

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus University of Technology
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty:** Communication and Media Studies
- **Department:** Communication and Internet Studies
- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Programme 1 - Bachelor

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Bachelor Communication and Internet Studies, 4 years, 240 ECTS

Language(s) of instruction: Greek

Programme 2 - PhD

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

PhD Communication and Internet Studies, 4 years, 240 ECTS

Language(s) of instruction: Greek and English

Programme 3 - [Title 3]

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Language(s) of instruction: Language(s)

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

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee consisted of three academics with relevant disciplinary expertise and a student representative. Given the current circumstances due to the on-going pandemic, the evaluation took place online. The committee had the opportunity to meet with the senior management of the University and the Department, the academic faculty and administrative/support staff, and students (UG, PhD students and alumni). During the online meetings, the committee had the chance to attend presentations related to the University, the Department and the programs and ask questions pertinent to the under-review programs. The EEC committee also had the chance to watch a lecture delivered for the UG program. Overall, staff has been very open and responsive to all questions of the members of the evaluation committee. The committee also had the opportunity to review the physical infrastructure via the link provided and examine the relevant documents provided by the Department.

The external evaluation committee would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the evaluation. The committee would also like to thank the CYQAA coordinator for managing the process both efficiently and effectively.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Josef Trappel	Professor	Salzburg
Anastasia Veneti	Associate Professor	Bournemouth
Christina Lioma	Professor	Copenhagen
Panagiotis Chrysanthou	Student	Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - o *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - o *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - o *benefits from external expertise*
 - o *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)*
 - o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
 - o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
 - o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
 - o *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*

- o is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o 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*
- o 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:

 - o selection criteria*
 - o intended learning outcomes*
 - o qualification awarded*
 - o teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - o pass rates*
 - o learning opportunities available to the students*
 - o graduate employment information**

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

 - o key performance indicators*
 - o profile of the student population*
 - o student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - o students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - o learning resources and student support available*
 - o career paths of graduates**
- Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b)*

whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?

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

Findings

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

Overall, the university has established quality assurance processes that are transparent and inclusive. Such processes and policies underpin the on-going review and development of both programmes. Teaching and administrative staff were aware of the relevant policies and procedures. Overall, the Committee felt that the programmes featured appropriate learning objectives at the programme level (both programmes).

Findings for Bachelor

When it came to the taught modules of BA programme, a good mixture of theoretical and practical modules is provided to the students. It is clear to the EEC committee that the programme developers have kept in touch with developments in the field of study. ECTs are clearly defined signalling the corresponding student workload in all programmes. The practice around the definition of ECTs is along the expected lines. Learning and teaching are supported by adequate and well-equipped building facilities and services. The Department has policies in place guarding against academic fraud.

Admissions criteria are in line with national law. Clear admissions criteria with regards to Cypriot and Greek students. Further clarification is needed with regards to admissions criteria for international students. That is important for the future development of the programs (potential programs to be offered in English).

With regards to program development and quality assurance, it was unclear if there is any involvement of external stakeholders.

Findings for PhD

The Department follows the established process by the Faculty and the University. In turn, as these follow the established regulatory frameworks, the committee has no reservations towards the process adopted for the development and evaluation of the program in question.

The University has the necessary infrastructure to check for plagiarism cases and the processes to deal with such instances.

Having discussed with the Head of the Doctoral Programme, the EEC feels that more clearly defined processes should be considered with respect to disputes and students' complaints. As it stands, students refer to the Head of the Doctoral Program which seems not to be sufficient, especially depending on the nature of the dispute or complaint.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

A solid and well-designed program of study that offers a good balance between theory and practice and is further enhanced by teaching staff's research expertise (research-led teaching).

Strengths for PhD

Very active research staff that acquires the necessary theoretical and methodological knowledge to support students' research projects. Students are well supported to attend conferences and other research activities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The EEC would like to encourage the Department to introduce a clear policy/clause on IP and authorship rights and that be communicated to students since the beginning of their studies.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

Admissions criteria are in line with national law. Clear admissions criteria with regards to Cypriot and Greek students. Further clarification is advisable with regards to admissions criteria for international students. That is important for the future development of the programs (potential programs to be offered in English).

With regards to program development and quality assurance, it was unclear if there is any involvement of external stakeholders. The EEC suggests that the Department makes use of its strong external network in such processes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

The EEC urges the Doctoral Team to consider developing clearly defined structures and policies with regards to students' disagreements and complaints. We recommend that a committee should be in place to take care of such matters.

