ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar enqa.

Doc. 300.1.3

Feedback Report from EEC Experts

Date: Date

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Neapolis University
- **Town: Pafos**
- **School/Faculty:** School/Faculty
- **Department:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study under evaluation**
  Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:
Πληροφοριακά Συστήματα και Ψηφιακή Καινοτομία (1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Συμβατικό/Εξ Αποστάσεως)

In English:
Information Systems and Digital Innovation(1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, Master, Conventional/E-Learning)

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

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws" of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	*Position*	*University*
Stuart J. Barnes	Chair	Newcastle University, UK
Mauro Cherubini	Member	University of Lausanne,Switzerland
Thomas Heide Clausen	Member	Ecole Polytechnique,France
Olaf Zawacki-Richter	Member	University of Oldenburg,Germany
Marilena Lemonari	Student Member	University of Cyprus

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) and the Higher Education Institution's response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.

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

   (*ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9*)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution **29-07-2024**	Actions Taken by the Institution **30-10-2024**	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Make the Quality Manual publicly available on-line.	Done. We are pleased to inform you that the Quality Manual is now publicly accessible via the following link. https://policies-nup.netlify.app/		The committee found the front page of the documents but were not able to access any of the files indicated. We also consider that policies should be clearly accessible from the institutional webpage. We do not consider the actions taken to be satisfactory and recommend that the documents are made available and accessible from the institutional webpage.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution **29-07-2024**	Actions Taken by the Institution **30-10-2024**	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Make the on-line program description provide links to detailed course syllabus and descriptions.	Done. Taking your suggestion into consideration, we have now included links to these detailed course syllabi on our programme page. They can be accessed at: https://www.nup.ac.cy/msc-in-information-systems-and-digital-innovation/		Although the committee could find a list of the modules (under "Courses"), we could not find any details. Under "Programme Structure" there is an overview of some of the modules, though not detailed syllabi. We do not consider the response satisfactory and recommend that the detailed syllabi are made easily accessible / available.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution **29-07-2024**	Actions Taken by the Institution **30-10-2024**	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Establish a formalized system for tracking and recording careers of graduates of the program.	Done. We are pleased to inform you that we have already implemented a system that effectively tracks the career progression of our alumni. This system involves regular surveys and outreach efforts, conducted in collaboration with our alumni association. This ongoing tracking allows us to gather valuable data which is crucial for assessing the impact of our programme and continuously refining our curriculum to meet both current and future industry demands.		This is a welcome initiative. It is essential to evaluate the success of using this information for continuous program development in the next programme cycle. We would also like to see further development of procedures for using this information for curriculum development.

Ensure that the training -- both through each individual course, through dedicated methodology courses, and through the dissertation (i) enables the students to develop critical analysis/thinking, (ii) enables the students to develop critical analysis of their own work, and (iii) enables assessment of these skills, to a level in conformance with the QF-EHEA ”Second Cycle” and EQF ”Level 7” standards. Please see further recommendations for actions detailed below.	Thank you for your emphasis on the critical aspects of our programme. We ensure our training aligns with the QF-EHEA “Second Cycle” and EQF “Level 7” standards through several integrated approaches: **Individual Course Design:** Each course is designed to include assignments and projects that require analytical thinking and critical evaluation of complex issues. We use case studies and real-world scenarios to encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge practically and critically. We implement project-based learning where students tackle real-world problems requiring innovative solutions. Each project is structured to prompt students to question norms, assess various perspectives, and develop substantiated conclusions. Regularly scheduled debate sessions are also incorporated into the curriculum, where students are assigned different viewpoints on a topic relevant to the course, fostering therefore, deeper understanding and the ability to argue and critique different angles logically and persuasively. Additionally, students are tasked with assignments that require them to perform SWOT analyses, risk assessments, and economic impact analyses, which teach them to think critically about various business scenarios and to develop strategic responses. **Dedicated Research Methodology Course:** We offer a specialised course focused on research methodologies and with your recommendations on how to restructure this, our students now train not only in data collection and analysis but also in critically assessing the methodologies themselves as well as applying statistical software tools and data analysis techniques to interpret data critically, identify patterns, and draw evidence-based conclusions. A key component of our methodology course		It is not actually clear from the “Actions Taken by the Institution” whether new actions were taken, or whether the response is a rebuttal to the findings of the committee stating that actions already in place are sufficient. The findings of the committee included, for example, that for the completed master’s dissertations that were provided: “they successfully 'produced an artefact’ or ‘accumulated descriptive data’, the application of critical analysis was wanting.” Concrete actions here would be introduction of a dedicated course on “The Scientific Method & Scientific Writing” or a strengthening and reorganisation of the curriculum in “IS509”, notably with mechanisms for evaluating that students understand how to apply this prior to commencing their dissertation. The findings of the committee also included: “courses are presented as exclusively focused on 'specific technologies’ and not on general methodologies and architectures. A consequence of that is, that they seem to be ‘preaching for a specific technology or methodology’ (…) and do not provide the background to allow, or training in, critical analysis of an area” Concrete actions here include adaptations to the course syllabi — for example, IS503/DIS503. While an evolution of the syllabus is presented, the changes are nonetheless marginal, and still appear as “presenting a catalogue” rather than a “critical analysis of” the project

	is the exploration of ethical considerations in conducting research. This not only enhances students' ability to conduct ethically sound research but also encourages them to think critically about the broader impacts of their work on society and the environment. **Dissertation Process:** The dissertation is a pivotal component of our program. Students are mentored to develop a thesis that is original and reflective of high analytical rigor. Regular feedback sessions with their supervisors help students to critically assess their work and refine their arguments, ensuring alignment with high academic standards. **Assessment:** Assessment strategies are designed to measure clarity, depth, originality and rigor in argumentation and analysis. This includes rubrics that specifically evaluate critical engagement with content and the ability to synthesise and evaluate information effectively. Oral defences, peer reviews, wikis, video presentations, teamwork and reflective essays are also utilised to assess these skills comprehensively. **Continuous Improvement:** We continuously review and update our curriculum and teaching methods based on feedback from academic peers, industry stakeholders, and our students, ensuring that our educational offerings remain relevant and rigorous. These strategies collectively ensure that our students not only meet but exceed the expectations set by the QF-EHEA "Second Cycle" and EQF "Level 7" standards, preparing them for their future careers and higher academic pursuits.		management methodologies, their strengths/weaknesses/applicability spaces. The same comments were made to other modules by the committee. While evolutions of the syllabi for those have occurred, they are again marginal. Courses appear to be "evangelising" a technology/method and do not go far enough on the "critical analysis" thereof. The committee maintain that the recommendations from the initial report stand and should be implemented forthwith.

Increase student engagement in the formulation of their dissertation project, to enable that they develop intellectual independence through this process (e.g., take the initiative and prepare proposals, under the guidance of their supervisors).	Thank you for your suggestion to enhance student engagement in the formulation of their dissertation projects. We would like to highlight that our programme actively involves students in this process. The dissertation is a central element of our programme, designed to develop students' ability to conduct independent research underpinned by robust analytical skills. Here are the detailed steps and supports in place. Each term, the programme coordinator organizes a meeting between students and all supervisors. During these sessions, supervisors share their research interests and engage in fruitful discussions with students. This collaborative environment encourages students to take the initiative and develop their own research ideas, aligning with their skills and interests. • **Proposal Development**: Students begin their dissertation journey with a structured proposal development phase, where they identify research questions, formulate hypotheses, and outline their research methodology. This phase includes proposal review sessions where students receive critical feedback to refine their approach. • **Research Supervision:** Each student is paired with a faculty supervisor who has expertise in the relevant research area. Supervisors meet regularly with students to discuss the progress of their research, address any challenges, and ensure the research stays on track and adheres to scholarly standards. • **Workshops and Seminars:** Throughout the dissertation process, students have the opportunity to attend specialised workshops and seminars that cover advanced research techniques, data analysis, writing for scholarly publications, and effective presentation skills. These sessions are organized by our		Thank you for this detailed description, which provides a more nuanced view of the process. It does appear to highlight the lack of a systematic literature review of related work, which is essential for the dissertation. We noted in our report that: “When an artefact was produced, no hypothesis was enunciated that the artefact would contribute to affirm or invalidate. In both cases, the use of, and critical positioning of, obtained results with respect to prior work and the state of knowledge in the field of work was not demonstrated.” Introducing a “critical related work survey” and positioning the proposal with respect to that survey as a (mandatory) step of the process, would help to address this problem. Overall, we consider that this problem has not been addressed sufficiently and make ethe following recommendations: • Amplify practical exercises on how to conduct and utilise literature surveys in IS509/DIS509. Specifically, the challenge is not to (section 3.2.2) manage a bibliography or to “criticise other research proposals and papers” — but should properly develop and refine a research proposal in view of previous work. This should is an important competency that this course develops in the students (Row 2 of the table in 3.2.2) — and the course syllabus adapted to do so. • Augment the master’s dissertation process to have the development of a relevant literature survey as a mandatory component • Introduce the positioning of the “artefact” produced as part of the master’s thesis with

	Pedagogical design unit and are designed to support all stages of the dissertation from initiation to completion. • **Final Submission and Defense:** The conclusion of the dissertation process is the submission of the final thesis followed by an oral defense. During the defense, students present their research findings to three committee panel, one of which is the research supervisor, who rigorously evaluate the quality of work and the validity of the conclusions drawn. Recordings of the defense and the dissertation are available in the university's Hephestos system. This accessibility allows students, faculty, and researchers to review past defenses and dissertations, promoting learning and transparency in the evaluation process. It helps students improve their presentation skills by reviewing their performances and serves as a valuable resource for future students preparing for their defenses. The archival of these recordings ensures that academic achievements are preserved, facilitating collaboration and ongoing research within the institution.		respect to related literature as an explicit and mandatory (and, potentially, failing) criteria when grading the dissertation.

