some of the *Introduction* courses in the programme resemble the South Kensington system (c19th) - e.g. the still-life drawing studio - and show no hint of post-Bauhaus reforms. This would make them over 100 years behind the curve for comparable foundation courses. Some courses need more attention than others in this respect to make them up to date and relevant.

While the programme documentation read by the EEC states that the programme is periodically reviewed, this is simply stated and not demonstrated. The EEC saw no documented evidence to corroborate this statement. Any periodically review would surely pick up on the issues with the currency of the courses (see last paragraph) and the issues with the students' workload (the 3 ECTS attributed to most courses is not enough to account for the workload), and the ineffectiveness of some of the procedures used for the assessment of students? The programme should clearly document (minute) what changes they made and how successful they were; this is something that an Academic Director would oversee as a routine part of QAE.

The programme documentation read by the EEC uses a boilerplate statement that the programme is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. However, again, this is stated but no evidence is given to corroborate this happening formally. (Again, please be careful to always minute all Committee decisions and keep this on file.)

Clarify the Pass criteria for each course. As it stands, this is not clear in all of the courses. NB: The LOs and Pass criteria *must* align in course OR BE THE SAME. Fail criteria would = not achieving all of the LOs. Some courses are well written in this regard - they align and have a small number of LOs - others need some work.

The EEC recommends that the institution reduce the number of LOs / create a limit (e.g. limit of 5 or limit of 3). This would make it clear and simpler. All LOs have to be demonstrated to pass a course.

The EEC recommends that the institution reconsider the composition of assessment panels to ensure that students are never *only* assessed by the course organiser/tutor. (i.e. *remove all conflicts of interest*) There must be a clear distinction between a) the assessor and the member of staff who moderates the assessment to check for parity.

The EEC recommends that the institution introduces formal written feedback at the end of each course (summative feedback) that corresponds clearly with the assessment criteria. Additionally, the use of a pass/fail tick-box for the assessment criteria would help here.
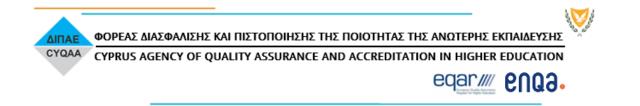
The EEC recommends that the institution formally teach students research skills and information management. This relates to accessing peer-reviewed information in libraries and understanding how to manage such research data. As it stands, research *in this sense* is not taught.

Monitoring: The EEC recommends that the institution *anonymously* collect, analyse and use student feedback. A system for data analysis should be adopted from a comparable higher educational institute.

1.3 **Public information**

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==*Strengths*== and ==*Areas of improvement and recommendations*== below:

==Strengths==

Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:

- o selection criteria
- o pass rates
- o learning opportunities available to the students

==*Areas of improvement and recommendations*==

- o *intended learning outcomes -* need to be simplified/reduced, aligned with criteria in all courses. Should match the actual delivery of the course teaching rather than the speculative delivery.

- o *qualification awarded -* The validated Diploma programme results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated and refers to the correct level of the Cypriot National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (Diploma). The EEC note that the programme (and institution) would benefit also from describing itself as Short Cycle EQF 5 since the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area are going to be increasingly important when recruiting non-Cypriot students (re: Strategic Planning).

- o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures -* See previous section: regarding need to clarify.

- o *graduate employment information.* Graduate Destinations: The EEC recommends that the institution collect data on, and *understand*, graduate destinations and how the programme supports graduates to achieve.

1.4 Information management

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==*Strengths*== and ==*Areas of improvement and recommendations*== below:
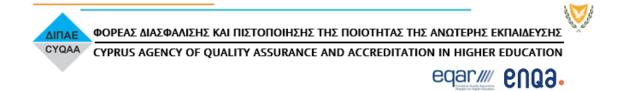
Strengths

Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:

- o *profile of the student population*

- o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

- o *students' satisfaction with their programmes (they appear to be highly satisfied, clarified in the meeting with students)*

- o *student support available*

Validated courses provide detailed information on aims, LOs, assignments - published before the course starts each academic year in the form of Course Handbooks.
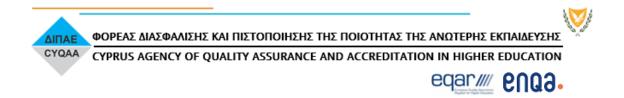
Areas of improvement and recommendations

- o *Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):* The EEC recommends that the programme team develop KPIs, then use them (annually) to review their progress.

