Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(E-learning programme of study)

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

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

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

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The site visit took place on Tuesday 20 May at the premises of European University in Nicosia according to the following programme:

09:00 –09:10

Introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

09:10 – 09:50

Meeting with the Rector/Head of the Institution and/or the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs

10:00 – 11:10

Meeting with the Head of the department and the Coordination Committee of the programme.

11:10 – 12:10

Meeting with the coordinators and members responsible for the E- Learning unit.

12:10 – 13:10

Meeting with members of the teaching staff of the programme.

14:10–15:00

Meeting with members of the administrative staff.

15:00 – 15:40

Meeting with external stakeholders.

15:40 – 16:45

Meeting with students.

17:00– 18:20

Meeting between the EEC members.

18:20 – 19:00

Discussion with the Head of the department, the coordinator of the programme - and the Director of Academic Quality and Compliance.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	*Position*	*University*
Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	Professor	Uppsala University
Raghava Rao Mukkamala	Professor	Copenhagen Business School
Shahab Heshmati-Alamdari	Associate Professor	Aalborg University
Georgia Christodoulou	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

  Findings

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

  Strengths

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

  Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
  - *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher*

Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The programme is generally well-balanced and covers recent, in-depth developments in core areas of AI. It is structured with 40 ECTS of compulsory courses (4 courses of 10 ECTS each), which cover foundational topics in AI, machine learning, and data analysis. These courses are followed by a rich selection of elective courses, offering further specialization in AI. Students are required to take at least two electives (20 ECTS in total) to complete the MSc degree. Moreover, there are foundation courses, including mainly math and programming, that cover the required student background for this MSc, where students before starting the programme, could take them in order to full fill the entry requirements. While the programme is well balanced and covers development in AI, there is a need to incorporated recent and very important advances in AI developments, such as LLMs and Generative AI into the curriculum.

The availability of these specialized courses equips students with advanced knowledge and practical tools necessary to tackle real-world problems in their future careers. This structure aligns well with the European Qualification Framework's expectations for MSc graduates, particularly regarding the "specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields." This emphasis on the problem-solving skills was also underscored by external stakeholders during consultations.

It was noted that students are allowed to take additional elective courses beyond the minimum requirement; however, these do not currently lead to any formal recognition beyond being listed on the transcript. One suggestion would be to offer an additional certificate for students who successfully complete extra electives, to reflect their expanded skill set. This could incentivize students to pursue a broader range of AI competencies and further enhance their CVs and career prospects. Such a practice would also contribute to producing a larger pool of AI specialists with strong problem-solving profiles, which is a pressing need in both industry and academia.

A well-defined mechanism is in place for collecting and analysing student feedback. Regular course evaluations are conducted, and the results are used to update course content, pedagogy, and the programme structure. Furthermore, an Alumni Committee has been established, which as reported, plans yearly activities and maintains an online platform (e.g., a Facebook page) to ensure ongoing communication and feedback from the market. The institution collects and monitors various indicators related to programme performance, including student success, graduate employment data, and stakeholder engagement. While feedback from employers and alumni is considered during curriculum reviews, there remains room to enhance graduate career tracking and the systematic analysis of dropout data.

Regarding public information, the programme website provides clear access to course descriptions, teaching staff, learning outcomes, admission criteria, study regulations, plagiarism policy, and general structure. However, public access to more detailed information, such as pass rates and graduate employment statistics, could be improved to enhance transparency for prospective students and stakeholders.

The inclusion of an elective course on Ethics and AI was particularly appreciated by the EEC. This course is highly relevant for fostering AI professionals who not only develop functional solutions but also adhere to ethical standards and regulatory frameworks. Given the growing importance of ethical considerations in AI deployment, we suggest that this course be made compulsory. One option to accommodate this change would be to reduce the suggested

ECTS of each of the current compulsory courses from 10 to 7.5 ECTS (i.e., keeping the current structure with 7.5 ECTS per course)[1], as this would still align well with the course descriptions and overall workload.

A very positive aspect of the MSc programme is the inclusion of a compulsory Master's thesis (30 ECTS). This ensures that students acquire the ability to apply their acquired skills in a research or innovation context and integrate knowledge across disciplines. Furthermore, many thesis topics are developed in collaboration with external stakeholders and research institutions. In recent years, several of these theses have led to scientific publications, a highly commendable outcome that strengthens both academic and industry ties.