As a particularly important part of the above point, deploy metrics that allow the dissertation to validate that the criteria of the QF-EHEA standards for "Second Cycle" qualifications are fully satisfied – notably with respect to "originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context".	We would like to assure you that we have a comprehensive system established to ensure that our dissertations meet these rigorous standards. Here's how we validate the originality and research context of our dissertations: 1. **Pre-Approval of Research Proposals**: Before beginning their research, students must submit a detailed proposal that outlines their research questions, methodology, and expected contributions to their field. These proposals are reviewed by a committee to ensure they meet the criteria for originality and depth required at the MSc level. 2. **Use of Plagiarism Detection Software**: All submitted dissertations undergo rigorous plagiarism checks using advanced software, TurnitIn, to ensure the originality of the submitted work. This helps in maintaining the integrity and uniqueness of research conducted under our institution's name. 3. **Evaluation Rubric with Specific Metrics**: We employ a detailed evaluation rubric that assesses various aspects of the dissertation: • **Originality and Innovation**: The extent to which the dissertation presents new findings or approaches within the field and the ability to publish in journals or present at conferences. • **Application of Ideas**: How effectively the student has applied theoretical concepts to solve practical problems or to explore new areas of research and the ability to critically analyse existing literature, methodologies and findings to develop well-reasoned arguments and conclusions.		The committee finds it reassuring that academic integrity is being treated very seriously. However, the key issue raised by the committee was that dissertations were not applying a critical analysis to the results they were presenting, with insufficiently formulated hypotheses, and a lack of juxtaposition of findings to the state of the art (see the table-line above for details and recommendations).

	• **Research Methodology**: The appropriateness and execution of the chosen research methods. • **Ethical Considerations:** Adherence to ethical standards in research and how the dissertation complies with ethical guidelines, data privacy and research integrity, particularly when it involves human subjects. • **Impact and Relevance**: How well the potential practical impact of the research on the field or industry, including its relevance to current challenges and knowledge gaps is demonstrated. • **Use of advanced tools and techniques** 4. **Viva Voce (Oral Defense)**: Students must defend their dissertation in front of a three member committee who rigorously evaluate the originality and applicability of their research. This oral defense helps to further validate the depth of understanding and innovation in their work. 5. **Continuous Improvement Processes**: Feedback from these assessments is used not only for grading purposes but also to improve the academic processes and guidance provided to future students, ensuring ongoing alignment with EHEA standards. We are committed to upholding these standards and continuously refining our assessment methods to support our students' academic and professional growth.		

Revise the individual courses to provide less of a “catalogue” of currently hot buzz-words, but to instead provide abstraction, methodology, and emphasis on critical reflection/evaluation of the topics taught and their applicability.	Done. We would like to inform you, as further discussed in the sections below, that we have revised our course offerings to provide a more in-depth and practical study of the various topics taught. We now emphasize a more methodological approach, focusing on critical reflection and evaluation. These updates are designed to better align with the QF-EHEA “Second Cycle” and EQF “Level 7,” as well as other comparable European programs. Our goal is to ensure that students gain a thorough understanding of the principles and methodologies underlying each subject area and how these can be practically applied. Specifically, the terms used in our Information Security course are not just trendy buzzwords; they represent essential concepts that are rigorously explored and applied in practice through various activities and labs. This hands-on approach ensures that students not only grasp the theoretical aspects but also understand how to implement and use these concepts in real-world scenarios. Additionally, we appreciate your concern regarding the potential emphasis on specific methodologies within the project management course. We would like to clarify that it is not the intention of the project management course to "preach" for a specific methodology, such as Agile. Rather, the course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of various project management methodologies and frameworks, including PMBOK and other planned based, predictive approaches alongside Agile. We emphasize critical analysis and ensure that students understand		Thank you for this information. We believe the revision are moving the course in the right direction. However, as mentioned above, we believe more work is needed to improve the offering to students. The revisions of syllabi are marginal. Modules appear to be “evangelising” a technology/method and do not go far enough on the “critical analysis” of these technologies or methods. To provide further direction on the required changes, we provide some specific examples: • In Project Management (IS503/DIS503), when do you chose one methodology over another? Is a hardware-intense or hybrid software/hardware project a good candidate for applying “Agile”? Would you be comfortable in an airplane where the flight-envelope-protection software was developed using “Agile”? If not, what would you be using? On the other hand, for an administrative IT system, why would Waterfall be better/worse than Agile? • In Blockchain (IS505/DIS505), the technology as an “academic object” is quite interesting. However, it is also observed that the real-world problems that “blockchain” can solve, are easier (and better) solved by simpler solutions. That doesn’t mean that blockchains shouldn’t be studied academically — but it means that when taught, this observation should also be taught, and the students should — in general — be taught to have a critical approach to all emerging and established technologies. To be even more

	where different techniques and choices are appropriate, as well as what alternatives exist and when they might be more suitable. Our curriculum includes case studies and articles that present different situations and highlight the appropriate methodologies to be applied. This approach helps students appreciate the context in which different project management techniques are effective. To further ensure that this balanced perspective is clearly evident, we have updated the study guide to explicitly highlight these areas. Please refer to Annex 1 for the updated syllabi.		specific, when the syllabus in activity 1 (section 1.8) asks the students to answer questions "Why is blockchain significant in today's world?", "What are some benefits of blockchain technology for its users?", "Can you think of any industries or sectors that could benefit from using blockchain technology?" then that reflects a bias: Blockchain is a solution with benefits, and the goal here is to convert the students to also believe so. This is, incidentally, confirmed in the syllabus section 3.2.2: a critical view on, and a understanding of the application of, blockchain is not among the knowledge, skills, or competencies that the module seeks to provide. Given the above, the committee recommend that the syllabi continue to be further developed to rectify these problems.

Revise and extend the "Research methodologies" module to provide a complete view of systematic and scientific approaches that are used to conduct research, investigate problems, and gather data (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, case-studies, surveys, experimental ...) -- including how to formulate scientific hypothesis, and how to properly select, and deploy the techniques and procedures used to identify, collect, analyse, and interpret data, to ultimately affirm or invalidate the postulated hypothesis. This includes the teaching of basic statistical methods to analyse data such as ANOVA and regression. It is noted that one of the dissertations that we were provided with used very basic descriptive statistics that did not reflect well for Level-7 educational outcomes.	Done. We have taken your feedback seriously and have revised the module to provide a comprehensive view of the systematic and scientific approaches used in research. Here are the key enhancements we've made: 1. **Expanded Content Coverage**: **Diverse Research Approaches**: We have integrated an in-depth exploration of various research methodologies, including quantitative methods for numerical data analysis, qualitative methods for thematic and content analysis, mixed-methods approaches that combine both, along with specialized methods like case studies and surveys, and experimental designs to address different research questions and contexts. **Hypothesis Formulation**: The revised module now systematically guides students through the process of formulating hypotheses based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks. This includes identifying gaps in current research, defining variables, and setting parameters for measurable and testable hypotheses. 2. **Technique Selection and Application**: **Method Selection**: A comprehensive session has been added to teach students how to select the most appropriate research methods and tools based on the nature of their research question, the characteristics of the data they will collect, and the objectives of their analysis. **Data Collection and Analysis**: We now provide detailed training on various data collection methods, from designing surveys and conducting interviews to setting up experimental protocols. This is complemented by diving into data analysis techniques, ensuring students can effectively process and interpret their data using both manual methods and software tools.		Thank you for this information. Our points regarding the lack of critical analysis in juxtaposition with a literature review was mentioned above and is relevant here. The committee notes the comment: "We now provide detailed training on various data collection methods…" and "the module now covers advanced statistical techniques such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) …" However, the study guide that was provided for DIS509 at the time of the visit, and the study-guide provided in Annex 1 to the response, are both dated Paphos 2023. Furthermore, while "apply statistical analysis methodologies and understand their outcomes" does appear as a competency (section 3.2.2), this does not appear as a key concept (section 3.2.3), nor does it appear as a topic taught through the course (section 3.2.5) or as part of the topics for instructor lead sessions (3.2.6), individual sessions with mentor (3.2.7), or the interactive activities (section 5.1). In addition, this aspect does not appear to be part of the semester assignment or the final assessment of the module. In addition, the required and additional reading include no texts with respect to these topics. Based on the above assessment, the committee reemphasize the need for the HEI to implement the recommendations from the committee's initial report within the syllabus.

	3. **Statistical Analysis**: **Advanced Statistical Methods**: In response to prior feedback, the module now covers advanced statistical techniques such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), multiple forms of regression analysis, and multivariate analysis techniques. These sessions include hands-on practice with statistical software, enabling students to perform and interpret complex data analyses. 4. **Critical Evaluation**: **Interpretation and Validation**: Students learn to validate or refute hypotheses based on the strength and consistency of their data, and are taught how to critically assess the reliability and validity of their findings. These comprehensive enhancements to the "Research Methodologies" module are designed to equip our students with the skills necessary to conduct high-level research that is rigorous, ethical, and impactful. Annex 1 includes the updated Research Methods course syllabi.		