Finally, while the staff is highly qualified to supervise PhD students based on their own research expertise, the Committee would also recommend that training for first time supervisors be in place.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>PhD</i>	[Title 3]
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
1.3	Public information	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
1.4	Information management	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

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.

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 and method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning*

outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.

- Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.
- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

Overall, the EEC found that the process of teaching and learning of this program is appropriate to the topics covered by the program, and the delivery of the program is also appropriate for the expected learning outcomes. Students are provided the opportunity to give their suggestions to the program. The Department provides a supportive and encouraging learning environment to students, where students are supported by all faculty and administrative staff. The structure of the program reflects well the student needs for both education and personal wellbeing. The department implements a flexible process of teaching and learning which ensures the quality of the provided program. Student learning takes various forms from lectures to exercises to individual and group projects. The assessment of most courses involves a variety of more traditional and modern elements. Active learning with student feedback is in focus. All mid term, final exams and major projects are marked by permanent staff and special scientists (with PhDs). The marking is carried out by staff with no moderator.

Both individual and group work assignments are common. The teaching methods are appropriate to ensure that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning. Further, the optional thesis work enables students to get involved in research.

The practical (optional) training in industry via internships supports the goal of practical industry experience for those that select this option, whether the students follow the research route (thesis selection) or the course route (additional elective courses).

Findings for PhD

The EEC met some current PhD students. They were particularly satisfied with their studies. Both students and academic staff noted that a close relationship is built between them, affecting their studies positively not only during their studies but also their development after completion of their studies. Students have commented that the instructors are accessible and helpful. A shared positive view was the assistance and good communication students have had with the teaching staff especially during Covid-19 restrictions.

Furthermore, regarding the enhancement of students' research socialisation, students have to participate in internal seminars where they present their research interests, discuss, comment and offer constructive critique of the research course of doctoral students. Overall the process of teaching and learning supports individual and research socialisation of the students. The campus offers adequate opportunities for research socialisation. Students are also exposed to the international research community of their respective area through attendance or active participation of international research conferences.

From the evidence gathered by the EEC, the process of teaching and learning (e.g., webinars, face to face meetings, pre-recorded webinars) seems to be quite flexible with respect to students' individual characteristics and needs. There is evidence that appropriate guidance and support is in place.

Appropriate procedures for receiving student feedback and for dealing with students' complaints are in place.

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Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The inclusion of real world examples in courses provides students with a realism (strategic goal) that connects course theory to real-life practice in industry. This is a key strength sought by industry and the EU standards of education.

The potential for an industry related research project and the potential for employment are further motivating factors for students. The supporting infrastructure for ensuring student support during this training is in place, however more attention should be paid to the communication of IPR issues to students and staff.

The program enjoys a good staff-student ratio, which means that each student can get sufficient support.

The institution seems very well equipped and prepared to deal with online learning in the case of a continuing pandemic, such as COVID-19.

Strengths for PhD

The EEC notes the positive impact of the external examiners to the proper delivery of the programme. The programme supports a friendly environment between students and teaching/ administrative staff.

The PhD students interviewed by the Committee highlighted they are satisfied with the quality of the program. They have also indicated that communication with faculty members and the administrative team is open and part of the culture of the institution.

The programme is compatible with the professional employment of the students prior to, during and upon completion of their studies. In this sense, their studies are integrated smoothly into their professional careers, enhancing their prospects and adding value to all stakeholders and the broader job market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

There is no formal didactic training requirement for teaching assistants. It is advisable that teaching assistants receive some formal didactic training in their role, especially with respect to marking, given that marking is only checked and not fully moderated.

In terms of student assessment, the bachelor's dissertation is generally internationally seen as a major component of student assessment. In this program, the dissertation is optional. It seems that approximately 50% of students choose to write a dissertation as part of this program, overall. Given that graduates of this program can be admitted to the PhD program (without having completed a Master's program), it may be useful to establish a way of requiring that a dissertation is completed at the Bachelor's level in order for the student to be admitted to the PhD program. The rationale behind this suggestion is that having completed a Bachelor's dissertation will be valuable experience and practice to a student enrolling to do a PhD. Not having completed a Bachelor's dissertation can be a disadvantage.