Strengths

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

- Balanced curriculum with a clear structure combining core foundations and specialised electives.
- Possibility of taking foundation courses, before starting the MSc programme, for complete student required background.
- Emphasis on specialised problem-solving skills, well supported by elective offerings and stakeholder input.
- Effective and structured student feedback mechanisms leading to concrete programme updates.
- Active involvement of an Alumni Committee maintaining engagement and facilitating market feedback.
- The Ethics and AI course reflects awareness of the societal responsibilities of AI professionals.
- High-quality Master's thesis component that supports research, external collaboration, and real-world application.

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.

- **Recognition of extra electives:** Students who take additional elective courses beyond the required 20 ECTS currently receive no formal recognition apart from transcript inclusion.
  - Recommendation: Consider issuing supplementary certificates for extra elective courses to reflect students' extended skill set and support employability.
- **Ethics and AI course**: The ethical dimension of AI is currently elective despite its increasing relevance.
  - Recommendation: potential consideration of the Ethics and AI course as compulsory. This could be potentially achieved by reducing each of the current compulsory course ECTS from 10 to 7.5.
- **Graduate tracking and dropout analysis**: While stakeholder and alumni input is considered, data on graduate outcomes and dropout reasons is not systematically analysed.

[1] Its seems that the programme currently is run with 7.5 ECTS per course, with 4 compulsory courses and 4 elective courses, link: https://euc.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/teaching_personnel_Artificial_Intelligence_MSc_EN.pdf

- Recommendation: Strengthen alumni tracking and introduce regular analysis of dropout and completion data to improve retention and relevance.

- **Public information**: Although basic programme information is accessible, key statistics (e.g., pass rates, employment outcomes) are missing.

  - Recommendation: Improve transparency by publishing detailed programme statistics on the website.

- **Incorporation of recent advances in the curriculum**: While the programme is well balanced and covers development in AI, there is a lack of new advances in AI in the curriculum.

  - Recommendation: incorporated recent and very important advances in AI developments, such as LLMs and Generative AI into the curriculum.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
2.2 Practical training
2.3 Student assessment
2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed **30** students per class.*

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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence programme was launched a few years ago and has been running successfully since then.

There are guidelines and practices for interactive tasks between students as well as between students and teachers, and between students and course materials, in which all students participate. Students cooperate and support each other even informally by using other communication platforms.

The teaching/instruction in the courses is being delivered in a combination of both synchronous and asynchronous modules. In general, students in the programme need to watch the pre-recorded videos and then attend the interactive question-and-answer session with the instructors/teachers once a week. It was mentioned during the

discussions that, on average, students will attend a 90-minute synchronous live session with the teacher, and the rest of their time will be spent watching pre-recorded lectures, reading study materials, and completing assignments.

The course curriculum includes a substantial amount of group work, despite the master's thesis being an individual project. Regarding the student assessment mechanisms, 50% of the course grade is based on the mandatory activities and assignments that students must complete during the course. The remaining 50% of the grade is based on the final exam.

There are internal quality assurance procedures, including revisions of course materials and methods, and evaluations by the students. Through different procedures students learning skills and other needs are supported, for example by foundation courses. Practical training is not component of the programme, since the students had it in their previous bachelor programmes, and now they are active in their professions.

Master thesis is mandatory. A variety of assessment methods are used, including written exams, presentations, and peer-reviewing. The programme incorporates a robust digital infrastructure. A digital platform, Blackboard Learn, a web-based virtual learning platform and management system, is used for the delivery of the course and the assessment of student performance.

Strengths

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

- The programme is fully compatible with e-learning education principles. It incorporates an up-to-date digital infrastructure that supports the dissemination of course materials, synchronous and asynchronous communication, interaction between students, and between students and teachers, and online assessment. The structure and content are designed to be effectively delivered via the digital platform.
- The teachers and instructors receive proper training in e-learning methodology and the tools used for it (e.g., the Blackboard platform). During the discussions, it was reported that the training provided to the teachers includes both technical and pedagogical aspects.
- Students are actively engaged in research activities through their Master thesis work. Many of the master's thesis projects from the programme were later published as conference and journal articles, which indicates the high quality of the master's thesis projects
- Interaction is systematically supported through clearly defined guidelines, discussion forums, group projects, regular on-line synchronous sessions, and interactive learning platforms. These elements ensure meaningful engagement between students, between students and faculty, and between students and course content.
- There is a good balance of theory and practice that is interconnected in teaching and learning. It has been reported that in some courses, students also work on open and research-related datasets and problems, which indicates a strong connection between theory and practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- It could be of great help for the students' understanding of the impact of their work on humans, economy, society, and environment as well as on their skills to design usable and adapted AI systems if the Ethics course was mandatory. Although knowledge about regulations and general ethical issues is important the

course would need to be restructured and enriched with a stronger focus on students' ethical problem-solving skills.