Revise the course offering to provide more in-depth study — to the point of attaining mastery of — the different topics taught in each course, in place of an introduction and overview.	Done. We would like to confirm that our course offering has now been revised to provide a more in-depth study of the various topics taught in each course, aiming for students to attain mastery rather than just an introduction and overview. Some of the courses have been updated with new titles to better reflect these changes in content and to appropriately match the enhanced Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs). **Updated Course Titles and Descriptions** **DIS506 Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovative Business Models (core)** This new course combines material from the previously named Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the proposed Digitally-Enabled Business Models course. It offers expanded learning outcomes by integrating the development of innovative business ideas, the implementation of digitally enhanced business models, and the utilization of technological tools into a single comprehensive framework. Students will have the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to practical examples and case studies, enhancing their ability to analyse and address complex business problems. The course delves deeply into the strategies and tools essential for digital innovation and entrepreneurship, including advanced applications of AI and machine learning, and features case studies on successful digital transformations. **DIS503 IT Project Management (core)** This course focuses on advanced project management techniques, processes and frameworks including PMBOK, agile		For a number of modules, detailed comments and further recommendations were made above (for DIS503, DIS509, and DIS505). In brief: • The syllabus that we have received for DIS509 has not been updated with statistical methods. • DIS509 should emphasise the use of bibliographic research for formulating and positioning a research proposal/topic. • DIS503 and DIS505 need to further position a critical view on the technologies and methodologies that they are covering. Regarding other modules, we note the following: • DIS506 has been updated. However, scrutinising section 3.2.5 in the 2023 and 2024 versions of the module indicate that the updates are mostly a reshuffling of the topics taught week-by-week, with some cosmetic changes: “Innovation Categories” is now called “Types of Innovation”; “Issues for Startups” is now called “Issues in Business Start-up”; “Introduction to the Digital Economy”, and “Digital Platforms” are removed; “Business Models” is scheduled for two weeks instead of one; and “Corporate Entrepreneurship and Organisational Creativity” have been added. While this reorganisation does makes sense, it seems less ambitious than it could have been,

	methodologies and stakeholder management, risk management, costing, budgeting and more preparing students to lead complex IT projects. The course has been enhanced with further formative assessments to enable students to understand the integration of AI tools in project management. This includes leveraging AI tools to facilitate project management and planning, improve efficiency, and enhance decision-making and collaboration with their teams. **DIS507 Disruptive Technologies and Digital Transformation (core)** This course provides a comprehensive study of disruptive technologies such as blockchain, IoT, AI, and their application in transforming business models and operations. Students explore how digital technologies can lead to failures and unintended consequences for organizations, but also, how technology can enable organizations to achieve a meaningful digital transformation and compete in the context of the digital economy. **DIS509 Research Methods (core)** This course offers an in-depth exploration of advanced research methodologies as per your previous recommendations, emphasising ethical considerations in the context of digital innovation. **DIS502 Problem Solving Programming with Machine Learning Techniques (core)**		especially regarding business models enabled by digitisation. However, the insistence on the proper inclusion of a biography is appreciated. • The document for DIS507 is dated "2023" and, notwithstanding an update of the instructors, appears identical to the one available during the site-visit. • The syllabus for DIS502 does appear updated. However, several objectives (3.2.2) seem out-of-place for an introduction to programming module, e.g., it mentions "You will be able to explain the concept of artificial intelligence in the context of an algorithmic strategy for solving a wide range of problems" and "You will be able to write research proposals and present research reports/summaries." These elements appears as if they should be in DIS509. Further, "You will be able to define what artificial intelligence is and how it is implemented in business" should be in DIS506. Overall, the module presented (3.2.5) should be entitled "Data Science Starter Course", and a relatively good one. • DIS501 appears identical to the version that was available during the site visit. Other specific issues worth noting are that Meeting 3 is dedicated to "Agile modelling" which would appear redundant alongside DIS503, and that that a session on how to "go from OO model to

	The changes in the course are significant, as evident from the substantial modifications to the teaching material over the 12-week period. The current curriculum focuses on a Machine Learning orientation grounded in programming concepts. While Python is the primary programming tool used, the focus of the teaching material is on general programming principles and their application to solving complex real-life problems with the aid of appropriate libraries. In addition to Python, we cover libraries such as Matplotlib, Pandas, and Scikit-Learn. We also provide students with equivalent libraries for other programming languages, including Java and C/C++. Consequently, most of the formative assessments are designed to be flexible, not requiring the mandatory use of Python. Students are encouraged to use any programming language that they find most convenient. The core principle of the course has shifted towards the use of algorithms supported by machine learning techniques to address complex real-world problems within a business context. As a result, students will be introduced to a multifaceted scientific field where business complements computer science and vice versa. They will learn machine learning techniques applied to business scenarios, ensuring that no prior business knowledge is required for computer science students, nor are advanced programming skills necessary for business students. Either computer science or business students will learn for first time how to implement AI techniques into real-life problems in the context of business. It is for this reason, that the semester project enforces students to elaborate on a business problem.		OO code" would be relevant to understand how to transform a design into an implementation/realization. • The revised and original DIS508 documents are both dated 2023. However, the content appears revised concert with the recommendations of more in-depth treatment of the different topics. This is welcomed by the committee. • The DDM515 syllabus appears identical to the version that was available during the site visit, and both documents are dated 2023. • The document for DIS504 is dated 2023, as with the document that was available during the site-visit. Outside of formatting and layout, the two documents appear identical. • For DIS511 the Program Learning Objectives have been changed slightly, but are not reflected in the specific objectives (3.2.2) or the Course Content (3.2.5).

	DIS501 Information Systems Analysis and Design (core) This course offers a comprehensive study of the principles and practices of information systems analysis and design. It covers the design and development of information systems through understanding and detailing system requirements and how system components should be implemented and integrated. The curriculum includes techniques for data requirement collection and analysis, methods for data modeling at conceptual, logical, and physical levels, and comparisons of different approaches considering their advantages and limitations. In particular it provides students with a practical and theoretical insight into the methods, attitudes, techniques and tools employed in the analysis and design of complex Information Systems. Attention is given on problem structuring and design, the elicitation of requirements and finally modelling of those requirements using the Object Oriented and Structured systems analysis and design models and diagrams, thereby helping to produce efficient solutions to problems. The course has also been updated to reflect contemporary material on design thinking. This integration teaches students a human-centered approach to innovation, involving empathising with users, defining problems, ideating solutions, and prototyping designs. Real-world case studies and hands-on exercises allow students to apply concepts and techniques to practical scenarios, enhancing their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. By the end of the course, students will have a solid foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of information systems analysis and design, preparing them to tackle complex challenges in the field and		

	contribute to the development of innovative and effective information systems. **DIS508 Big Data and Analytics (core)** This is a comprehensive course that not only covers essential analytical methodologies but also integrates practical, hands-on experiences with the latest industry tools and technologies. It emphasizes hands-on projects using advanced data analytics tools and techniques, teaching students to analyse large datasets and derive strategic business insights. Students experience how managers move from the different possibilities that data create to generate meaningful information in a business context. They have the opportunity to reflect critically on the value of data in business, understand the impact of data, and explore different forms of data manipulation and visualization. **DDM515 Digital Marketing (elective)** This course explores advanced digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO) and content marketing etc., focusing on the integration of digital strategies into the business models. The course aims to equip students with a thorough understanding of the advantages of digital marketing and its crucial role in a company's success. Students will learn to develop digital marketing plans, conduct SWOT analyses, define target audiences, and effectively utilize various digital channels. Additionally, they will gain skills in integrating digital media, optimizing web pages, and improving search engine marketing. The course also covers creating Google Ads and social media campaigns, as well as understanding		

	Google Analytics principles to manage and enhance digital marketing performance effectively. **DIS504 Information security (elective)** This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the essential principles of information security. Students will engage with a broad range of topics, including the identification of security threats and attacks, the deployment of security technologies, and the application of access control mechanisms. The curriculum also encompasses cryptographic algorithms, physical security measures, and network security protocols. Furthermore, the course will address the management of security practices, the evaluation of information risk, and the legal and ethical issues pertinent to information security. Upon completion of this course, students will possess a deep understanding of the various types of security incidents and attacks. They will also gain expertise in effective methods for preventing, detecting, and responding to these threats. Through this course, students will develop the capabilities required to manage and mitigate information security risks in a wide range of professional settings. **DIS505 Blockchain and Cryptocurrencies (elective)** This course covers advanced blockchain technologies and their business applications, including in-depth case studies on blockchain integration in various industries. **DIS511 Behavioral Science and Decision-making with Modern Technology (elective)**		

	This course serves as a guide for strengthening decision-making and problem-solving skills in the modern professional environment, using science-based techniques, behaviorally-infused research methods and technology tools. Based on findings at the cross of managerial decision science and behavioural economics, the course provides students with an applicable understanding of how people make decisions, what drives us, the predictable errors in our cognitive thinking and how we can be nudged to improve our decisions. Drawing from the behavioral science field, the course examines ways in which decision-makers can: (1) improve their own decisions and (2) help those around them (teammates, managers, customers, suppliers etc.) make better decisions, ethically. **Dissertation (core)** This course ensures that dissertation projects reflect the integration of all PLOs, encouraging comprehensive research and practical application across various aspects of information systems and digital innovation. By implementing these enhancements, the programme now better aligns with the evolving needs of the industry and ensures that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the field of information systems and digital innovation. Please refer to Annex 1 for the revised programme structure as well as the updated syllabi.		

Introduce a course on “digitally-enabled business models” - both for ex-nihilo business creation, and for business transformation.	Thank you for your recommendation. We have decided to integrate the material of the proposed new course, “Digitally-Enabled Business Models,” into another course. The integration of the courses "Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship" and "Digitally-Enabled Business Models" is a strategic move that can offer significant benefits to both students and the educational programme. This integration is necessary as many of the topics and teaching material of the two courses overlap, resulting in duplication of content. In the Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship course, students are taught new technologies and Business Model Canvas analysis. In addition, they cover the principles of digital innovation, which are fundamental to understanding how businesses can leverage technology to innovate and remain competitive. Similarly, in the Digitally-Enabled Business Models course, students learn how to develop and implement business models based on digital technologies. The integration of these courses will prevent the repetition of much of the course material, providing a more coherent and cohesive learning experience. Rather than taking two separate courses covering largely the same topics, students will benefit from a single curriculum that provides them with a		As noted above, DIS506 is, indeed, updated — however looking at section 3.2.5 in the 2023 and 2024 versions of the course, the updates seem to (mostly) be re-shuffling the topics that are taught week-over-week, with some cosmetic changes. While this reorganisation does make sense, it seems less ambitious than could have been, especially regarding business models enabled by digitisation.

	comprehensive understanding of digital innovation and entrepreneurship. The new course offers more learning outcomes as it combines the development of innovative business ideas, the implementation of digitally-enhanced business models, and the use of technological tools in a single framework. Students have the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to practical examples and case studies, enhancing their ability to analyze and address complex business problems. In addition, the integration of the two courses is better adapted to contemporary business needs. The business environment is changing rapidly due to digital technology, and businesses require professionals with specialized knowledge both in digital innovation and in the development and implementation of digitally-enhanced business models. The integrated course equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet these demands, making them more competitive in the labour market and better able to contribute to the digital transformation of businesses. Based on the above reasons, we believe that the integration of the courses "Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship" and "Digitally-Enabled Business Models" delivers a rich, coherent, and effective educational experience. This approach ensures		

	avoidance of repetition, enhances learning outcomes, and adapts the curriculum to the current needs of business, better preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the digital business environment. Please refer to Annex 1 for the new course's syllabi.		