- o *students' satisfaction with their programmes.* Current missing ways of gathering this data that are anon. and ethical – within GDPR Data Protection laws of the EU. Monitoring: The EEC recommends that the institution anonymously collect, analyse and use student feedback. A system for data analysis should be adopted from a comparable educational institute.

- o *career paths of graduates*: The EEC recommends that the institution collect data on, and *understand*, graduate destinations and how the programme supports (or fails) graduates to achieve. The institution notes that it is not doing this but might do so in future (post-BA). This has to happen now - weakens any case for a BA.

- o *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities:* The EEC recommends that the institution anonymously collect, analyse and use student feedback. A system for data analysis should be adopted from a comparable educational institute once it starts to collect the data this way.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Non-compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Partially 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.*
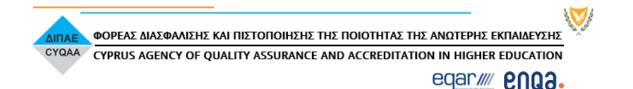
2.2 Practical training

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.*
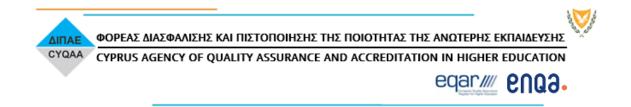
2.3 Student assessment

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)?*

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

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==Strengths== and ==Areas of improvement and recommendations== below:

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

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching is key to the programme philosophy; all staff aim to respect and attend to the diversity of students and their needs by supporting and enabling flexible learning paths.

The process of teaching and learning appears to support students' individual and social development.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating their own learning processes
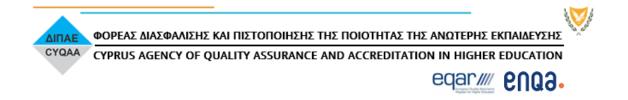
Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.

A sense of autonomy in the learner is promoted.

==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.

There's really just one main learning style encouraged within the curriculum as it stands – teacher presence (50-75% contact time) or 'sitting-with-Nellie'. The fact that assessment methods are not as varied as they ought to be means that - in comparison with peers in other institutions - students are not *as* familiar with a full range of means by which to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Given that the institution is an art school, and that art schools use a wide range of assessment methods, it would be appropriate to include a broader range of assessment methods in the courses that constitute the programme. This might mean not always relying *exclusively* on the portfolio as the assignment for assessment. e.g. For the Major Project, students might work on publishing their work either online or as a printed catalogue.

It is recommended that the programme deliberately introduce some *different* modes of delivery - such as peer-to-peer, workplace-based, problem-based or collaborative learning - and that the Learning Outcomes are always clearly tied to each mode of delivery in a *specific* way (not currently the case). For example, problem-based learning is happening with some of the design briefs, but it's not presented or understood as a form *of* problem-based learning presently. Being more aware of the learning styles would be very beneficial to both staff and students as a form of transferable knowledge/skills.

The teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are not consistently contemporary, nor do they appear to be regularly updated or as effective as they *could* be.

In general, the course content is not as up to date as it should be. Some courses are more timely than others; while some do not adequately teach or support critical thinking. The resource lists / bibliographies are not up to date in many cases, nor do they represent diversity in the respective subjects. The EEC recommends that the institution review the resource lists / bibliographies from a *decolonial* perspective given the School's stated aim to become a leading provider in ADM in the MENA area.

In general, the course content is not making the best use of contemporary art galleries, museums and design institutions in the city. Such organisations are vital learning resources and should have a clear place in the curriculum to foster understanding of CURRENT art and design research in professional settings.

There isn't particularly strong integration of digital technology with the programme; more could be done here to ensure digital media and relevant digital forms of communication are integrated with the programme.