- Peer-reviewing is a powerful pedagogical tool for learning through interactive tasks, especially in distance learning programmes. Team and individual interactive actions, like individual and group peer-reviewing, could be integrated formally in to the course tasks.
- Peer-reviewing each-others' Master thesis in the form of an opposition task during the presentation procedure.

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

Sub-area		***Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant***
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *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.

The MSc programme is delivered by 5 full-time permanent teaching staff and 4 external collaborators. Although nearly half of the teaching team consists of external collaborators, these individuals are highly qualified, possess recognized academic profiles, and contribute to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning outcomes. This has also contributed to the strong graduate employability profile of the programme. However, considering the increasing student intake (e.g., 85 students in 2024-2025), it is recommended to increase the number of full-time staff, particularly with specializations in core AI domains, to ensure continued sustainability and academic consistency.

The teaching staff involved in the MSc programme are highly competent professionals with academic and research expertise directly relevant to the courses they teach. Their scientific qualifications, active research involvement, and continued scholarly output; including peer-reviewed publications; contribute to aligning the programme content with current research developments. Many of them collaborate with industry and other research institutions, enhancing both research impact and teaching quality.

EUC has a clearly defined and transparent faculty recruitment and appointment process. It adheres to EU standards and anti-discrimination policies, in line with equal opportunity principles. Recruitment and promotion criteria consider academic qualifications, research output, teaching quality, and professional experience.

EUC actively supports the professional development of its teaching staff. The university offers several incentives, including reduced teaching load based on active participation in funded research projects and scientific publication output. The standard teaching load is 12 hours per week, which can be reduced to 9 hours through research/project based "buy-out" mechanisms. This flexible model encourages staff to maintain a balance between teaching and research responsibilities. Nonetheless, it is recommended that the university consider allocating internal competitive research grants to further support faculty development. These grants could be used for funding PhD students, hiring research assistants, or acquiring equipment; especially valuable for early-career researchers and those without access to large-scale external funding. Additionally, the teaching staff benefit from a supportive institutional environment that includes equipped teaching spaces, opportunities for professional development, and administrative guidance. Moreover, there is a well-defined strategy for academic progression from Lecturer to Assistant Professor, then to Associate Professor, and finally to Full Professor. This progression is based on criteria such as research output, acquisition of funding, and teaching performance. In addition, student evaluations of teaching are conducted regularly and are taken into account in course and programme development. These evaluations could also be used more systematically for assessing and planning staff training and development needs.

Strengths

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

- Competent teaching staff with good academic and research credentials.
- Transparent academic progression strategy from Lecturer to Full Professor.
- Integration of research and teaching through active publication through master theses.
- Opportunities for workload reduction through funded research involvement.
- Regular collection of student evaluations to inform teaching and programme improvement.
- Supportive teaching environment with appropriate resources and infrastructure.

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.

Staffing Adequacy: The current number of permanent staff may become insufficient due to rising student numbers.

- *Recommendation*: Recruit additional full-time academic staff with specialisation in core AI areas to ensure academic sustainability and maintain quality.

Internal Research Support: While research activity is incentivised, it would be well received to allocate internal funding opportunities to initiate or sustain research.

- *Recommendation*: Introduce a competitive internal research grant scheme to support faculty in developing their research activities and profiles.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The recruitment process for the e-learning M.Sc. programme in Artificial Intelligence is designed to ensure that admitted students have a solid academic foundation in relevant fields. Applicants are required to possess a B.Sc. degree in Computer Science, Mathematics, Engineering, or other related disciplines. The primary objective of these requirements is to ensure that candidates demonstrate both mathematical and computational competencies. Proficiency in English is also mandatory, and applicants must provide official proof of their language skills, like any other European Master's programme taught in English.

Students who do not fully meet the entry requirements must complete a series of foundation courses before beginning graduate-level coursework. These courses cover essential knowledge in mathematics and programming, providing students with the necessary mathematical and computational skills to succeed in the programme. Foundation courses ensure that all students begin the programme equipped with the fundamental theoretical and practical knowledge required to understand the advanced AI subjects.