Calibrate the course load to approximate the expected 810 student-workhours per semester, as is expected for a full semester (30 ECTS), in place of the present 186 student-workhours.	Thank you for your comment regarding the course load calibration. We would like to clarify the existing structure and the calculation of workload hours associated with our courses to address the concerns raised. Each course in our programme is assigned 7.5 ECTS credits, adhering to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) standards, which equates to approximately 202.5. This calculation is derived from the ECTS guideline that 1 credit corresponds to 27 hours of student work. Our curriculum is designed to ensure that each semester, comprising four courses, aligns with the standard full semester workload of 30 ECTS credits. This equates to 30 ECTS x 27 hours = 810 hours per semester, precisely meeting the expected standard mentioned. The details of the workload for each course are meticulously outlined in our study guides, with an example table included in Annex 1 for your reference. These guides are readily accessible to both current and prospective students, ensuring transparency and understanding of the commitment required to succeed in our program. We continually assess and adjust our course content and workload to ensure it meets both academic standards and the practical needs of our students. This ongoing process reflects our commitment to maintaining rigorous academic standards while providing a flexible and supportive learning environment.		The committee remains concerned about the amount of contact time on the course and is equivalency to courses in other European universities. The students interviewed during the on-site visit indicated that they all had been able to maintain full-time employment, in parallel with following the programme. Some were also parents to young children with caregiving responsibilities. Further, the committee observed, and included in the report, that for e-learning students, each course comprises six synchronous sessions, each which with a duration of two hours. With four courses per semester, this means that each semester contains 48 contact-hours over 12 weeks. Adding the 10h/week of “outside contact hours” study time as indicated by the students interviewed by the committee, this equates to 168 “student-workhours” per semester — much less than a typical semester which would consist of 810 student-workhours. This is at odds with this being a full master’s programme of 90 ECTS. The committee maintains that the 7.5 ECTS that are given for each course is excessive and needs adjustment. For example, DIS504 comprises 12 “contact hours” plus outside contact hours. However, 40.5 hours (~1.5 ECTS) “study for assessment” sems odd, since this is the focus of the whole module; the basic biography comprises ~330 pages, counted as 22 hours (0.8 ECTS) which appears excessive.

			Without accessing the LMS, it's difficult to quantify if the various exercises and projects are correctly calibrated. However, courses of similar "content" (according to 3.2.5) taught at other EU institutions comprise an average of around 40 "contact hours" (plus student homework and self-study), and award between 3 and 5 ECTS. That makes for, at least, a 2.5 ECTS difference — which is significant. Again, students interviewed testified to spending "10h/week on their studies outside contact hours", which is not commensurate with the estimate that each course corresponds to a student-workload of 202.5 hours. All courses exhibit the same, notably fairly similar workload tables (section 3.2.8)

Extend the Adaptive Learning initiative from “within a course” to “between courses” to accommodate student background heterogeneity. For example, a student with an economics undergraduate degree may benefit from an “Introduction to problem solving programming” course — which would bore a CS undergraduate, who instead might benefit from a module on “Econometrics”.	Thank you for your thoughtful suggestion regarding the extension of our Adaptive Learning initiative to span across different courses, aiming to better accommodate student background heterogeneity. Currently, our adaptive learning framework, provided by McGraw Hill Publishing, is specifically designed to offer customized learning experiences within individual courses. This system enables us to tailor content adjustments and targeted readings that meet the unique needs and learning paces of our students within each specific course. At present, extending this adaptive learning model to operate between courses presents a series of challenges. The system is fundamentally designed to adapt content within the confines of a single course curriculum, focusing on optimizing learning paths based on student interactions and performance related to specific course material. Transitioning to an inter-course adaptive system would necessitate a more complex integration of curricular structures and a deeper understanding of cross-disciplinary student backgrounds, capabilities that the current system, provided by McGraw Hill, does not yet support. We recognize the potential benefits such an expansion would bring and are continually exploring ways to enhance our educational tools. We will certainly take this feedback into consideration as we plan future developments and potential collaborations that could enable a more interconnected adaptive learning environment.		The committee thank you for this information. We look forward to finding out about further developments in due course.

2. Student - centred learning, teaching and assessment

(*ESG 1.3*)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution 29-07-2024	Actions Taken by the Institution 30-10-2024	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Apart from learning together in the online classes, further opportunities for international experiences for distance learners could be explored, e.g., by inviting international visiting experts (virtual internationalization).	We continually strive to integrate global perspectives into our curriculum and have already implemented similar initiatives in some of our courses. For instance, our Disruptive Technologies course includes several guest lectures from international industry experts and other universities, which has greatly enriched the learning experience by providing diverse viewpoints and expertise. Examples of guest speakers include Dr Angelos Amanatiadis, Assistant Professor Democritus University Thrace, Dr Lefteris Doitsides, Assistant Professor Technical University of Crete, Dr Elias Kosmatopoulos, Professor Centre for Research and Technology Hellas, representatives from RootHunt, Nexxie Statare, BeepXtra, Jetbrains and others. We are committed to expanding such opportunities and exploring new ways to provide	As a postgraduate program, we continuously strive to provide our students with international experiences and access to distinguished experts. This semester, we have invited the following international specialists to speak to our students: • Dr. Angelos Amanatiadis, Assistant Professor at Democritus University of Thrace, as part of the *Disruptive Technologies* course. • Dr. Lefteris Doitsides, also as part of the *Disruptive Technologies* course. • Representatives from JetBrains, as part of the	The committee thank you for this information. We look forward to finding out about further developments in due course.

	our distance learners with valuable international exposure.	*Information Systems Analysis and Design* course. • The Cyprus Institute, offering a presentation on the use of the largest computational cluster for algorithm implementation, as part of the *Problem Solving Programming* course.	

The programme could consider utilizing better the university's external network of partners in the design and execution of its distance learning programmes.	We would like to assure you that our programme's content undergoes a rigorous and systematic review process every two years to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to technical, scientific, and societal shifts. This periodic review is conducted in consultation with our Scientific and Business Advisory Boards, which we convene once a year. Their collective expertise is pivotal in aligning the programme's offerings with the latest industry trends, scientific advancements, and educational best practices. Moreover, our commitment to a multifaceted and relevant curriculum is reflected in our partnerships with a diverse range of industry leaders. We have Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with over 20 companies that are part of our Business Advisory Board. Through this collaborative approach, we aim to equip our students with the skills and knowledge that are in demand across the industry, thus avoiding the risk of over-specialising the program in one particular direction. This structure of continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement ensures that our programme remains at the forefront of educational excellence, preparing students to meet the challenges of today's dynamic world.		The committee thank you for this information. We look forward to finding out about further developments in due course.

The course appears to have a limited amount practical lab content, which in the view of the panel limits the ability to provide solid, in-depth practical training. We recommend extending the depth of practical content on the programme.	Thank you for your feedback regarding the practical aspects of our programme. We appreciate your concern about ensuring our students receive substantial hands-on training. It's important to note, that our programme indeed includes significant practical lab content in key areas that are crucial for hands-on learning and across several key subjects such as Information Security, Problem Solving Programming with Machine Learning Techniques, Big Data and Analytics, and Blockchain and Cryptocurrency. In addition, however, we have updated our course offerings and below we present evidence of the practical and lab content included. **DIS504 Information Security** The course curriculum includes several lab-based simulation activities meticulously designed to enhance the learning experience. These activities focus on various competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and ethical decision-making. They are aligned with the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to ensure a holistic educational approach. The simulation activities are crafted to provide students with practical lab-based experiences that complement their theoretical learning. These activities enable students to apply concepts in controlled environments that integrates learning outcomes related to ethical		The committee appreciates the details provided in answer to this recommendation, and encourages the institution to both continue to develop the 'practical' / lab aspects of the program, and to emphasise those at the next accreditation round.

	decision-making and strategic planning, promoting a deeper understanding and mastery of the material. Further information is provided in Annex 2. **DIS502 Problem Solving Programming with Machine Learning** The structure of this course is intrinsically linked to the existence of a laboratory component. The nature of the course involves teaching programming frameworks for solving complex problems with machine learning. Additionally, it covers the application of artificial intelligence algorithms. Hence, the learning of machine learning algorithms and the use of Python as a programming tool will be conducted through examples that require students' participation in laboratory sessions. To enhance students' understanding and delve deeper into the advanced features of SciKit-Learn, Pandas, and NumPy, hands-on short projects should be integrated into the lessons. This practical approach will help reinforce their learning of each programming tool. Besides, both the theoretical and practical aspects of the course material will be developed simultaneously through the implementation/development of algorithms and codes. To this end, theoretical knowledge will be imparted in a laboratory setting to facilitate better assimilation by the students. This approach ensures that students are well-prepared for both graded and non-graded weekly assignments.		

