

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 26/05/2023

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Cyprus University of Technology
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Communications and Media Studies
- **Department/ Sector:** Public Communications
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

**In English:**

Experiential Digital Marketing Communications

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



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

## A. Introduction

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) would like to express its gratitude to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) for extending an invitation to evaluate the proposed Masters in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications presented by the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT).

The strategic goal of the Cyprus University of Technology to establish itself as an international university and provide comprehensive and multidimensional education on the latest technological and industrial developments reflects its commitment to offering high-quality education that meets the needs of both Cypriot and foreign students. The emphasis on programme relevance to society allows students to acquire knowledge and skills that are directly applicable to the current technological and industrial landscape. This ensures that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the professional world and contribute to advancements in their respective fields.

On the 25th of May 2023, the evaluation was conducted in-person by a team comprising three academics and a student representative. During the evaluation process, the EEC had the opportunity to meet with key individuals at the University, including the Rector, the Head of the Department, the programme coordinator, members of the quality assurance committee, as well as various teaching and administrative staff from different departments such as the library, IT services, research support, office student welfare, learning development network, and the faculty administration office. Engaging with these individuals, alongside interactions with students, made it possible for the EEC to gather valuable insights and perspectives into both the proposed programme but also more broadly.

In addition to the meetings, the EEC thoroughly examined the self-evaluation report prepared by the programme team in advance of the evaluation. This, combined with staff presentations and the examination of various documents requested by the EEC, enabled a comprehensive understanding of the program's strengths and areas that hold potential for improvement. Considering that this is a new programme, part of the evaluation findings and recommendations are based on existing practices related to other similar programmes.

The EEC recommendations are grounded in established good practices and aim to support the enhancement of the programme's potential functionality and effectiveness. The EEC holds the utmost hope that the suggestions outlined in the report will serve as a valuable resource for the Cyprus University of Technology and the programme team as they progress towards their goals.



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Savvas Papagiannidis</b>	Professor	Newcastle University, UK
<b>Fotis Kitsios</b>	Professor	University of Macedonia, Greece
<b>Periklis Gogas</b>	Professor	Democritus University of Thrace
<b>Maria Agathangelou</b>	Student Representative	University of Cyprus

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

### Sub-areas

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

### 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

#### Standards

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

### 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

#### Standards

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

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

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

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

### 1.4 Information management

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Findings

The MSc in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications (XDMarComs) is designed as a level 7 qualification in the European Qualifications Framework, reflecting its advanced nature and alignment with European educational standards.

The proposed programme aligns with the guiding principles of the Cyprus University of Technology, which include a "Think Human First" approach and a focus on key aspects such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, openness, transparency, meritocracy, and cooperation for value co-creation. These principles ensure that the programme is designed to meet the needs of students, society, and the industry while fostering a sense of responsibility and sustainability.

The Quality Assurance Committee's review of the programme aimed to ensure excellence in learning and teaching, research development and internationalisation, sustainability of programs, excellence of academic staff, and effective ongoing management. Student feedback was also taken on board when considering the above.

The proposed MSc aims to provide students with ample opportunities to experiment and develop a good skill basis in the field. By emphasising originality, problem-solving, multidisciplinary contexts, and integrating knowledge intelligence and data, the programme equips students with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of the marketing communications field in an experiential economy and digital world. Students will be encouraged to exercise their creativity, apply their knowledge in new and unfamiliar environments, and formulate informed judgments.

All courses within the MSc programme are taught entirely in English, and class activities and teaching materials are also in English.

The overall structure of the programme is along the expected lines for such a postgraduate programme. The taught component covers a range of relevant topics, including Agility and Sustainability, Internet of Things marketing, Data Analytics and AI, Customer Experience, Value-Based Marketing, and Content Creation and Management. These modules provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the field and prepare them for their research dissertation or project. The capstone project makes it possible for students to delve deeper into a specific area of interest and apply their knowledge in a practical and research-oriented manner. Each module has a range of assessed tasks. Modules are typically 6 or 8 ECTS, reflecting the required load.

Dropout rate in the undergraduate programme, that is currently only at the second year, offered by the Department is relatively low. As the proposed programme is new there is no information currently available on its pass rate or drop-out rate.

The University's website appears to be sufficiently comprehensive and provide all the necessary information with regards to university operations and programme details.

### Strengths

The enthusiasm exhibited by the staff in creating a distinctive programme offered within a conducive learning environment that enhances the overall student experience is commendable.

The department has the resources needed, both human and technical, to undertake this programme efficiently and successfully.