Strengths

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

- Having an alternative path to take the foundation courses to fulfill the programme requirements is a good practice. It promotes inclusivity by allowing students from diverse academic backgrounds to bridge the gap and qualify for the programme. This flexibility ensures that motivated students from diverse backgrounds are not turned away solely because of strict entry requirements, particularly when they demonstrate promise and dedication.
- The programme also takes work experience into account when managing student admissions. During the discussions, it was reported that they collaborate with large companies, using the programme as a means to upskill their employees. It is also clearly evident from the interactions with the students that most of them are employed and taking this programme as a means of upskilling themselves as part of their lifelong learning.

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.

- Having an alternative path to take the foundation courses to fulfill the programme requirements is a good practice. It promotes inclusivity by allowing students from diverse academic backgrounds to bridge the gap and qualify for the programme. This flexibility ensures that motivated students from diverse backgrounds are not turned away solely because of strict entry requirements, particularly when they demonstrate promise and dedication.
- The programme also takes work experience into account when managing student admissions. During the discussions, it was reported that they collaborate with large companies, using the programme as a means to upskill their employees. It is also clearly evident from the interactions with the students that most of them are employed and taking this programme as a means of upskilling themselves as part of their lifelong learning.
- It was noted during interactions with the students that, before the start of the programme, clearer communication is required about the level of expected proficiency in programming and mathematical skills necessary to follow the programme. Some students expressed that if they had known the programme was demanding in terms of mathematical skills and programming, they would have revised their skills by taking supplementary or foundation courses.
- The HEI should consider providing clearer and more transparent communication about the expected expertise in mathematical and computational skills, and also recommend that students take foundation courses if they need to revise these skills.
- Based on the statistics provided by the HEI, the average gender distribution ranges from 15% to 20%, which is understandable given the technical nature of the programme. However, the HEI does not have any specific campaigns attracting more women into the study programme. Nowadays, data science and AI programmes have become quite attractive to female students as well.
- The HEI should consider implementing targeted outreach/campaigns and support initiatives to attract more women to the programme. This could include offering scholarships or partial fee waivers to female applicants and employees, as well as highlighting female role models, alumni, and faculty in marketing materials, additionally, organizing mentorship and preparatory workshops tailored specifically for women, particularly by advertising the option of taking the foundation course to meet entry requirements, among other measures.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
5.2 Physical resources
5.3 Human support resources
5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The study programme is supported by an adequate supply of teaching materials and equipment, including not least up-to-date software. All these are flexible and well adapted to the special demands of e-learning and can be used efficiently in such an educational context.

Strengths

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

- Students and teachers are supported by professional structures, procedures and special designed training courses to use the platform and other tools as well as to take advantage of the possibilities they provide for achieving the pedagogical goals of the programme.
- Teaching staff generally express satisfaction with the availability and quality of teaching materials and facilities. Resources are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with evolving e-learning requirements. Programme evaluations and curriculum reviews incorporate input from staff, students, and stakeholders outside the university.
- Library resources are excellent and they are accessible on-line by students and staff.

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.

- During training and support focus even more explicitly on the special conditions of using technology in education and in distance learning.
- Introduce more formal peer-reviewing tasks, between individual students and groups of students.

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The programme is very good and our suggestions to make it even better are the following:

- Ethics and AI course: The ethical dimension of AI is currently elective despite its increasing relevance. We recommend a potential consideration of the Ethics and AI course as compulsory. This could be potentially achieved by reducing each of the current compulsory course ECTS from 10 to 7.5.
- Considering adding the latest advanced in AI developments such as LLM and generative AI in to the curriculum.
- Peer-reviewing is a powerful pedagogical tool for learning through interactive tasks, especially in distance learning programmes. Team and individual interactive actions, like individual and group peer-reviewing, could be integrated formally in to the course tasks.
- Peer-reviewing each-others' Master thesis in the form of an opposition task during the presentation procedure.
- Staffing Adequacy: The current number of permanent staff may become insufficient due to rising student numbers. We recommend to recruit additional full-time academic staff with specialisation in core AI areas to ensure academic sustainability and maintain quality.
- Internal Research Support: While research activity is incentivised, it would be well received to allocate internal funding opportunities to initiate or sustain research. We recommend to introduce a competitive internal research grant scheme to support faculty in developing their research activities and profiles.
- EUC should consider implementing targeted outreach/campaigns and support initiatives to attract more women to the programme.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*
Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	
Raghava Rao Mukkamala	
Shahab Heshmati-Alamdari	
Georgia Christodoulou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 21-5-2025