Learning Platform / Learning Management System (LMS) There's very little use of educational technologies, or the use of new technology in general in order to make the teaching process more effective and relevant. An LMS allows course content to be made public (Golden Copy) and to be updated on-the-fly where and when it can have pedagogical impact. What are the plans to

generate more blended approaches; could the institution use this to support students who are in more remote locations in Cyprus? How might each course revise and bring its methods, tools and materials up to date? The creation of a highly effective self-hosted LMS doesn't have to have any costs beyond install and maintenance. For example, Commons-in-a-Box is free and runs on WordPress – it can work with other freeware and open-source tools. Staff and students in ADM need to learn how to use such open-source tech – it is vital to the profession. The LMS enables better communication with students around what they should be doing and opens up new possibilities for teaching.
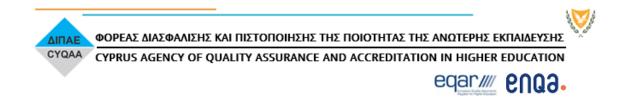
The criteria for the method of assessment are published in advance but they are not clear enough; please clarify what is assessed and how. The Institution does use marks (0-100% scale) but the institution does not have any marking criteria (i.e. it cannot tell us what 72% means). It needs to rationalise this by clarifying that it operates a straightforward pass/merit/distinction CMS – removing all references to % or numerical scales.

The assessment process as it stands doesn't *always* allow students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved since there's an inconsistent alignment between the LOs and the assessment criteria.

Students are given feedback, but it's not clear what form this takes (is it verbal or written or both) or when it is given. An external examination panel need to be able to read or listen to examples of useful feedback for learning given to students in order to assess how effective it might be. Useful feedback has to be linked to advice on the learning process; this requires some work on the Learning Outcomes and criteria. See: EEC recommendation on written feedback.

Students need more support on their general competencies and transferable skills; given the existing courses are already trying to do too much, a course focused on educational skills (learning-to-learn), information management, academic integrity and research methods/ethics really would help here. This would support the students' abilities to think critically.

It is not clear what the procedures are for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning. How does a student make a complaint? What are the accepted grounds? Etc..

2.2 **Practical training**

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==Strengths== and ==Areas of improvement and recommendations== below:

==Strengths==

The organisation and the content of practical training meets the needs of some stakeholders.

The technical fabrication workshops are well established and serve the current number of students on the programme well.

Staff work on their own projects in the same technical fabrication workshops and studios. This is a good teaching tool - allowing students to learn from observation and/or through an apprenticeship model of learning from assisting. There is some teaching innovation in relation to the use of field trips as learning environments. Arguably the institution doesn't make enough of this as an asset. It should also draw more on its theatre teaching and its links with KE partners.

==Areas of improvement and recommendations==

The institution doesn't have a clear method of understanding and verifying that staff have the requisite skills and recognised qualifications (e.g. an MA or BA) to *teach everything*. For example, staff who are, perhaps, well-suited to work as technicians may not be academically qualified to teach students in the art and design aspects of their studies.

Practical and theoretical studies are NOT interconnected in ways that develop critical thinking. Practical and theoretical studies cannot be connected presently since the theoretical studies are focused on pre-Renaissance European culture, while the practical courses focus on contemporary ADM. Theoretical studies do not address Design or Media, since Design is largely an invention of the C19th, nor do they adequately address 'art' (a post-Renaissance invention).

The *practical* courses do not provide theoretical instruction at the appropriate Level (EQF5). The institution should review theoretical studies in all of its courses and ensure that the art history courses focus on ADM with a particular attention to developments **since 2000**.

2.3 Student Assessment:

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the ==Strengths== and ==Areas of improvement and recommendations== below:

==Strengths==

All staff assess students holistically, taking their development over the whole semester into account.

The staff offer lots of useful feedback and do so continuously. (While useful feedback is not assessment, it is as supportive of learning as assessment.)
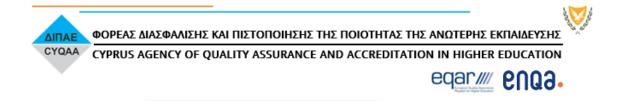
A formal procedure for student appeals is in place. However, it should be in the Assessment Regulations.

