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

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

In Greek:

Μηχανολογική Μηχανική (4 χρόνια, 240 ECTS,
Πτυχίο)

In English:

Mechanical Engineering (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor
of Science degree)

- **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 External Evaluation Committee (EEC), which was established following an invitation from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, thoroughly studied the information contained in the Evaluation Application submitted by the University of Nicosia regarding the programme BSc in Mechanical Engineering.

In the application, reference is made to the details of the programme (name, title and duration of studies). Then, in the main part of the application, there is a detailed presentation of the content of the programme. An extensive reference is made to the purpose and expected learning outcomes of the programme and the language of instruction in which it is offered. The structure of the programme and the curriculum per semester are provided in tabular form, while a detailed description of content, objectives and the applied teaching method is given for each course in a separate volume. In addition, a list of sources and aids recommended for use during the teaching of the course is provided.

The application contains also the criteria that are applied for the admission of students to the programme and a brief presentation of the careers and qualifications of the teaching staff whose detailed CVs are included in the Annex of the Application.

The Evaluation Application also contains information related to the administrative structure of the programme and its place in the School, the regulations that should be followed to ensure the quality of the programme, the research activity of the teaching staff, information on the number of students in the first years of programme operation and the employment prospects of programme graduates.

Finally, there is an extensive reference to the Student Care and student support procedures available at the University of Nicosia, the facilities and spaces used (rooms, laboratories, libraries), the tuition fees and the other financial resources of the program. Especially for the infrastructures (rooms, laboratories, libraries) which are available for the needs of the programme, the Annex contains a detailed presentation of these including some photographic material.

On 16 March 2023, the evaluation committee carried out an on-site visit to the premises and infrastructures of the University of Nicosia that are used for the needs of the programme. During the visit, the members of the committee had the opportunity to get a direct personal picture of the infrastructure, which greatly helped the evaluation of the programme. During the same visit, the members of the committee had meetings and extensive discussions with the UNIC management, the programme coordinator, faculty members, students and administrative officers.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Nicolas Moussiopoulos	Professor	Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece
Dimitrios Kyritsis	Professor	Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, Switzerland
Dmytro Orlov	Professor	Lund University, Sweden
Iakovos Christodoulou	Mechanical Engineer	Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber
Demetris Hadjiconstantis	Student	University of Cyprus
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 BSc programme in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Nicosia fulfils all the formal requirements set by respective regulators in Cyprus and therefore has a formally approved and publicly available official status. It also fulfils all the standards for quality, non-discrimination, and academic integrity, has necessary monitoring systems and administrative support. The programme has clearly defined objectives, structure and outcome goals including ECTS-based system for student knowledge assessment well aligned with the purposes of higher education of EU council including EQF. This programme seems to be regularly reviewed and updated based on feedback from academic personnel, students and evolving societal needs.

The academic courses up to 210 ECTS are compulsory in the BSc program, while the remaining 30 ECTS are elective. The programme has excessive amount of basics education courses in Mathematics and Sciences, while it lacks specialised courses relevant to the Mechanical Engineering curriculum. Therefore, the distribution of load and ECTS assignments is found to be in need of substantial revision.

The programme includes compulsory courses (138 ECTS), elective courses (30 ECTS), courses related to Mathematics (30 ECTS), Sciences (24 ECTS), Business (6 ECTS) and the English language (12 ECTS). The programme also includes the mandatory BSc thesis divided into two phases (Capstone project I and II giving a total of 10 ECTS, included in the 138 of the compulsory courses) and a non-mandatory Internship with the possibility of choosing between it or other courses. In the opinion of this committee, the distribution of basic science to engineering course is unbalanced, while the total of 10 ECTS for the BSc thesis is too low.

The programme offers nominally 19 elective courses out of which only 9 were offered in the last two years, while students suggested that only 3 of them were actually popular. Although internship projects were not offered, the students expressed high interest in having access to such opportunities.

Strengths

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

Based on the committee findings, the programme has the following strengths:

- The programme is supported by the solid expertise of UNIC in many other popular and internationally recognised study programs in medicine, business and applied sciences, as well as international reputation;
- Exceptional campus with excellent facilities for student life.