The existing links with diverse companies that can support the learning experience through guest talks and other collaborations can offer a valuable conduit to industry. The teaching staff and the administrators of the programme appear to be committed to connect the courses and learning experience with industry. There is a relevant office in place to facilitate this procedure. These connections provide insights and real-world perspectives to students, enhancing the relevance and practicality of the program. Building on these existing links, the programme team can further leverage industry partnerships to benefit the program.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recognises the aspiration of the programme team to create an in-depth offering. To achieve this aim, it is crucial that all aspects of the student journey reflect this intention. The EEC suggests the following recommendations to further enhance the program:

1. **Position and Present Modules:** The modules should be explicitly positioned and presented in relation to the "experiential" dimension of the program. This goes beyond revising module titles. It is important to clearly communicate how each module contributes to the experiential learning approach and how it aligns with the overall programme goals.
2. **Articulate Progression and Linkage:** The progression from one semester to the next and the connection among modules should be more clearly articulated. Students should be able to understand how the knowledge and skills acquired in one module build upon and complement those in previous and subsequent modules and how everything comes together to form a coherent learning offering. Establishing early in the learning journey an "experience marketing framework" to which all modules relate and contribute could be helpful for both students and staff.
3. **Mapping of Objectives and Skills Development:** It is recommended to develop a mapping of programme objectives and skills development against the modules offered. This mapping will help students and programme staff understand how each module contributes to the overall programme goals and the acquisition of specific skills. It can also guide the programme team in identifying any gaps or redundancies in the curriculum.
4. **Optional Modules for Career/Industry Specialisation:** The programme team could consider adding optional modules that offer students the opportunity to tailor their learning to future career or industry sectors. For example, offering modules that explore experiential marketing in the context of tourism or retail, since these are significant business sectors nationally and internationally, can provide students with specialised knowledge and skills relevant to their specific career goals. This flexibility will enhance the program's appeal and enable students to



align their studies with their individual interests and aspirations. It can also enhance their employability prospects.

5. The teaching staff and the administrators of the programme seem interested and committed to connect the courses and learning experience with the industry necessary for a true “experiential” flavour. Nonetheless, the way this was presented to the EEC committee, this seems to be left to ad hoc connections of the staff / students with various businesses. For such relationships to be successful and sustainable, a coordination between the institution’s relevant office and the teaching staff is required.
6. An Industrial Advisory Board can be created to facilitate the program’s communication and cooperation with industry in Cyprus and abroad and achieve the goal of developing high-level graduates that the market demands. The members of the Board can identify the market’s changing needs and determine the way these changes can be addressed by the programme. Members of the board can provide recommendations for the knowledge and skills that the programme should provide. Finally, the Industrial Advisory Board can promote opportunities and cooperation at the level of research and transfer of knowledge and technology.

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

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

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

### Sub-areas

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

**2.2 Practical training**

**2.3 Student assessment**

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

#### Standards

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

### **2.2 Practical training**

#### Standards

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

### **2.3 Student assessment**

#### Standards

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

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

### Findings

The teaching process of the programme is described as flexible, employing various pedagogical methods to facilitate student learning. The use of educational technologies and regularly updated teaching methods, tools, and materials is evident. The learning management system, Moodle, is utilised to support module management, teaching, learning, and administrative processes.

### Strengths

The assessment approach of the programme includes both formative and summative assessments. Summative assessment is based on a range of assessment methods, such as exams, projects, essays, and presentations.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The programme team can consider the following two recommendations related to assessment:

1. Mapping of Assessment Types: Similarly, to the mapping proposed for the programme objectives and skills, a mapping of assessment types can be conducted to formulate a program-level assessment strategy. This mapping will ensure that assessments across modules are aligned with the intended learning outcomes and provide a comprehensive evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. It can also support the programme team in diversifying assessment methods to foster a holistic and authentic assessment approach.
2. The EEC would like to encourage the programme team to exploring alternative assessment approaches that align with the program's experiential / experience objectives and provide students with practical opportunities to develop relevant skills and competencies.



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

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

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### **Sub-areas**

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

#### **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**

##### Standards

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

#### **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

##### Standards

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

#### **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

##### Standards

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

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

### Findings

The Department within which the proposed programme will be hosted is relatively new. The undergraduate program, commenced in 2021, and thus, students are finishing the 2nd year of study. The department is also relatively small, comprising seven staff members, the majority of whom have been recently appointed. Considering the selected mode of delivery, the number of teaching staff in the department is deemed adequate to support the program.

While the department is small, it is important to note that there are plans for further expansion in the teaching team, indicating the university's recognition of the need to provide appropriate staffing levels to effectively deliver the program. CUT has established fair, transparent, and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff. This ensures that the selection and appointment of faculty members follow rigorous procedures, adhering to established regulations.

The teaching team members hold PhDs in their respective fields, demonstrating their expertise and qualification to deliver high-quality education. Their research activities, such as attending international conferences and publishing papers in relevant academic outlets, signify their engagement in scholarly pursuits and their commitment to staying up-to-date with the latest advancements in the field. Despite being a recently established university, the University/department has managed to attract funding and foster collaborations with European and international bodies. This success reflects the university's dedication to creating a research-focused environment and nurturing a culture of active participation among the teaching staff.