==Areas of improvement and recommendations==

There a large number of issues with assessment in relation to **ESG 2015**:

The institution's stated procedures are still opaque (rather than transparent); meaning that assessment is not quite consistent enough. An example of a knock-on effect here, is that there are very different processes pursued in courses of = #ECTS in terms of LOs, workload, criteria, etc. The fact that the stated procedures are not crystal clear, makes it hard to ascertain if assessment is always fairly applied to all students.

The Assessment Framework *is published* in advance but is not comprehensively clear. The institution makes use of marks (0-100% scale) but this scale is contextless so it doesn't *mean* anything (e.g. the institution would not be able to explain what 72% means or how numerical grades are used to calculate ungraded/pass/merit/distinction in the course or programme as a whole). This can be fixed easily by simply removing all references to 0-100% scale marks and

instead only using the ungraded/pass/merit/distinction as the Common Marking Schema (CMS) within the overall Assessment Framework. So, the EEA highly recommend that the institution remove the use of 0-100% scale and simply have ungraded/pass/merit/distinction framework as the CMS.
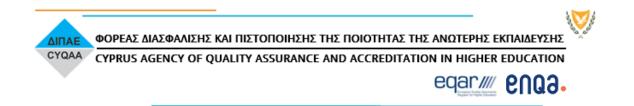
The rules for calculating the overall pass/merit/distinction need to be published as part of the Assessment Framework for the institution - within a singular, definitive set of Assessment Regulations. This, along with the CMS itself, should be published as part of the institution's definitive set of Assessment Regulations and be upheld by the institution's QAE Policy.

Generally speaking, assessment does not *allow students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved* - since the LOs and the Assessment Criteria/Assignments are not consistently aligned *in every course.* There are a number of courses where this does happen, and equal number where it does not. The EEC can provide examples to help here.

Students are given feedback, but it's not clear what form this takes (is it verbal or written or both) or when it is given. A panel of external stakeholders should be able to read or listen to examples of useful feedback for learning given to students in order to assess how effective it might be. (This is something that might happen at the end of the programme to confirm the Diploma.) Useful feedback has to be linked to advice on the learning process; this requires some work on the Learning Outcomes and criteria.

Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner? It is not clear when or where this happens presently. This needs to be implemented at the Institutional Level as a singular set of Assessment Regulations. To ensure fairness, the examiner really should not be the tutor/Course organiser; there should be more than one examiner (a team or moderator at very least). The use of feedback **and** grading moderation and a Moderation Policy in the Assessment Regulations is needed here.

There is insufficient evidence to support the contention that *all* Assessors are *consistently* familiar with existing testing and examination methods or that they receive support in developing their own skills in this field. Staff who have studied at masters or degree level tend to be more familiar with existing testing and examination methods and should be enlisted (perhaps as an Academic

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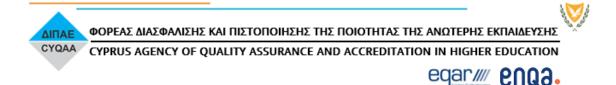CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Director) to support and train junior staff. The institution has provided boilerplate on both topics but no empirical evidence of a) what assessors know b) what training, exactly, they have been given. The course docs show no real updated understanding of learning design such emerging Universal Design for Learning (UDL) standards.

The EEC can't be sure if the Assessment Regulations consider mitigating circumstances. This should be stated clearly in Assessment Regulations.

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

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

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

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.*

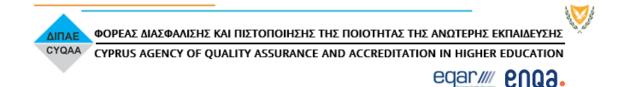**3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

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.*

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> - *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)?*

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Findings
All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

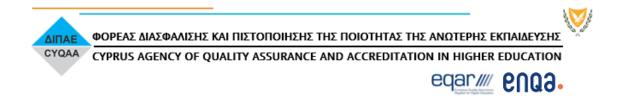Staff are diligent, dedicated, engaged, engaging, highly committed teachers.