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 findings also lead to the recommendations as following:

- Improve the distribution of ECTS between basic education and advanced engineering courses. Namely,
 - the total number of ECTS for the Mathematics should be reduced to no more than 18 ECTS,
 - the total number of ECTS for the Sciences (Physics and Chemistry) to no more than 12 ECTS,
 - the total number of ECTS for English language to no more than 8 ECTS and
 - the number of ECTS for specialty courses must be enhanced bringing the value of BSc thesis to 30 ECTS.
- The number of offered elective courses needs to be limited in relation to the number of third and fourth year students available per semester.
- Internship opportunities must be elaborated, ideally with the engagement of industrial partners, and offered to students with the number of ECTS corresponding to the respective load.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

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

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.

The BSc MENG programme of UNIC is found to be truly centred on the needs of students. It is of high educational standard with slightly excessive focus on theoretical background. The formal assessment of student knowledge appears to be adequate and fulfilling the EQF. The experience of teaching and research faculty members (TRFs) results in a very comfortable climate for studies. TRFs implement various teaching methods (traditional, collaborative, collective) and engage students in the preparation of assignments (e.g., laboratory exercises), as well as use of modern communication forms (email, Moodle, social networks) facilitating the approach and mutual understanding of teachers and students in efficient cooperation. The teaching staff also provides comprehensive and constructive feedback to students on the course's Learning Activities, Teaching Methods, Coursework and plans to proceed with the Course Assessment. Students also receive clear information regarding the time required by the lecturer to provide them with feedback on their course tasks, activities and course works. So far participation at mobility programmes is limited.

The comfort of teaching environment is reflected in formal feedback from students at the end of every course and confirmed in personal communication of EEC with students. Students often refer to the positive climate and accessibility of teachers as major factors in their decision-making process for entering UNIC and staying in the BSc study programme until graduation.

However, interviewed students asked for a larger number of academics on full-time positions who are more readily available for contacts, as well as facilities for hands-on experimental work. According to student reflection, the programme has insufficient amount of hands-on practices.

The EEC members also found that additional specialised laboratory facilities as well as associated formalised safety procedures are necessary for the MENG programme under evaluation.

Strengths

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

Based on the committee findings, the programme has the following strengths:

- Very positive feedback from students on support, their study and social life experiences in the university;
- High TRF / student ratio;
- Diverse cohort of international students from all continents.

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 findings also lead to the recommendations as following:

- Encourage academic exchanges and mobility programmes including local and international internships for students.
- Significantly enhance laboratories and other experimental facilities available to the students.
- Elaborate, formalise, and enforce safety procedures for students in laboratories.

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

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

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

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

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.

The committee discovered confusing discrepancies in the number of involved personnel between application and presentation materials, and therefore reflected on the figures from additional materials considering them latest and therefore most accurate. The teaching-research faculty (TRF) available in the programme consists of 16 lecturers, all PhD holders. Only 19 % of TRFs in the programme are females, which is well below desirable gender balance. The majority of teachers have sufficient academic and work experience in their own subject of teaching, as can be inferred from the academic specialisation (doctorate, publications). At a quick glance, the total number of TRFs appears to be significantly above average on the TRF / student ratio according to international standards. However, most TRFs have very limited relevance to Mechanical Engineering making insufficient contributions to the overall subject of the programme. Namely, besides adjunct faculties, only two full-time members are Mechanical Engineers, and even those cover only a minor fraction of the Mechanical Engineering subject. This is reflected also in the experimental facilities available to students in the programme, which may compromise the motivation of students in this programme.

Present full-time staff satisfactorily covers all the subjects relevant to the early stages of Mechanical Engineering programme. However, the committee found the number of personnel with direct expertise in e.g. Solid Mechanics, Machine Elements, Strength of Materials, and Production Engineering to be very limited. This situation is very vulnerable particularly to possible moves of

adjunct TRFs. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance expertise and to increase the number of respective teaching personnel on full-time positions in advanced and elective courses with specialisation closer to the programme subject. It will also be necessary to hire sufficient Special Teaching Staff to meet the needs of the programme's laboratories.

Strengths

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

Based on the committee findings, the programme has the following strengths:

- Human capital available to the programme is of high standard and competitive at international level;
- All the personnel involved in the teaching process appears to be very passionate about teaching and carrying about the students;
- The teachers are found to be very experienced while also open for introducing new methods into the educational courses.