	DIS508 Big Data and Analytics The course introduces students to cutting-edge tools and emerging technologies such as AutoML and advanced data mining processes. These tools are used in hands-on projects where students design and implement innovative solutions to tackle complex organizational and social challenges, ensuring they can apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems. Students learn to strategically apply technologies like SalesForce Tableau for data visualization and analysis. By engaging in interactive activities and practical labs, they develop the skills to use these technologies to meet and sustain organizational goals through effective data-driven decision-making. Through comprehensive modules on predictive and prescriptive analytics, the course enables students to utilize advanced data analytics and AI techniques. Hands-on exercises involving real-time data monitoring, integrated dashboards, and data storytelling equip students with the skills to solve complex business problems and drive organizational transformation. **DIS505 Blockchain and Cryptocurrency** The "Blockchain and Cryptocurrencies" course provides hands-on experience with blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies, focusing on practical applications through laboratory sessions. Students set up and manage private blockchains using Ethereum, develop smart contracts with Solidity, and deploy them on the		

	Ethereum test network. They create and manage cryptocurrency wallets, perform transactions on Bitcoin and Ethereum, and explore cryptographic principles like hashing and digital signatures. Additionally, students analyse blockchain data using tools like Blockchair and Etherscan, and investigate decentralized applications and DeFi protocols. This practical approach ensures students are equipped with the skills to apply blockchain technology in various business scenarios. Please refer to **Annex 2** for further Evidence of Practical Lab Content and in-Depth Training within our Course offerings. Additionally, it's essential to highlight that other courses in our curriculum, while not traditionally practical in terms of lab content or programming, still incorporate practical components critical to professional development. For example: **DIS503 IT Project Management course** requires students to engage in a comprehensive real-world project that simulates actual workplace tasks and the development of a detailed business plan, demonstrating a clear understanding of project goals, stakeholder requirements, and project scope. This project involves going through all the management steps to produce flexible schedules, resource allocations, budgeting, and cost-benefit analysis,		

	and present comprehensive risk management and mitigation plans using advanced project management tools. This approach ensures that students apply theoretical knowledge to practical, real-world business scenarios and case studies, providing a hands-on experience, as well as enhancing their learning and readiness for professional challenges. Additionally, this course has been updated to incorporate AI tools to facilitate project management, risk analysis and mitigation as well as to enhance team collaboration. This includes tools such as Spinach, Notebook LM and more. **DIS511 Behavioural Science and Decision-making with Modern Technology (elective)** The course integrates key practical elements to enhance learning. This includes the following: – Case studies are conducted in weeks 2, 9, and 10. – Data visualization applications are explored in week 8. – User journey mapping applications are utilized in weeks 5 and 8, and also during the mid-term. – ChatGPT is employed to support decision-making in week 3. – The EAST framework is applied to real-life problem-solving in the mid-term assignment. These components are designed to provide hands-on experience and practical insights into the subject matter.		

Discussions with students revealed that eLearning students could participate in the programme via watching recorded lectures, i.e., there is no mandatory attendance; some students graduate without actively engaging with their peers. This hinders the sense of community and being part of the team.	Thank you for your insights regarding student engagement in our eLearning programs. We appreciate your concern about fostering a strong sense of community and teamwork among distance learners. As per the guidelines provided by CYQAA, our programmes are designed to meet specific requirements regarding contact hours, and like other distance learning programs, attendance is not mandatory. This approach prioritizes flexibility, allowing students to manage their studies alongside personal and professional commitments. Additionally, as a university, we have established robust mechanisms to monitor student participation in the distance learning programmes. For synchronous sessions, which are conducted through MS Teams, we utilize the platform's automatic reporting feature. This allows us to track attendance and participation efficiently by providing detailed reports on who attended each session. For asynchronous learning, we ensure that students engage with the course material by requiring them to participate in weekly activities and submit assignments. These submissions, whether formative or summative, serve as a critical measure of student activity and engagement. By having a consistent submission		Thank you for this information. We would still recommend further work to improve the sense of teamwork and community of students on the programme.

	schedule, we can effectively monitor student progress and identify any potential issues early on. Furthermore, our use of Moodle provides additional oversight. Moodle tracks the last login time and session duration for each student, and this data is directly linked to our student risk platform. This integration is crucial because it alerts coordinators if a student has not logged in for more than three weeks, enabling timely intervention and support to help students stay on track. Overall, these monitoring mechanisms ensure that we have a comprehensive view of student participation and engagement in the programme, allowing us to support our students effectively and ensure their success in the course. However, we are committed to enhancing student interaction and engagement, which are crucial for a robust learning environment through several interactive formats. For example our courses integrate various collaborative tasks where students must work together to complete projects. This not only helps in learning from peers but also encourages building connections despite the physical distances. By involving students in the		

	assessment process of their peers' work, we create a constructive dialogue among students. This not only helps in learning from each other's perspectives but also fosters a sense of community as students interact more closely with the work of their peers. Additionally, we have vibrant online forums where students can discuss course materials, share insights, and even bring up new topics related to the course content. These forums are moderated by the course lecturer to ensure constructive and respectful discourse, promoting an inclusive and supportive online community. We will continue to explore and implement innovative methods to enhance student engagement and build a more connected eLearning community. Our goal is to ensure that all students, regardless of their physical location, feel an integral part of the academic community and fully engage in their learning journey.		

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution 29-07-2024	Actions Taken by the Institution 30-10-2024	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
1. There is a persistent need to hire additional staff with specific expertise in Information Systems. 2. Concretely, there are core learning objectives that are available in similar programmes in Europe which are currently not sufficiently developed in the programme under evaluation. 3. Specifically, the EEC recommends considering adding courses around design thinking, and (digital) business model design. 4. Related to this, the EEC recommends assigning the course of Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship to an instructor with formal training in the subject matter.	1. In response to the ongoing need to hire additional staff with specialised expertise in Information Systems, we would like to provide a detailed overview of our current staffing structure and highlight the qualifications of our existing faculty members. We ensure that each specialised course has a dedicated permanent staff member, and the workload distribution strictly adheres to university regulations, ensuring a balanced and effective teaching environment. So, our current staff includes: Dr. Avgousta Kyriakidou Zacharoudiou, an Associate Professor **with over 13 years of experience in higher education in the UK and extensive experience in programme coordination,** holds a PhD in Information Systems from **the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).** She also serves as an Associate Examiner for LSE's external Information Systems		We believe that the modules are moving the programme in a constructive direction. However, it is not clear if PLO8 is getting enough contact-hours and we strongly encourage this to be investigated and amended.

	programme and is a newly appointed external examiner for the University of Hull's programmes of studies. Dr. Kyriakidou Zacharoudiou's depth of knowledge and expertise in information systems are invaluable. She is actively involved in teaching the IS courses in our programme, such as IT Project Management and Information Systems Analysis and Design, bringing her practical experience into the classroom. Dr. Georgios Deirmentzoglou, Lecture, holds a PhD in Business Administration from the University of Piraeus and has extensive experience in strategic management, business models, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. He is the newest addition to our team and is responsible for the newly introduced course in Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovative Business Models, providing students with a strong foundation in strategic and sustainable business practices. Dr. Zach Anthis, Lecturer, holds a PhD in Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics along with an integrated MSc in Quantitative Methods from University College London (UCL), is an expert in Big Data Analytics and Blockchain. His expertise significantly contributes to our curriculum in AI and data-related fields, ensuring that students are well-versed in these cutting-edge technologies, and how they can be applied in real-world scenarios. Dr. Lefteris Zachariouadkis, an Assistant Professor with a PhD from the National Technical University of Ukraine, specializes in cybersecurity, system and network security, cryptography, and authentication/identification methods. His research and practical experience cover a wide range of cybersecurity issues from theoretical foundations to real-world		

	applications. His role in teaching these subjects ensures that our students receive comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in designing and implementing secure systems, providing them with hands-on experience and preparing them for careers in cybersecurity. Our permanent to part-time staff ratio is 70-30%, reflecting our commitment to maintaining a stable and highly qualified teaching faculty. The CVs of all of our full-time academic staff have already been submitted to CYQAA, demonstrating their qualifications and expertise in teaching the specialised courses offered in our programme. For further evidence, Annex 4 includes the report from the Information System Ergani, listing the academic staff who teach in our programme, in accordance with the announcement from CYQAA. Finally, we are confident that our current staffing structure, coupled with the qualifications of our faculty members, ensures the delivery of high-quality education and meets the rigorous standards expected by CYQAA and the Ministry of Education. 2. We are pleased to confirm that our programme learning outcomes have been enhanced and new learning outcomes have been incorporated to align more closely with similar high-quality programmes in Europe, ensuring that our graduates are well-prepared for the demands of the modern digital landscape. Below are the enhancements made to our Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), reflecting the core learning objectives observed in comparable European programmes:		

	[PLO1] Apply advanced tools and skills, exploiting emerging technologies, for designing, developing, managing and implementing innovative solutions that address complex organizational and social problems. Enhanced PLO1 now focuses on applying advanced tools and skills, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, IoT and blockchain, to design, develop, and implement systems. Emerging technologies are pivotal in addressing complex challenges, as well as driving strategic decision-making, operational improvements and innovation in businesses. **[PLO2] Practice essential skills and knowledge to manage and lead digital innovation and transformation initiatives within organizations.** Enhanced PLO2 now ensures that graduates will exhibit strong communication, leadership and other skills, and are capable of managing cross-functional teams and projects in multicultural and international environments. This also includes strategic digital transformation and change management initiatives within organizations. This update ensures that students are equipped to handle the strategic and operational aspects of digital transformation. **[PLO3] Strategically apply innovative information and communication technologies to achieve and sustain organizational goals.** Enhanced PLO3 now more clearly emphasizes the practical application and strategic alignment. Practical		

	application and strategic alignment are essential for ensuring that technology investments deliver tangible business value. **[PLO4] Analyse, design and manage information systems within the broader organisational environment to optimise performance and support innovation.** Enhanced PL04 now equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to analyse, design, and manage information systems within the broader organizational context and contribute to overall goals, ensuring optimal performance to meet user needs and standards. Students will be able to utilise information systems to support and drive different types of innovation within the organization, including process improvements, new product or service development, enhanced customer experiences, operational efficiencies, and strategic initiatives. **[PLO5] Utilise advanced data analytics and computational methods, including AI, to solve complex business problems.** Enhanced PLO5 now incorporates advanced data analytics, visualisation and computational methods, including AI, to solve complex business problems. Proficiency in Big data analytics and AI is critical for modern business operations. **[PL06] Apply ethical principles and data governance frameworks in the development and implementation of digital innovations.**		

	Whilst critical thinking and autonomous learning are important, they are often embedded within other outcomes. We have therefore decided to remove that from the Programme Learning Outcomes list and introduce a new Programme learning outcome that embraces the ethical considerations and data governance in digital innovation. These are increasingly critical in the digital age, ensuring responsible use of technology and data. **[PLO7] Demonstrate research proficiency by applying advanced research methods to solve real-world information systems and digital innovation challenges.** Enhanced PLO7 now emphasizes the application of research to enhance its relevance and impact and in solving real-world problems. **[PLO8] Develop and implement digital strategies and innovative business models to drive organizational transformation and competitive advantage.** This is a new Programme Learning Outcome that aligns with the focus on digital strategy and innovation seen in leading programmes. It ensures that students understand how to create and implement strategies and innovative business models that leverage digital technologies, which is crucial for modern business. By integrating these enhancements, our programme not only aligns with the high standards of similar European programmes but also provides our students with a competitive edge, enabling them to effectively address		

	contemporary challenges and leverage opportunities in the digital economy. Annex 3 includes the updated course mapping to the provided Programme Learning Outcomes. 3. We have integrated the proposed material on digitally-enabled business models into the existing Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. The course has been given a new title, Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovative Business Models, to reflect the changes in content and programme learning outcomes. Further details on this course were provided in the responses above, and the updated syllabi can be found in Annex 1. Additionally, the Information Systems Analysis and Design course has been updated to include content on design thinking, ensuring our students are well-versed in this critical methodology. Please refer to Annex 1 for the course's syllabi. 4. In response to the recommendation regarding the Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship course, we have assigned this course to a new instructor who has formal training in the subject matter. Annex 4 provides the new instructor's CV.		