Recognised visiting teaching staff participate in teaching the programme.

There is some teaching innovation in relation to the use of field trips and live research projects as learning environments. Arguably the institution doesn't make enough of this as an asset. It should also draw more on its theatre teaching and its links with KE partners (particularly with schools).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*

The institution appoints staff without a clear system of ensuring their competence a) as established researchers/practitioners in their ADM field b) as experienced/trained teachers in

ADM. The teaching staff qualifications are not *consistently* adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.

> a) proof of being an established researcher/practitioner in ADM would be a prerequisite to teach at this level. Teachers should have a degree that is a level *higher* than the level they are teaching at.

> b) an experienced teacher in ADM would have worked in a number of academic environments over 5 years or more, and thus have solid comparative understanding of the QAE standards of trained teachers; failing this, they would have completed accredited training that supports teaching in Higher Education.

The institution has appointed some members of staff who do not yet hold a first degree in their teaching specialism; this is highly unusual.

Aigaia, like any other employer, needs to ensure that employment law is followed transparently and that there are no ethical conflicts of interest or hidden biases within its system of line management (annual performance review, staff training and staff promotion). This is particularly important to address across all aspects of the institution's governance since family members work together in the School.

The teaching staff are regularly engaged in professional and teaching specialism-skills training (e.g. through Erasmus+), but not in training that relates more specifically to teaching in higher education.

As a result of the above points, the EEC are not certain that transparent and clear processes for the recruitment of the teaching staff are in place that appoint staff on a competitive basis based on competence, qualifications and experience as would be the case elsewhere.

More innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies should be encouraged.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the <mark>*Strengths*</mark> and <mark>*Areas of improvement and recommendations*</mark> below:

Strengths

The staff:student ratio is very low, which means it is more than adequate to support the programme of study.

The institution appoints a very small number of full-time staff. Full-time staff take on a broad range of institutional roles, teaching, administrating, and governing the institution. This enables staff to develop a range of non-subject specialist skills and diversify their own skills portfolios.

The institution appoints a number of visiting staff (part-time) with fixed-term fractional contracts to teach specific courses related to their specialisms. This can be *appropriate to offer a quality programme of study, and is used in the ADM sector.*
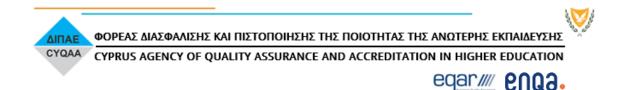
Areas of improvement and recommendations

The institution appoints a number of visiting staff (part-time) with fixed-term fractional contracts to teach specific courses related to their specialisms. This generates precarity for staff who are reliant on their 'elective' courses being chosen by enough students to determine that they will run. Visiting staff (part-time) with fixed-term contracts are thus disadvantaged by the course elective system. The consolidation of the courses (such as *Introduction* to… 3ECTS) would eliminate this issue and ensure that such staff could be employed on a permanent fractional contract.

The institution appoints a very small number of full-time staff. Full-time staff take on a broad range of institutional roles, teaching, administrating, and governing the institution. Administration and governance are – perhaps – understaffed, or stretched, in comparison with teaching and are not yet quite *appropriate to offer the highest quality programme of study* that the institution aspires to provide.

As demonstrated above, teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) are *not* consistently 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 EEC could not confirm if the visiting staff number exceeds the number of permanent staff.

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3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

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 research outputs - *conducted in their own spare time* - are within the discipline.

Members of the teaching staff are supported in the development of their teaching skills through Erasmus+ staff exchange.

The School involves visiting teaching staff from Cyprus and abroad.

Teaching staff research outputs - *conducted in their own spare time* - are closely related to the programme's courses.

Staff are not paid to conduct research so there is no allocation of time for research activity. The staff, nevertheless, do research which is highly commendable.

How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills? How is the teaching performance assessed? The institution does this informally, via group discussion.