Finally, students who fail a course of this program are obliged to repeat the course. They cannot just have a re-exam. The university staff believe that this is an opportunity for students to learn the course material. However, the university allows students to repeat the course without attending all lectures. There is no maximum number of times that a student can repeat a course that he/she has failed. In order to avoid having situations where students have failed a course that is compulsory in order for them to progress to courses of the next semester, the program is designed with reduced chain courses (courses that are compulsory to subsequent courses). This is a point where the university can consider updating these practices drawing inspiration from the more common international practice of 1) allowing for re-exams without the obligation of repeating the course, 2) imposing a maximum number of re-exams in case of failure, and 3) having enough chain courses to support a coherent and well structured program curriculum.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

The doctoral defence is worth only 5 ECTS. This is a bit too low, given that the oral defence is the only opportunity for an external examiner to examine the student.

The composition of the evaluation committee is mainly internal members. The external members are a minority. This is not standard practice in quite a few EU countries. The university may want to consider drawing inspiration from this and adopt a stronger international participation of examiners in the evaluation committee. This can be an opportunity for establishing links with other universities outside Cyprus too.

The EEC was informed that the doctoral program may be completed in minimum 3 years. If this is the case, this goes against the Bologna standards of 30 ECTS per year. The university should look into this point more closely.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>PhD</i>	[Title 3]
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the*

development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?

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

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

The EEC considered the submitted documentation and met with staff to understand the clarity and fairness of the approach on how the university recruits, appoints, inducts and supports academic staff in delivering high quality teaching, research and student experience. Based on these, the recruitment and selection procedure seems to be fair and clear. There are clear criteria for every teaching rank (professor, associate professor etc.) and clear guidelines for progression and promotion.

There are some central procedures to support staff induction and staff development. However, these are not systematically structured and there is no training activity menu. On the positive side, the EEC has found that the university is supporting its staff to undertake research and publish their research findings. The link between teaching and research is healthy.

The CVs of existing staff demonstrate very good evidence of appointed academic staff having prior and relevant teaching and research experience in other higher education institutions. Research expertise and publication records are relevant and consistent to the program of study.

The staff-student ratio in the Department seems to be adequate. There are plans to hire staff.

The planned contribution of PhD students to the teaching and lab support in the program was discussed. It was understood from this discussion that engagement from PhD students is optional.

The teaching staff have PhDs.

Findings for PhD

The EEC noted that the PhD program is supported by a well-qualified faculty, i.e., all of the faculty members are PhD qualified and experienced academics.

Overall, there is a good fit between the teaching team's qualifications and expertise with the course units they deliver.

From the evidence gathered, the faculty appears to be involved with research activities. The EEC identified that there is a synergy between teaching and research. The EEC also observed that members of staff have experience in their field for several years.

During the visit, the teaching staff was praised both by students and by the alumni for both the quality of teaching and the level of support received.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The fact that each permanent teaching staff member has to contribute to different teaching roles from fundamental courses, through electives and at the PhD level, provides an excellent spread of knowledge and experience at all levels.

There are many strong researchers in the department and the design of courses is thus highly influenced by this experience. Students further have a course on research methods.

Staff expertise is consistent with the program of study and it seems that they receive more than appropriate support to undertake research. This is evident by the strong research output of the staff involved in this program. The seed funding offered to newly hired staff and the opportunities for sabbatical leave are excellent.

Strengths for PhD

The faculty members involved in this programme appear to be committed to the programme. The specialization fields of the faculty members are overall reflected in the content of the programme and in the supervisory roles. The faculty's research informs their teaching.

The experienced faculty have been in academia for several years.

Teaching outcomes are monitored and are carefully reviewed by the institution so that any issues arising are dealt with in timely and in a professional manner.

The program makes an effort to draw upon qualified academics from other institutions in PhD committees.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

It is very encouraging that the university is planning to hire more faculty members. It is recommended that these new hirings are within areas that are currently under-represented in terms of staff expertise, such as ethics or security, for instance.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

The university provides some central procedures to support staff career development. However there is no compulsory training activity menu that leads to accreditation of supervisory skills and that is compulsory for all staff. On the positive side, the EEC found that the university is supporting its staff to undertake research and disseminate their research findings through the appropriate channels.

Supervisory outcomes are monitored although the substance of these assessments is not entirely clear in terms of the action taken.