The EEC recommends redefining the workload of the staff to accommodate more time for research. Generally speaking, the majority of time should be spent on research, especially for younger staff members (i.e., lecturers, assistant professors). For younger staff members, a reasonable split would be to allow 50% of the time dedicated to research activities throughout the year, and even during semesters.	We completely appreciate the much-needed time for research, particularly for our younger staff members, such as lecturers and assistant professors. We recognize the importance of dedicating a significant portion of their time to research to foster innovation and academic growth. To this end, we currently have measures in place that allow our staff to engage in research activities both outside and within term time. Staff members are given the flexibility to allocate their time between teaching and research based on their individual responsibilities and departmental needs. This includes the ability to focus on research during less intensive teaching periods. During the academic term, staff can dedicate a portion of their weekly schedule to research activities. Outside of term time, staff are encouraged to get involved with research projects, as this period provides an excellent opportunity for uninterrupted research, writing, and collaboration with peers. The university has designed a workload calculator to compute the total workload hours for university staff based on various activities and responsibilities. This tool helps in managing and balancing the workload of university staff by providing a detailed and structured way to calculate and monitor their various professional responsibilities, ensuring that no single task overwhelms an individual's schedule. Please see below for a step-by-step breakdown of how it works.		Thank you for providing this information. However, the response gives rise to s continued concern. We note that “Staff members are given the flexibility to allocate their time between teaching and research based on their individual responsibilities and departmental needs”. This creates more problems than it solves in our view. Introducing, and enforcing, an annual percentage of “mandatory research time” is not a constraint, but a guarantee that junior faculty members are able to develop, scientifically, thus continuing to be “on point” in their fields and with their teaching. It is not uncommon to see that lecturer/assistant-professors have a guaranteed annual 50% “research workload”, with associate and full professors having an expectation of more “service” and “teaching” (and so, a 30-50% research workload). The committee strongly encourages exploring this.

	Input Sections: The calculator is divided into several sections corresponding to different types of activities: • **Teaching Load**: This includes hours for conventional courses, distance learning courses, undergraduate and postgraduate thesis supervision, office hours, course coordination, participation in thesis evaluation committees, supervision of PhDs, and private tutoring. • **Administrative Duties**: Activities such as programme coordination, head of department responsibilities, and participation in departmental/school committees. • **Marketing Activities**: Includes tasks like writing newspaper articles, school visits, exhibitions, and presentations. • **Research Activities**: Involves preparing research proposals, writing journal articles (categorized by journal quality), and preparing conference articles. • **Other Activities**: Includes preparation of new study guides, updating existing study guides, preparing accreditation documents, and participation in accreditation processes. • **Hours Input**: Each activity has a predefined number of hours associated with it (e.g., per course for conventional teaching is 78 hours). • **Multipliers**: For some activities, a multiplier is provided to account for the number of occurrences or students involved (e.g., the number of students for a conventional course).		

	• **Calculation**: The calculator multiplies the hours by the respective multipliers for each activity to determine the total workload hours for that specific task. • **Total Hours**: The total workload hours are summed across all activities to provide an overall workload total for the staff member. • **Update and Calculate**: Users can update the inputs and recalculate the totals to ensure accurate workload assessment. • **Result Display**: The results for each activity and the total hours are displayed for review. The total number of hours should be up to 1600 for each academic member of staff to ensure a balanced workload. Furthermore, we offer research sabbaticals to provide staff with extended periods to focus solely on their research projects, free from teaching and administrative responsibilities. The institution, additionally, provides various forms of support, including research grants, access to facilities, and administrative assistance, to ensure that staff can pursue high-quality research. Finally, younger staff members are paired with senior researchers, acting as their mentors, to receive guidance and support in developing their research agendas and securing funding.		

	Our goal is to create an environment where staff can thrive in both their teaching and research roles, contributing to the academic excellence of our institution and therefore we are committed to continuously improve our support for research activities and refining our workload allocations. Please refer to Annex 5 for our research policy and Annex 6 for an example of the workload calculator.		

The EEC recommends encouraging staff mobility at all levels. Mobility is a fundamental activity for staff to create opportunities for scientific collaboration, to further the professional network and for professional development. Specifically, the HEI should clearly indicate that mobility is a favorable point for promotion and should encourage staff members to take leave (short-term and through the academic sabbatical) to spend time in other institutions and to collaborate with other colleagues.	Thank you for the recommendation to enhance staff mobility, which we recognize as a vital component for fostering scientific collaboration, expanding professional networks, and promoting professional development. We agree that mobility should be seen as a favourable aspect of a staff member's professional activities, especially when considering promotions. At our institution, we do encourage faculty members to engage in mobility opportunities, such as short-term leaves and academic sabbaticals, to collaborate with peers at other institutions. We acknowledge the immense value these experiences bring to individual career growth and to our academic community. However, it's important to clarify that while mobility is highly encouraged and favourably viewed, it is not a compulsory requirement for a promotion. We consider it a desirable attribute that can enhance a faculty member's profile and contributions but recognise that opportunities for mobility may not be equally available or suitable for all staff members due to various personal or professional constraints. We would nevertheless like to highlight that we are proud to be a member of Informatics Europe and the European Emerge network. These memberships play a crucial role in our commitment to staff mobility: • **Informatics Europe:** As a member of Informatics Europe, we have access to a broad network of academic and industry professionals in the field of informatics. This affiliation facilitates staff exchanges, collaborative research projects, and		Thank you for this clarification. The committee recommends continuing the encouragement of international staff mobility

	participation in international conferences and workshops, all of which contribute to the professional growth and development of our faculty members. • **European Emerge Network:** Our involvement with the European Emerge network further supports staff mobility by providing opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration across European institutions. This network focuses on emerging technologies and innovative research, allowing our staff to engage with cutting-edge developments and expand their professional horizons through joint projects, training programs, and knowledge exchange initiatives. These affiliations underscore our commitment to promoting staff mobility as a means of enhancing academic excellence and professional development within our institution. We continue to support and facilitate mobility opportunities and aim to provide the necessary resources and information to help our staff pursue these options when they are interested and able.		

The EEC recommends the HEI to clarify the promotion criteria through quantitative markers. The number of publications and the outlet considered valid for publication should be made clear in the promotion procedure to enable better progress through each level of the job ladder.	Thank you for your comment regarding the clarification of promotion criteria. We would like to confirm that we already provide clear and specific guidelines that aid our faculty in understanding how to progress through various academic ranks. Our promotion policy aligns with the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and the standards followed by other universities in Cyprus. Please see below for an outline of our promotion policy, which can be found in full in Annex 7. **Promotion Policy** **Application Process:** • Faculty members applying for promotion must submit a written request to the Dean of their School, accompanied by a cover letter justifying their request. They must also notify the Human Resources department simultaneously. **Eligibility Criteria:** • **Lecturers:** Eligible for promotion to Assistant Professor after three years of experience. The request is reviewed by a Progression Committee, as detailed in Stage 2 of the recruitment process. • **Assistant Professors:** Eligible for promotion to Associate Professor after at least four years of experience at Neapolis University. Their request is also reviewed by a Progression Committee. • **Associate Professors:** Eligible for promotion to Professor after four years of experience at Neapolis University.		The formal promotion process is well documented. However, the committee notes that the precise expectation (outside of "time in job") for promotion were not understood by the younger faculty members; there are uncertainties regarding reasonable scientific productivity for promotion to a given rank. Thus' the committee maintains it original recommendation of increased transparency and guidance on this matter.

	Review Process: 1. The Dean of the School submits the candidate's promotion request to the Senate. 2. Upon Senate approval, a Promotion Committee is established, similar to the Progression Committee but without declaring a new position. The process mirrors that of examining applications for new posts, without announcing the position. 3. The candidate is informed in writing by the School's administration of the Promotion Committee's composition, with simultaneous notification to the Human Resources department. **Stage 2: Application Evaluation** Applicants must submit an evaluation folder to the Selection Body, including: • Curriculum vitae with a list of publications by category, a summary of past and current research work, and future goals. • Teaching load details. • Student evaluations and overall academic performance. • Research projects, including original publications, particularly in international journals or independent scientific studies. • Contribution to society. • List of citations and book reviews.		

	• Administrative work, including participation in university coordination and administration. • Contribution to their School, including developing and revising programs and supporting administrative tasks. • Significant scientific distinctions and participation in research programs. • Ability to supervise and guide graduate students and academic staff in research. • Participation in the supervision and successful completion of PhD dissertations. The candidate must send the evaluation folder electronically to the President of the Progression Committee within one month of the Committee's appointment. The President then communicates the folder to other Committee members. The School's Administrator arranges the evaluation process, which can be conducted live or via Skype teleconferencing. **Stage 3: Final Evaluation and Decision** • Within ten days of the evaluation process, the Progression Committee submits a documented proposal and a confidential note to the Dean of the School. • Within five days of receiving the Committee's recommendation, the Dean forwards it to the Senate. • The Senate reviews the proposal and sends it, along with its decision, to the Council for ratification within five days.		