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 findings also lead to the recommendations as following:

- Significantly enhance 'human capital' with core expertise closely relevant to the Mechanical Engineering programme, e.g. by recruiting to permanent positions adjunct academic personnel already participating in the programme, and by making strategic investments into new faculty members.
- Improving gender balance should be given attention in the recruitment process.
- Encourage academic exchanges and mobility programmes for training existing personnel.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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 BSc programme MENG of UNIC seems to have well defined, transparent policies and criteria along with consistent established procedures for student admission, progression, and recognition. These are evident from the submitted formal documentation, information on the website of UNIC and interviews with students. The programme has very low drop-out rate of admitted students at a rate of only 14%, which indicates the robustness of admission procedures and adequate student progression practices.

Strengths

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

The strengths of this programme are (i) low drop-out rate among admitted students, and (ii) good international reputation of the University.

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.

Although established routines appear to be functional, it can be recommended to (i) increase promotion of the programme to attract more students, and (ii) recruit new faculty with background in Mechanical Engineering.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Not applicable

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.

The examination of formal documents submitted for the evaluation of the BSc MENG programme in UNIC along with on-site visits to the teaching and laboratory facilities revealed that most teaching and learning as well as support resources necessary for adequate student education are available. All the programme's courses are taught in English.

A significant number of classrooms are available for teaching needs, the majority of which are located in the University's Research and Technology building. For the non-technological courses, additional rooms located in other buildings of the institution are used. The number of rooms is sufficient to cover the needs of the programme. All rooms are properly equipped to meet teaching needs (desks, chairs, tables, projector connected to a PC, etc.).

The laboratories available for the programme through the department are well equipped and maintained, but as described in more detail above, are not sufficient for covering all the needs of the Mechanical Engineering curriculum.

Most critically, present full-time staff satisfactorily covers all the subjects relevant to the early stages of study programme, but the number of personnel with direct expertise in Mechanical Engineering related subjects is very limited. This situation is very vulnerable particularly to possible moves of adjunct TRFs. Also, students ask for more adequate academic and physical work support on the subject from full-time faculty.

Consequently, the existing infrastructures and personnel resources are good in general but require enhancements to support the proposed curriculum.

Strengths

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

The faculty members of the programme have active involvement in research and notable international recognition in their fields. Several of them have been participating in European and National Research programs. According to the data of the report, the University of Nicosia has an active presence in the research sector.

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 is necessary to enhance expertise and to increase the number of respective teaching personnel on full-time positions in advanced and elective courses with specialisation closer to the programme subject. It will also be necessary to hire sufficient Special Teaching Staff to meet the needs of the programme's laboratories.

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

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

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

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

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

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

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

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.

Not considered

Strengths

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

Not considered

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.

Not considered

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC), which was established following an invitation from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, thoroughly studied the information contained in the Evaluation Application submitted by the University of Nicosia regarding the programme BSc in Mechanical Engineering. On 16 March 2023, the EEC carried out an on-site visit to the premises and infrastructures of the University of Nicosia (UNIC) used for the needs of the programme. During the visit, the committee obtained a direct personal picture of the facilities for the sake of the programme evaluation. During the same visit, the EEC carried out meetings and extensive discussions with the UNIC management, the coordinator of the MENG program, the faculty, students, and administration officers.

Based on the committee findings, the programme has the following strengths:

- It is supported by the solid expertise and international reputation of UNIC;
- Human capital available to the programme is of high standard and competitive at international level;
- High teaching research faculty / student ratio;
- Diverse cohort of international students from all continents;
- Exceptional campus with excellent facilities and on-campus student support.

The findings also lead to the recommendations as follows:

- Significantly enhance 'human capital' with core expertise closely relevant to the Mechanical Engineering programme, e.g. by recruiting to permanent positions adjunct academic personnel already participating in the programme, and by making strategic investments into new faculty members.
- Improving gender balance should be implemented in the recruitment process.
- Actively promote academic exchanges and mobility programs for training existing personnel.
- Significantly enhance specialised laboratories and other experimental facilities available to the students.
- Elaborate and enforce safety procedures for students and personnel training.
- Improve the distribution of ECTS by enhancing advanced engineering courses and BSc thesis.
- Facilitate internship opportunities.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Nicolas Moussiopoulos	
Dimitrios Kyritsis	
Dmytro Orlov	
Iakovos Christodoulou	
Demetris Hadjiconstantis	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 19.03.2023