The program makes an effort to draw upon qualified academics from other institutions in PhD defence committees. However, the participation of external members to the committee is too low according to international high standards, where the ratio of external members must form the clear majority. It is also a deviation from international high standards to allow the supervisor of the PhD student to have an equal role in the defence committee as the remaining members: according to international high standards, the supervisor may have a sitting role, or secondary role in the committee, but may not have an equal say in the assessment, to avoid issues of favouritism, bias, and to ensure the necessary level of independence and integrity in the evaluation.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>PhD</i>	[Title 3]
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

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:*
 - o *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - o *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*

- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

In general, student admission, progression, recognition and certification work smoothly, and all the necessary mechanisms and procedures are in place. Admissions criteria for the BA programme are in line with national law. As noted above, in section 1, there are clear admissions criteria with regards to Cypriot and Greek students. However, admissions criteria for international students are not clear.

Findings for PhD

In general, student admission, progression, recognition and certification work smoothly, and all the necessary mechanisms and procedures are in place.

However, during the discussion with the supervisory teams, the EEC felt that there is some inconsistency regarding the duration of the studies (minimum years of study).

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

CUT is an established institution in the higher education sector of Cyprus and its expertise is evidenced in its clear procedures for admission, progression, recognition, and certification. Additionally, the programme uses ECTS credits for each course, which demonstrates the commitment to European standards, and allows for recognition of attended courses outside Cyprus.

Strengths for PhD

Please see above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

The EEC suggests that further clarification is needed with regards to admissions criteria for international students. That is important for the future development of the programs (potential programs to be offered in English).

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

The EEC suggests that the supervisory team revises the duration of the doctoral program as per the equivalent European standards.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>PhD</i>	[Title 3]
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.2	Student progression	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.4	Student certification	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1. Teaching and Learning resources

5.2. Physical resources

5.3. Human support resources

5.4. Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population,*

such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.

- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

The EEC was virtually guided through the Department, observing the resources and facilities, and were able to ask questions to the members of academic and administrative staff and students. The overall perception is that the Department has adequate resources and infrastructure to meet the requirements of this program. The department is effective and professional in its learning and teaching activities.

As the student number in the program is small, the teaching rooms are suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons. The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students. The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programs of study (except elements of Ethics). As evident by their CVs, the scientific merits of the staff are of high standards. Physical resources and support services to the student are adequate. It is worth noting that during the pandemic period, when the University premises were closed, the supporting infrastructure ensured efficient forms of remote teaching.

The library offers group areas and individual areas to assist different reading/discussion needs. Further, the library provides optional courses to enable students to learn how to use the library resources. A large collection of physical and digital access to journals, as well as the potential to borrow from other libraries (national and international) is provided.

The mentoring process is established with an advisor assigned to each student. This system seems to be less used.

Findings for PhD

The view of the EEC related to facilities, physical and human support resources is primarily based on the internal report and the discussions with the staff. Overall, the EEC believes that the university offers satisfactory resources and a wide range of services to both students and teaching staff (e.g., access to library material, IT infrastructure and administrative support), that feature a wide range of sources (e.g., books, e-books, interface open-source platform, and so on). In terms of human capital support, the University and the Departments are performing well on that front as well; there is an adequate number of experienced and well-educated staff that supports the smooth operations of the University and the PhD programme.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The program has a very good structure and support. Administrative staff are well organized and provide high quality support. The Department is well managed and resources are adequately used to provide excellent quality of services and outputs. The academic faculty is a cohesive group working together to advance the quality of research and teaching in the department. The relatively small size of the department allows for effective informal solutions to operational issues. Students are highly satisfied with the quality of learning and teaching resources, staff expertise and relevance to the program of study and department. A key strength in the department's learning and teaching activities is the academic support given to students throughout their studies. New eco-friendly facilities are on the way.

Strengths for PhD

The management and administration team are committed in providing the necessary support to teaching staff and students with the necessary resources needed to perform their duties.

The personnel are well trained, with the EEC noticed the skilled administration staff that supports academic staff and students.

The EEC noted that the University is able to provide teaching, research and communication activities online when circumstances related to the pandemic dictated so.

The library meets expectations in an academic environment and serves the current needs of students and faculty. New eco-friendly facilities are on the way.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

An important point was raised about intellectual property (IP) rights from the point of view of the student. This applies to cases where either a student wants to open a company or go in an internship for instance, and how a student may find out about IP provisions, such as information about whether copyright of programming code should belong at the different stages of the program to the student, the university or a company offering an internship. The IPR rules will be valuable for students and Staff alike. IPR support through the Career Center should be encouraged. Overall, information as to the IPR person to contact and the process for students should be made publicly available, particularly for this program where entrepreneurship is in focus.