	• The Council ratifies the promotion and notifies the candidate through the Human Resources department. **Flexibility:** The above procedures are flexible and may be adjusted as needed. **Implementation Monitoring and Dispute Resolution:** The Rector and the Senate, with assistance from the Human Resources department, are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this procedure.		

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution 29-07-2024	Actions Taken by the Institution 30-10-2024	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
The course attempts to be catch-all for students from technical and non-technical backgrounds. This means that there is an inappropriate level of challenge for some students that may have previously covered content in their first degrees. It also creates issues in pitching the delivery of the courses when there are students with different levels of ability, with some students finding courses easy compared with others. It is recommended that there is a limited on the number of cognate credits previously studied during the admissions process (say 2 modules).	We understand the challenges presented by a curriculum that aims to accommodate both technical and non-technical students and the concerns about the variability in prior knowledge and the challenge this presents in terms of course delivery. In response to your recommendation, we would like to clarify that students cannot be exempted from credits in their undergraduate degrees. However, as part of the accreditation of prior learning (APL) process, students enrolled in any taught programme leading to an MSc university award can be exempted from up to 15 ECTS credits (equivalent to 2 courses) if they have completed appropriate studies at this or another institution or possess relevant qualifications or experience. The credits permissible via APL shall not normally exceed 30% of the total credits required for the program.		Thank you for your response. The committee's recommendation of having "a limited on the number of cognate credits previously studied during the admissions process (say 2 modules)," has not been responded to by the HEI. Instead, the HEI reiterates (and further clarifies) both the support given to "non-technical" students, and the advanced nature of the modules/syllabus meant to challenge technical students. We recommend that this issue is rectified by the HEI in the future.

	However, it's important to acknowledge that while it's true that some students may have previously covered similar content and have familiarity with certain topics from their undergraduate studies, the approach and depth at the postgraduate level, particularly at Level 7, are significantly more rigorous and more advanced. Our MSc courses are structured to deepen theoretical understanding and enhance the ability to apply these theories in complex, real-world situations. We emphasize critical analysis and evaluation and more complex application of concepts than might have been encountered at the undergraduate level. This could involve simulations, real-world problem-solving exercises, a strong research component, and strategic project management that mimic professional environments and require a sophisticated understanding of the subject matter. We would like to highlight that we have already implemented several strategies to ensure that all students, regardless of their previous academic exposure, find the courses appropriately challenging: – Each course is designed with foundational sessions for those new to the subject and more advanced modules that challenge more experienced students. – We utilise adaptive learning technologies that adjust the difficulty of course material based on real-time student performance data. This		

	ensures that students are neither under-challenged nor overwhelmed. – We provide additional tutoring and support sessions to help less experienced students catch up, if necessary, while also offering enrichment opportunities for those who seek deeper engagement with the subject matter. – We facilitate peer learning opportunities as a part of both formative and summative assessments that pair students from different backgrounds to promote knowledge sharing and collaborative learning. – Additionally, we offer students the opportunity to customize their learning experience through a selection of elective courses tailored to diverse interests and career goals. This flexibility allows students to enhance their knowledge in specialized areas alongside the core curriculum. By implementing these strategies, we aim to better cater to the diverse needs of our students, ensuring that everyone can benefit from and contribute to our academic community effectively.		

Greater transparency of data is needed (ESG 1.4). Provide more complete and detailed raw data on admissions. Provide more complete and detailed raw data on student outcomes (including employment). Provide grade classifications for the programme over the last five years.	Done. We fully acknowledge the importance of providing clear and accessible data regarding our admissions processes, student outcomes, and programme-specific grade classifications. Furthermore, we would like to **clarify that we do not have any students enrolled in the conventional programme;** so far, all student interest has been for the distance learning version of our MSc programme. For further information and evidence of our data reporting and analysis process, please refer to **Annex 8** of the Distance learning programme.		Thank you for providing the grade classification, student outcomes, and alumni employment data. We would like to point out that the original EEC comment also referred to student admission data, e.g., what was the undergraduate degree of admitted students.
Including alumni testimonials as part of the early first-semester programme may help current students identify their direction and aspirations -- for example, in terms of electives, dissertation topic, advisor or career outcomes.	We will look into implementing this idea to enhance our orientation and ongoing educational support for new students.		Thank you for your willingness to respond to our recommendations. The committee consider your answer satisfactory and look forward to further developments in the next review cycle.

5. Learning resources and student support

(*ESG 1.6)*

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution **29-07-2024**	Actions Taken by the Institution **30-10-2024**	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Given the rapid growth of distance learning and the high workload in this area to provide professional student and faculty support services, the university should consider investing more resources into the DLU. A specialized unit within DLU for audio-visual content development would be helpful. A media production studio could be set up with an educational technologist that supports media development. Opportunities for integrating Open Educational Resources (OER) should be explored, rather than relying too much on materials from commercial publishers.	Indeed, some aspects of your recommendation are already in place, as our educational technologists currently support staff with media development to enhance our distance learning offerings. However, the broader proposal to further specialize and invest in these areas, along with exploring opportunities for integrating Open Educational Resources (OER), is something we will carefully consider for the near future. Your insights are invaluable as we strive to continuously improve our educational delivery and resources. Thank you once again for bringing these important points to our attention.		Thank you. The committee consider your answer satisfactory.

Opportunities for the professional development of DLU staff should be provided as well to catch up with the latest developments in educational technologies, for example, new AI applications in education.	We acknowledge the importance of equipping our teaching staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support the educational process as well as staying current with advancements in educational technologies. Our Pedagogical Design unit, provides a range of seminars and workshops blending theoretical insights with practical teaching skills, specifically tailored to equip DLU staff with the latest skills in tools and methods. To reinforce this, we have implemented a comprehensive training programme as a key part of our on boarding process for all incoming academic staff. This program comprehensively covers modern teaching methodologies, classroom management techniques, and the application of innovative educational tools, all aimed at bolstering student engagement and learning effectiveness. Additionally, some of our permanent staff members hold formal teaching qualifications, with some having achieved the		Thank you. The committee consider your answer satisfactory.

	title of Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. We encourage all our academic staff to consider working towards these qualifications as part of their personal development. Please refer to Annex 8 for our Induction Policy for new faculty members.		

The university should explore methods of learning analytics in a more systematic way to develop an early warning system to identify underperforming students at risk of failure or drop-out.	Thank you for your suggestion regarding our approach to managing student dropout. We would like to assure you that we are already employing a comprehensive strategy aimed at not only understanding the root causes of dropout but also implementing targeted interventions to support our students better and reduce dropout rates. • We actively collect and analyse data encompassing a wide range of factors including academic performance, engagement levels, financial background, and personal circumstances. This is complemented by predictive analytics via the Targit system to identify at-risk students early. • Personal tutors conduct interviews with students to explore the specific and general factors contributing to their decision to leave the university, thus gaining a comprehensive understanding of both		The actions taken by the HEI regarding the development of systematic ways to reduce dropout rate, including but not limited to the Targit system and personal tutor interviews, is deemed satisfactory for the identification and support of underperforming students.

	individual circumstances and wider trends related to student attrition. • We've developed personalised support programmes that offer academic tutoring, financial aid, mental health counselling, and career guidance tailored to the needs of each at-risk student. • Efforts to enhance academic and social integration include peer mentorship, extracurricular activities, and study groups, aimed at fostering a supportive community. • Our approach also includes ongoing monitoring of at-risk students and the flexibility to adjust support strategies based on their evolving needs and feedback. • Faculty and staff are trained to recognize and respond to signs of student distress, and we maintain open, supportive communication with all students about the resources available to them.		

	• To ensure the effectiveness of our interventions aimed at student support and retention, we follow a structured process for regular reporting and continuous improvement. Feedback from students, faculty, and staff is used, helping us to refine and improve our interventions based on direct insights. Our proactive and comprehensive strategy addresses the multifaceted nature of student dropout. By combining detailed data analysis with personalised support and community-building efforts, we aim to not only mitigate the immediate impacts of dropout but also foster an environment where all students can thrive and succeed.		

More activities could be organized to further accommodate international students.	We appreciate your input on enhancing the experiences of international students. We are committed to continually improving the experiences of all our students, and we appreciate the importance of providing a supportive and inclusive environment for our international community. We already offer a variety of targeted activities designed to help international students adjust and feel more at home, such as: **International Student Orientation**: A specialized orientation program that addresses specific needs and challenges faced by international students. **Mentorship Programme:** Pairing new international students with senior students who can guide them through their transition. **Cultural Integration Activities:** Events that celebrate diverse cultures and facilitate interaction among students from different backgrounds, such as cultural nights and language exchange meetups. ANNEX		The HEI's strategy for inclusion and integration of international students both culturally and academically is established and diverse. Perhaps, having a dedicated student survey concerning international student would help the HEI realize problem areas for them (if any).

	Greek Language Programme: We provide courses to help students learn Greek. More information can be found in the following link Greek Language Programme - Neapolis University in Cyprus (nup.ac.cy) **Student Clubs:** We support a wide range of student clubs that cater to diverse interests and help foster a vibrant campus community. Details about our student clubs are available in the following link Student Clubs - Neapolis University in Cyprus (nup.ac.cy). **Confucius Institute Chinese Language Courses:** We offer Chinese language courses through the Confucius Institute, providing students with the opportunity to learn Chinese and explore Chinese culture. Moving forward, we will focus even more on expanding these activities and developing new initiatives to ensure that our		

	international students receive the best possible support.		