Student evaluation of teaching staff is conducted, demonstrating the university's commitment to gathering feedback from students and incorporating their perspectives into the continuous improvement of the program. This evaluation process makes it possible for students to provide valuable insights on their learning experiences, teaching effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with the teaching staff. By actively seeking student feedback, the university can identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, ultimately enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

### Strengths

The teaching staff is of high academic quality and look committed to all aspects of this program, both teaching and research. The current teaching load seems to be adequate and not compromising the quality of the reaching or research produced. This is also supplemented by a very good student to teaching staff ratio. The committee noted that the teaching staff acknowledges the importance and value of research-led teaching. This is reflected in their practices, such as incorporating peer-reviewed journal articles into the learning process and encouraging students to critically reflect on them. It seems that even undergraduate students have the opportunity to actively participate in empirical work such as text mining from Twitter and other sources, big data structures, and

processing data with state-of-the-art artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms. By integrating research-based content into the curriculum, students are exposed to current scholarly debates and develop critical thinking skills that are essential for their academic and professional growth.

The availability of a personal "research start-up" grant is an excellent initiative that actively demonstrates the university's support for research endeavours and encourages staff members to pursue their research interests.

In addition to the permanent teaching staff, the presence of recognised guest teaching staff can further enrich the student teaching and learning experience. These visiting staff members bring diverse perspectives and expertise from external institutions contributing to a more comprehensive education for the students. The involvement of visiting teaching staff can enhance the international outlook of the proposed programme and provides students with exposure to different teaching styles and approaches. At the same time, it can help establish relationships among CUT and visiting staff creating positive spill-over effects in other areas (e.g. research).

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

Concerning academic workload, it is recommended that the University/department considers a wider and more explicit approach. This should not only state the minimum number of teaching hours but also define what constitutes a reasonable teaching load. In addition, it is important to consider the inclusion of leadership/management duties and research tasks explicitly in the workload considerations. By providing clear guidelines on workload expectations, the department can ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities among the teaching staff and promote a conducive work environment.

The EEC appreciates the Department's plans to engage external international staff. They can add value to the learning process. Still, such engagement can also create logistical issues and inherit risk when it comes to the delivery of the proposed programme. Such risks are identified in the analysis undertaken by the Department, noting that "*timetables of teaching staff cannot be easily managed, especially for professors from abroad*". Similarly, the Department acknowledges the need to grow faster, and that workload needs to be managed more effectively. The EEC would recommend that the Department rethinks its approach to external engagement in a way that it adds value, can be managed more efficiently and can help contain risks. This could be done by recruiting additional members of staff, limiting the number of sessions per module that can be delivered by external staff and offering such sessions within a specific "international teaching" period and on specific state-of-the-art topics of interest.



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

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



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

##### Sub-areas

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

##### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

###### Standards

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

##### 4.2 Student progression

###### Standards

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

##### 4.3 Student recognition

###### Standards

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

#### 4.4 Student certification

##### Standards

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

##### Findings

The existence of pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission at the Cyprus University of Technology is a positive aspect that ensures transparency and fairness in the admissions process. These regulations provide clear criteria for assessing student applications and determining their eligibility for admission to the program.

Similarly, pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place, demonstrating the university's commitment to providing clear guidelines for students' academic advancement. These regulations outline the expectations, requirements, and milestones that students need to meet as they progress through the program. By having these regulations readily available and accessible to students, the university fosters transparency and accountability in the progression process, enabling students to track their academic journey and make informed decisions regarding their studies.

##### Strengths

In addition to establishing individual rapport with the students (which is possible because programmes in the Department feature small cohorts), the university has also established processes and tools for collecting, monitoring, and acting on information related to student progress. These processes may include regular assessments, feedback mechanisms, and academic advising sessions. The University can identify areas where additional support may be required and intervene proactively to address any challenges students may face. Such a proactive approach to monitoring and supporting student progress enhances the overall quality of the programme and helps students achieve their academic goals successfully.

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the current admission criteria are broadly in line with expectations, it is noted that closer alignment with the program's specific expectations would be beneficial, particularly for a specialised programme like the Masters in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications. To ensure that the programme admits students who have the necessary academic background and qualifications, it would be advantageous to explicitly state the required areas of study for the "academic" pathway. By specifying the relevant degree fields, prospective students will have a clear understanding of the academic prerequisites and can make informed decisions regarding their eligibility and suitability for the program.