The faculty is aware of some limitations with respect to facilities, such as lack of space, no extra space for students to work by themselves when the labs are used for teaching, or some software not being available. These limitations have been identified by the university as part of their SWAT analysis and solutions are currently discussed. These limitation will likely become worse if student intake increases, as projected. Careful and efficient use of the facilities should be planned and implemented.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

There was no evidence of international PhD students visiting the department for short or longer stays. This is regularly practised internationally. The benefit to the local PhD student body would be significant, and this point would also boost the international profile of the university. The university can consider how to create the conditions for this to take place. The EEC noted that one of the department administrators was not comfortable communicating in English. This would be a limitation for international visitors.

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

		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>PhD</i>	[Title 3]
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
5.4	Student support	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

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:*
 - o *the stages of completion*
 - o *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - o *the examinations*
 - o *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - o *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:*
 - o *the chapters that are contained*
 - o *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - o *the minimum word limit*
 - o *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:*
 - o *regular meetings*
 - o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
 - o *support for writing research papers*
 - o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are*

determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The PhD programme offers well structured studies for a limited but steady number of PhD students. Over the last years, the number of PhD students did not vary much (2015: 14, 2016: 15; 2017: 17; 2018: 19, 2020: 18; 2021: 20). These numbers indicates a well-designed programme which attracts a workable number of PhD students.

Students have continuous access to their supervisors, with regular contact (once or twice a month). Their applications are evaluated by a specific committee (3 members) which approves the application. Most PhD students have the opportunity to gain experience in research projects, located at the department. Furthermore, they have access to various financial support schemes, including merit-based and need-based schemes.

The great majority of ECTS credits is awarded to thesis writing (135), while the proposal and the defence are worth 5 ECTS. During the years of thesis writing, PhD students are in close contact with their supervisors.

The thesis is finally evaluated by a committee, including the supervisor and one external member. All members of the committee prepare written comments on the dissertation and share them among the committee, but not with the PhD student.

After the successful defence, the PhD student is encouraged to publish either an article in an academic peer-reviewed journal, or a book.

Strengths

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

Workings conditions for PhD students at the department are favourable and internationally competitive. PhD students find the necessary funds for their subsistence and they gain insights into academic research along the way. There is a clear time frame (min. 6 semester, max. 16 semester) for orientation and a close supervision by qualified academic staff. PhD students learn to teach as teaching assistants and gain own teaching experience as well.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

PhD students appear not to work in groups. Their work is reflected by their supervisors and by comments they receive every year when they have to present their progress. Peer-learning would be enhanced if some regular exchange among PhD students was available. Workshops with experts in relevant fields, such as contemporary methods, or good didactical teaching practices, could enable PhD students to share experience and learn from one another.

Furthermore, IPR management with regard to code or other goods and services by PhD students could be improved. It appears that rules and regulations in this respect are weak.

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

Sub-areas		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The two study programmes under evaluation, Bachelor and PhD in communication and internet studies, are well established, despite their relatively young academic age. Stable numbers of students in both study programmes demonstrate that the studies offer generates sufficient demand and interest for its supply. These numbers allow for some gradual growth in particular in the Bachelors programme, from an annual intake of 40 students to some 60 students over time.

Students appreciate the broad academic offer in courses, covering both wings of communication and internet studies, with insights into both disciplines, including practical courses in audiovisual and multimedia skills.


Campus facilities are adequate including digital facilities for students and staff. Library services are available both on the spot and remotely, the latter 24/7, including sufficient digital workspace for students' requirements.

Improvement could be achieved with regard to the comprehensiveness of topics taught in the Bachelors programme. Both ethics and economics appear underrated compared to their relevance in society. Furthermore, English courses or indeed an English Bachelor curriculum would help attracting international students.

The PhD programme would profit from some more international visibility by including more international supervisors or committee members, as well as from more peer-learning opportunities for enrolled PhD students.

Overall, the two study programmes under evaluation comply with international standards and their topical orientation is both internationally competitive and future-proof.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Josef Trappel	
Anastasia Veneti	
Panagiotis Chrysanthou	
Christina Lioma	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 26 April 2022