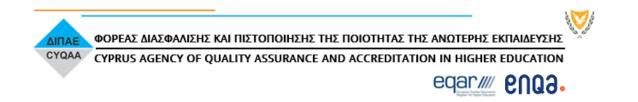*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

Staff should sign up to free online teaching development courses offered by Universities within the EU and complete them for accreditation.
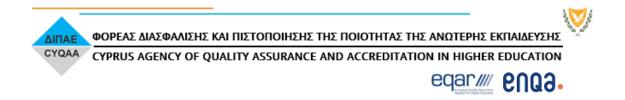
Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff?

The EEC didn't see the evaluations, but the team clarified that they take place.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially 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?*

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

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.

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:
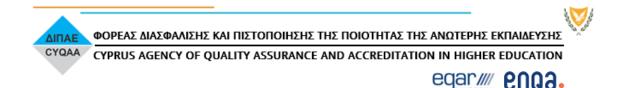
Strengths

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

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. The School has one scholarship that can help with widening access (1 for 15 students is a good ratio to maintain.)

The EEC have no *Areas of improvement or recommendations* here.

4.2 Student progression

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

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.

The EEC have no *Areas of improvement or recommendations* here.

4.3 Student recognition

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition (and RPL) for entrants are in place

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Badge the Diploma as Level 5 to ensure coherent recognition across the EHEA?

4.4 Student certification

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:
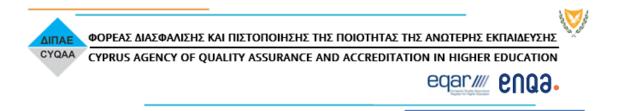
Strengths

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition for graduates are in place

Students receive EDS (European Diploma Supplement) *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.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The school should ensure that it produces a detailed EDS for each graduate. If the school implements a pass/merit/distinction approach to Diploma classification, it should supplement the

EDS by writing short contextualising exit references for each graduate, stating where they would rank them in relation to the cohort as a whole (i.e. 4th out a cohort of 15).
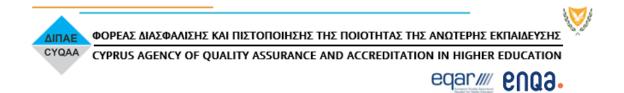
Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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.*

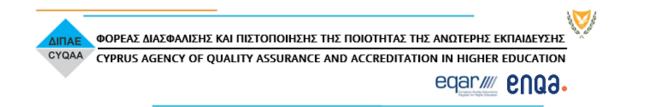## 5.4 Student support

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?*

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Findings

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enqa.

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

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

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.). As the cohort increases, access to peer-reviewed e-resources will be important, as will something akin to SCONUL Access to other University libraries in Cyprus.

Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources*.*

The EEC have no *Areas of improvement or recommendations* here.

5.2 Physical resources

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
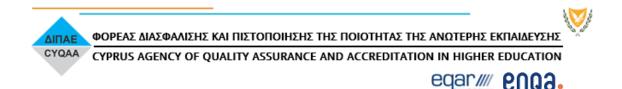
The purpose-built studio and teaching environment is an excellent, well equipped, and uniquely appointed, school for art and design. The ancient tomb, theatre space and outdoor spaces are valuable additional features that make the school stand out in this respect.

Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the number of students currently on the study programme

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

The EEC have no *Areas of improvement or recommendations* here.

5.3 Human support resources

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors are adequate to support the study programme.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

As the School grows in size, it could benefit from appointing specially trained student counsellors, careers advisers, and qualified specialist administrative staff.

5.4 Student support

Findings

All of the findings are incorporated into the *Strengths* and *Areas of improvement and recommendations* below:

Strengths

Student support is provided covering the needs of the current (homogeneous) student population. As the population grows and diversifies (including more mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs) this will have to be reviewed and updated.

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 via Erasmus+. Engagement with Erasmus+ student (and staff) mobility is highly commendable.

The EEC have no *Areas of improvement or recommendations* here.

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

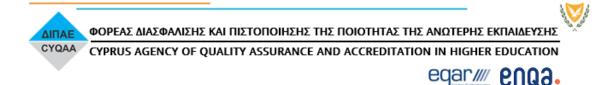| Sub-area	*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*

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*
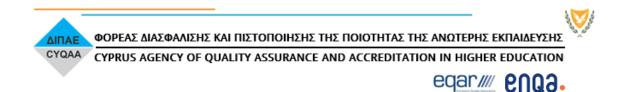
6.2 Proposal and dissertation

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*

- o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o *support for writing research papers*
  - o *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.