The elevator is small to comfortably accommodate wheelchair access, but we are told that in that case students are assigned to classrooms on the ground floor. The new computer lab does not have wheelchair access as of the date of the visit, but we were assured that there are plans to install a ramp.	We appreciate the committee's recommendations regarding the accessibility of our premises for individuals with disabilities. Ensuring easy access for everyone is a priority for us, and we are committed to addressing the highlighted issues. Indeed, in the case of students who use wheelchairs, they are assigned to classrooms on the ground floor to ensure accessibility and convenience. Regarding the new computer lab, we are currently in the process of installing ramps to facilitate wheelchair access, ensuring that all students have equal access to our facilities. We are also at the moment undertaking a comprehensive review of our facilities to identify and rectify areas where accessibility can be improved, including the installation of automatic door openers, widening elevators and smoothing transitions for ramps. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment that accommodates the needs of all members of our university community.	Beginning this semester, the Department of Computer Science has introduced its new lab, which was showcased during the recent EEC visit. A new elevator, designed to accommodate wheelchair access, has been installed and reference images are attached. 	The new elevator has clearly improved accessibility. The committee consider the answer satisfactory.

	Please refer to Annex 9 for the architectural plans showcasing the elevators tailored for individuals with disabilities.		

6. **Additional for doctoral programmes**

(ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

7. **Eligibility (Joint programmes)**

(ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC must provide final conclusions and remarks, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

EEC's final conclusions and remarks

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution 29-07-2024	Actions Taken by the Institution 30-10-2024	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Redesign the programme, to be in better compliance with European standards and comparable programmes internationally - both in terms of volume (student work-hours), content (course selection) and level (notably, knowledge, skills, and autonomy at EQF Level-7 for each course).	As per our responses provided in the earlier sections and the evidence included in the appendices, the programme has now been redesigned to align more closely and better comply with European standards and comparable international programmes as well as to incorporate your recommendations. Key updates include: • The programme learning outcomes have been enhanced, and new programme learning outcomes have been created. • We have integrated the proposed material on digitally-enabled business models into the existing Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship course. The course has been given a new title, "Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovative		There is a clear willingness to respond to the committee's recommendations, and we believe that these have been largely addressed. However, there are some areas that still require further improvement. The core learning objective has re-oriented the programme in the right direction. However, there are still adjustments needed to modules DIS503, DIS509, and DIS505 — and the syllabus for DIS502 merits a revision. The detailed recommendations were mentioned previously. The master's dissertation evaluation process should be augmented to have the development of a relevant literature survey as a mandatory component. Moreover, the positioning of the "artefact" produced as part of the master's thesis should be made with respect to related literature as an

	Business Models", to reflect the changes in content and program learning outcomes. • Additionally, the Information Systems Analysis and Design course has been updated to include content on design thinking, ensuring our students are well-versed in this critical methodology as per your recommendation. • The Research Methods course has been thoroughly revised to offer a comprehensive overview of the systematic and scientific approaches utilised in research. The module now encompasses a wide range of methodologies, techniques, and tools essential for conducting rigorous and credible research. It emphasises critical thinking, data analysis, and the ethical considerations involved in research practices. • The course previously titled Problem-Solving Programming is now titled "Problem-Solving Programming with Machine Learning Techniques" and has been completely restructured to cater to a diverse student body, including those with computer science and business backgrounds. This revised course utilises machine learning algorithms to tackle complex, real-world business problems. Business students will learn to apply these techniques within their domain, gaining exposure to various AI tools, machine learning ready-made algorithms and code, and engaging in formative assessments tailored to different skill levels. Computer science students will find this course offers specialized knowledge in machine learning and AI, with a primary focus on applying these skills in business contexts. The centerpiece		explicit and mandatory criterion when grading the dissertation. The most significant outstanding question is the attribution of ECTS units — which seems to be too generous compared to other courses with similar content internationally, and the student feedback regarding the actual work hours required for successfully completing each course (circa 50% unit inflation).

	project of the course involves a business scenario, providing all students with a practical, industry-relevant application of their learning. • All of our course offerings have been revised and updated to align with the newly enhanced programme learning outcomes. These updates incorporate fresh material, various types of assessments, and additional activities, reflecting the latest recommendations from examiners. By integrating these enhancements, our programme not only aligns with the high standards of similar European programmes but also provides our students with a competitive edge, enabling them to effectively address contemporary challenges and leverage opportunities in the digital economy.		
Hiring teaching staff with formal education in Information Systems could really help the programme in strengthening the link between Computer Science and Management disciplines. This would align the learning objectives of the programme with the learning objectives of similar programs in Europe and beyond.	In response to the ongoing need to hire additional staff with specialised expertise in Information Systems, we would like to provide a detailed overview of our current staffing structure and highlight the qualifications of our existing faculty members. We ensure that each specialised course has a dedicated permanent staff member, and the workload distribution strictly adheres to university regulations, ensuring a balanced and effective teaching environment, please, see above response 3.1. We are confident that our current staffing structure, coupled with the qualifications of our faculty members, ensures the delivery of high-quality education and meets the rigorous		The committee welcome this clarification. We would further suggest that the hiring of new staff is also mentioned.

	standards expected by CYQAA and the Ministry of Education.		
As for the previous committee, in 2019, this EEC regrets that (direct quote from the 2019 report): "the programme curricula and their implementation (of running programmes) are disclosed to the current students through the institutional LMS (Moodle). However, prospective students seem unable to examine the courses' syllabus" -- and would strongly recommend that in 2024, this recommendation be reflected.	This issue has been resolved and the updated course syllabi can now be found on the university's website, under the relevant programme section.		The committee thank you for this response.
Admissions. Greater transparency is required in the assessment procedure. It is noted that data was requested but not supplied in this area. Furthermore, the mixed nature of the admissions cohort is problematic for delivery of the programme; a fixed number of credits of previous learning should be allowed during the admissions process (two courses maximum suggested).	**As discussed above, we do not have any students enrolled in the conventional programme;** so far, all student interest has been for the distance learning version of our MSc programme. For further information and evidence of our detailed admission data, please refer to **Annex 8** of the distance learning programme. In response to your suggestion of a fixed number of credits for prior learning (maximum of 2 courses), we would like to clarify that students cannot be exempted from credits in their undergraduate degrees. However, as part of the accreditation of prior learning (APL) process, students enrolled in any taught programme leading to an MSc university award can be exempted from up to 15 ECTS credits (equivalent to 2 courses) if they have completed appropriate studies at this or another institution or possess relevant qualifications or experience. The credits permissible via APL shall not normally		The committee thank you for this clarification.

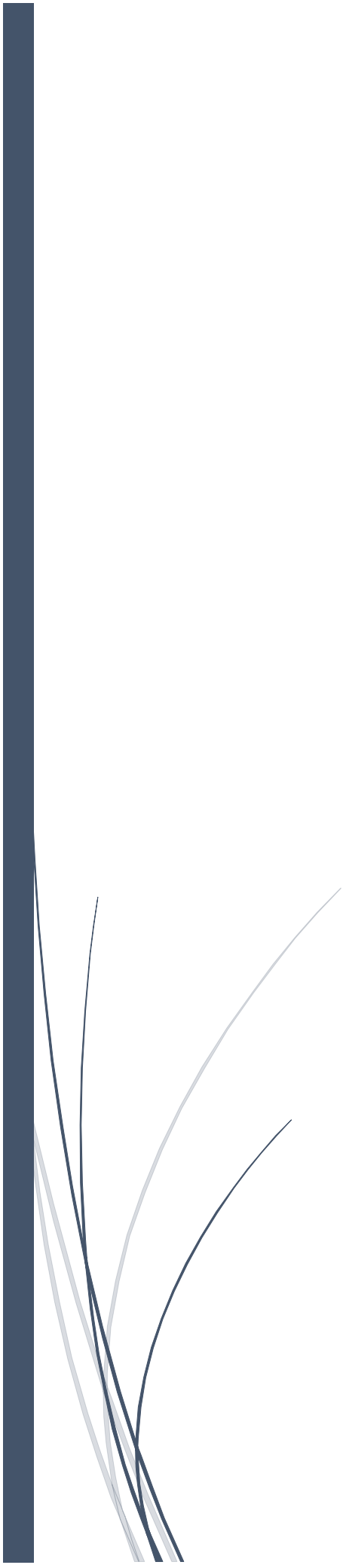
	exceed 30% of the total credits required for the program.		
Enriching some courses' content with lab activities to help students gain hands-on, practical experience.	As per the discussion provided above and the evidence in the appendices, this enhancement has now been completed, please refer to **Annex 6** for further evidence of practical lab content and in-depth training within our course offerings.		The committee believe that the responses to our recommendations demonstrate a willingness to improve in this regard. We would welcome further developments in this area in the future.
Younger teaching staff have been found responsible for significant functions of programme coordination and delivery. This poses a burden on these faculty members which could impede their ability to progress through the job ladder. The recommendation of the EEC is twofold: a) assign the program coordination responsibility to a more senior department member, and b) create conditions that could allow staff members to progress through the job ladder (e.g., allowing more time for research).	In response to the EEC's recommendation regarding the assignment of programme coordination and the conditions for staff progression, we would like to address the concerns raised. Our existing programme coordinator has demonstrated exceptional ability in managing multiple tasks and her workload has been carefully structured to incorporate these responsibilities, as evident in the workload calculator example provided in Annex 6. Dr Kakoulli has successfully undertaken the duties of teaching six courses and managing programme coordination for the past year, receiving excellent reviews for both students and staff. Despite her teaching and coordination responsibilities, she has actively engaged in research, presented her work at conferences, and published her findings in conference proceedings. Her performance in these areas highlights her ability to balance her		Although the committee note that the programme coordinator is on-track to be promoted to assistant professor, we still believe that an early-career academic with such a heavy administrative and teaching load will find it difficult to remain substantively research-active.

	responsibilities effectively without impeding her professional development. Moreover, she is on track for career progression and is expected to become an Assistant Professor in the upcoming year. We recognise the importance of facilitating staff progression and are committed to providing the necessary support. The excellent performance of our current coordinator demonstrates that with appropriate workload management, it is possible to fulfil both teaching and coordination roles while continuing to advance in research and career development.		

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*
Stuart J. Barnes	
Mauro Cherubini	
Thomas Heide Clausen	
Olaf Zawacki-Richter	
Marilena Lemonari	

Date: 20th December 2024



5 Lemesou Avenue, 2112, Nicosia
T: + 357 22 504 340
F: + 357 22 504 392
e-mail: info@dipae.ac.cy