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

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

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

### Sub-areas

#### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### 5.2 Physical resources

#### 5.3 Human support resources

#### 5.4 Student support

### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### Standards

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

### 5.2 Physical resources

#### Standards

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

### 5.3 Human support resources

#### Standards

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

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

## **5.4 Student support**

### Standards

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

### Findings

Given the size of the institution, the Cyprus University of Technology can offer easy access to the various support services provided to students. This commitment ensures that students can readily access the support they require, whether it be academic, technical, or personal, contributing to a positive and conducive learning environment.

The Cyprus University of Technology operates within an urban campus, a collection of historical and new buildings and other facilities to support the administration, teaching, and research. New buildings are already under construction. The quality of the existing infrastructure is on par with other similar institutions that are placed within an urban area. The upside of this is that students are immersed in the business and commercial centre of the city of Limassol, something that for a marketing or any other business programme may be a plus, as students can get a taste of the local economic activity.

During the evaluation, the EEC had the opportunity to visit the university library, which was found to be well-organised and conducive to learning. The library not only offers a suitable collection of books, but also provides access to online resources such as databases, which could support the proposed program. Additionally, the library provides ample working spaces and fosters a friendly atmosphere, further enhancing the overall learning environment. The Cyprus University of Technology, being part of the Cyprus Libraries Consortium, benefits from a strong library system that plays a vital role in supporting students' research skills development. The library collaborates closely with each School, ensuring dedicated librarians are available to assist students in their specific areas of study. This personalised support enhances students' ability to access relevant resources, conduct effective research, and enhance their overall academic performance. Academics in each department can also benefit from the dedicated support provided by the assigned librarian.

The university's IT support is comprehensive and covers various aspects of virtual learning and communication. The virtual learning environment, Moodle, provides a platform for course materials, assignments, and online discussions. In addition, the university utilises different teleconference systems to facilitate remote learning and collaboration. The availability of Office365 for both students and staff enables efficient communication, document sharing, and collaboration. In addition, specialised software (e.g. statistical packages) is available via shared access, providing students with the necessary tools to support their studies. The integration of Turnitin for plagiarism checks further promotes academic integrity and originality in student work.

To support students' learning skills, the university offers a Learning Development Network coordinated by dedicated professionals. The Network organises events and workshops aimed at enhancing students' academic and study skills. Additionally, academic staff can also benefit from online resources and one-on-one support, focusing on module and assessment design.

Recognising the importance of mental well-being, the university provides counselling support for students through specialised professionals. These specialists offer guidance and assistance to students who may require emotional or psychological support. Furthermore, the university considers socio-economic factors and offers potential financial support to eligible students, ensuring that access to education is not hindered by financial constraints. The recently introduced Student Counselling service acts as a central hub for students, providing a one-stop support centre that directs students to the necessary resources and assistance they may need.

The university's participation in Erasmus partnerships enables student mobility and international opportunities. Erasmus offers students the chance to study abroad at partner institutions, providing them with a valuable cross-cultural experience, exposure to different educational systems, and the opportunity to broaden their horizons. This international mobility enriches students' global perspective, intercultural competence, and adaptability, all of which are essential qualities in today's interconnected world. Additionally, being part of a European University of Technology opens new opportunities when it comes to enhancing student learning experiences.

### Strengths

CUT demonstrates a robust support system for students, encompassing library services, IT support, learning skills development, counselling support, and potential financial assistance. This comprehensive approach reflects the university's dedication to providing students with the resources and support necessary to thrive academically, emotionally, and professionally.

The Cyprus University of Technology is committed to ongoing investment in improving its infrastructure to enhance the learning environment and support the needs of its students and staff. Recognising the importance of providing a modern and well-equipped campus, the university strives to create an environment that fosters excellence in education and research.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Department acknowledges the need for faster growth and recognises that effective workload management is essential for its success. Expediting the recruitment process and increasing the number of staff can have a positive impact not only on the proposed program, but also on all the other activities undertaken by the Department. With a bigger team, the Department will be better



equipped to fulfil its academic commitments, enhance the learning experience of students, and further develop its research and scholarly endeavours.

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

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

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### Sub-areas

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

### **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**

#### Standards

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

### **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**

#### Standards

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

### **6.3 Supervision and committees**

#### Standards

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



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

Findings

N/A

Strengths

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A

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

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

### C. Conclusions and final remarks

Based on the evaluation conducted by the External Evaluation Committee, a number of aspects regarding the programme have been identified. While recognising the potential of the proposed Masters in Experiential Digital Marketing Communications, the EEC has identified areas that require attention and improvement. By implementing these recommendations, the programme team can further strengthen the programme by providing a more coherent and purposeful learning journey for students, enhancing the alignment between modules and programme objectives, and offering greater flexibility for specialisation in relevant industry sectors.

The EEC members are readily available to address any questions and provide additional information as needed.

### D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Savvas Papagiannidis	
Fotis Kitsios	
Periklis Gogas	
Maria Agathangelou	

**Date:** 26/05/2023