This is not a doctoral programme.

Strengths

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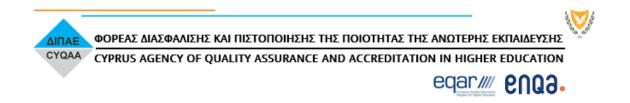
n/a

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.

n/a

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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 School is still relatively new and is still finding its feet in the world of Higher Education. It has been formed around provision to support students at EQF Levels 2, 3 and 4 to gain entry to Higher Education in ADM. The School is of vital importance in that it fills a gap in Cypriot art education where little provision is in place within the secondary school (EQF Levels 2, 3 and 4) system. Cypriot school students wishing to pursue a degree and career in ADM have few options to support their applications to ADM programmes. The School provides vital support here, running Portfolio preparation courses, GSCE and A-Level, and a BTEC in ADM. It is, thus, in a perfect position to enable transition through EQF Levels 4 and 5 and on to Level 6. This is the vital role that the school plays in the ecology of the arts in Cyprus.

The School is very small and niche; a strength that it recognises, but, also, a weakness that it perhaps does not recognise as clearly ;) The School has come a long way in a very short space of time and during a period in Cyprus that has been fraught with unimaginably difficult conditions. The staff and students should be very proud of what they have achieved here.
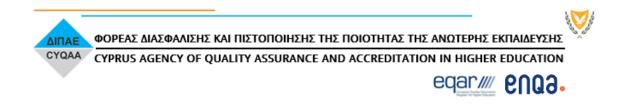
The institutional fleetness of foot that circumstances have afforded here is a great gift - it's something that the School should be very careful to retain if it wants to ensure that it plans for sustainable growth remain centre stage in what, and how, it teaches. To achieve this, the School may wish to commit to becoming a learning organisation (Senge 1992) and formally embed the values of research-led teaching in its Vision and Mission.

The EEC felt that the School was doing a very good job of managing all of the student support elements that a large institution would have to put in place. The staff do this by taking on multiple roles (both academic and para-academic) as is often the case in small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). They do this very professionally and the students are justifiably appreciative of their efforts.

While the EEC were generally happy with what they saw, we have identified a number of areas for Quality Enhancement that will need to be addressed by the School. What follows are some broad recommendations from the EEC to the School.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement for Level 5 Second Cycle

The main area for improvement lies in the design and maintenance of effective Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The Diploma requires that the institution understand and be able to *prove* parity with other institutions with validated Level 5 courses. This is where the Quality Assurance and Enhancement approach on the Diploma currently programme falls short. A number of measures can be put in place to rectify this:

Engaging with peer review by inviting in external stakeholders from academic and professional sectors would raise the educational standards of the institution and also enable it to make the most of its existing resources.

Engaging external stakeholders / more experienced academic staff in other institutions to mentor, support and offer 'critical friendship' for Curriculum Design and Development is essential in such a small specialist school Small specialist institutions in the vast majority EHEA states are required by law to take such measures to ensure their quality standards and, in the majority of cases to *validate their higher education programmes*. Hence, the EEC feel that, at very least, the School must seek to formally engage external stakeholders (including more experienced academic staff) from other institutions in the QAE processes, including the review and validation of its courses and programmes.

Engaging 'external' examiners to review final projects would help raise the standards expected from students. External examiners must have academic expertise; a team *might* also have professional expertise (ideally both).

Implementing both externality measures would significantly raise confidence in the ability of the School to meet, maintain and enhance standards in the Diploma.

Support for Academic Faculty: Learning and Teaching support and enhancement

Academic faculty are enthusiastic and dedicated and should be praised for the wide range of responsibilities they undertake. They need to be supported and trained in-service as teachers and researchers to ensure that their teaching and research matches the standard the School presents through its PR. There are many excellent, free, accredited courses that would also help to support and improve staff as teachers. The EEC highly recommend than all academic faculty complete the following free online courses in due course as part of their professional development training:
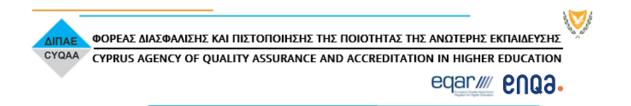
> Contemporary Approaches to University Teaching (HE) **(38hrs)** *Course is offered by CAULLT - Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching.*

> Get Interactive: Practical Teaching with Technology, *coursera*, Offered by University of London, Bloomsbury Learning Exchange. **(15hrs)** This would support and fill gaps in the School's use of learning technologies.

Renumerated time should be allocated specifically for training in staff workload plans. (e.g. 38hrs spent on Contemporary Approaches to University Teaching must be remunerated at 38hrs.)

Pastoral care is excellent in this small specialist school. As the school grows, it needs to grow its expertise in Quality Assurance and Enhancement, research and student support and begin to create specialist roles here, employing additional staff to focus exclusively on such work.

Support for Academic Faculty: Researcher Development

If a BA programme is on the horizon then the institution needs to begin to develop a research culture. Currently, there is no research culture. In short, without a research culture, it will not be able to run a BA programme.

To create a research culture, the School should start by supporting (paying for) developing staff research competencies. The common route in the EHEA to this effect is as follows:

Consulting the EHEA Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The EHEA's RDF is upheld across Europe (including in many third countries such as Scotland and Georgia). The exemplar of what it includes is the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (UK). Consult this and then work on the following:

TNA - research training needs analysis of each member staff.

What training can be provided for free, at cost? What can the institution afford?

Supporting existing staff to complete higher degrees (Second Cycle, Masters degrees are normative for staff teachign BA students) while they continue to teach.

Hiring new staff with more advanced qualifications (Second Cycle, masters) and engaging more high profile visiting artists/designers *specifically* to raise the bar in terms of research culture.
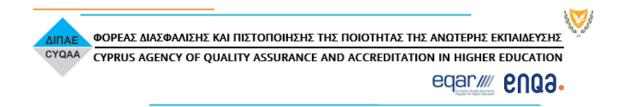
Supporting micro-residents of this advanced calibre as researcher-in-residences at the school (with studio and accommodation support, plus an exhibition).

Programme of Study

The EEC met with students to hear about the programme, the institution and their own work. While the students were highly enthused about the institution and their tutors, the EEC were not convinced that the students had a sufficient grasp of the current state of the field of ADM. Their contextual knowledge was *not* current and their frames of theoretical and practical reference were not adequate and up to date. This would severely hamper their educational progress if they were to transfer from their Diploma to a BA programme in Cyprus or, indeed, anywhere in the EHEA.

The content and ambition of the courses needs to improve to ensure they are kept up to date with the latest developments in ADM so that students are adequately prepared for transition to work or further study. *Replacing* the extant History of Art courses is key to this; **AND** updated ADM theory provision (Visual Culture courses) that is focused on contemporary resources and debates are essential.

The small scale, supportive family structure is clearly very appealing to the current cohort of students. However, this kinship model is also a source of complacency among the student body regarding what they think they know and what they imagine they might need to learn. It creates a bubble that leads to a lack of accountability vis a vis the ADM field and in relation to QAE. Students need to be challenged (dissensus), this means they have to have their world-views
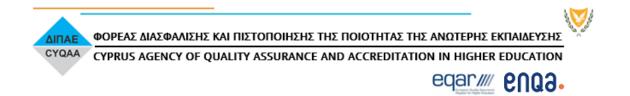
disrupted and be asked to step out of their comfort zones. The students need to have support *and* to be given rigorous feedback. The emphasis is very much on support but not enough on rigour.

Administration

The Institution should simplify its structures and procedures for administration, assessment and governance to ensure that they deliver what they say they deliver.

The Institution must remove all conflicts of interest from its QAE processes; consider adding external academic members of staff to your Course Review and Approval Panels.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof Neil Mulholland	
Professor Xenofon Bitsikas	
Professor Susanne Clausen	
Maria Agisilaou	

Date: 18th May 2022