

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 14 March 2025

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Computer Science
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Computer Science and Engineering (4 academic years, 246 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))

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



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](#)].

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) reviewed and examined the material provided by the American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo pertaining to its Bachelor's Degree Program (246 ECTS, 4 academic years) in Computer Science and Engineering. The EEC was briefed by Ms. Natasa Kazakaïou from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). The application material was provided to the EEC before the onsite visit, giving ample time to study them. The onsite visit took place on March 13th, 2025, where the EEC met with management, faculty, teaching staff, administration, and students of other programmes (because the programme under evaluation is new and not active yet). All members of the institute that the EEC interacted with were informative, open to suggestions and highly professional. After the onsite visit, the EEC requested additional material from the institute, which was provided. This report contains the findings of the EEC.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Christina Lioma	Professor	University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Giuseppe di Fatta	Professor	Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy
Georgios Fakas	Associate Professor	Uppsala University, Sweden
Polydoros Skannavias	Student	Cyprus University of Technology, 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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all 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*
 - *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*

- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.
 - conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.
 - performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.
 - establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.
 - conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.

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*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?
- How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?
- How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?
- In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?
- How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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.

A policy for quality assurance (QA) of the programme is in place and is part of the strategic management of the institute. This policy has a formal status. The QA policy requires the involvement of teaching, administrative staff and students in clear and appropriate ways. Regulations guarding against intolerance and discrimination are in place and publicly available.

Overall, the programme 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). The programme is subject to a formal institutional approval process. The programme's objectives are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Clear rubrics ensure that ILOs are aligned with student assessment. The purpose and objectives of the courses are aligned to the overall programme objectives.

Based on discussions with students of the Computer Science programme and with stakeholders, the EEC found evidence that both students and stakeholders are involved in the design of the programme. However, the processes for this involvement should be specified in detail in the QA policy, as mentioned under recommendations, below.

The programme design ensures smooth student progression. The exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS.

The programme results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated. Structures are in place to ensure that the programme is regularly monitored and therefore up to date.

Information on the selection criteria, ILOs and qualification awarded, is clear, accurate, up to date and readily available on the institute's website.

Strengths

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

It is a strength that the programme includes well-structured industrial placement opportunities, and that the institute is actively working towards solutions to complications regarding national regulations on employment for nationalities outside the EU.

Another strength is the professionalism of the staff, and the high standards of planning, organisation and execution. There is a culture of proactive and efficient handling of issues, due to both the capabilities of the staff, but also the organisational structures of the institute. This is commendable.

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 QA policy is described in the application submitted to CYQAA, however the description of this policy is rather general. Details on the precise regulations and procedures to be followed are missing. For example, what processes ensure that the strategic plan is implemented? How are potential conflicts coming from various US and EU accreditation standards and regulations handled? How many members of the internal evaluation committee need to be present, for a meeting of this committee to take place? These are just some examples of the type of regulations and processes that ought to be detailed precisely in the QA policy.

The QA policy, in its entirety, is not publicly available. It should be made publicly and easily accessible on the institute's website.

There are clear guidelines in place to ensure academic integrity and vigilance against fraud. However, these guidelines appear in the student code of content, but not in the QA policy. This information should be clearly linked to the QA policy document, with accurate descriptions of the precise procedure to be followed in cases of alleged fraud and misconduct.

It is not clear what precise processes and regulations support the involvement of external stakeholders in QA. This should be described clearly in the QA policy. Currently there is no mention of external stakeholder involvement in the QA documentation submitted to QA, nor information on how employer surveys on evolving workplace demands or alumni feedback is part of the institute's QA process. This should be described clearly in the policy.

The expected student workload of each course is specified in ECTS, but only hours for lectures, labs and in general types of interaction between students and teachers. This should be complemented with hours given to student preparation, project work, exam preparation and actual exam. Collectively, all of these define the student workload estimate and should be mapped to ECTS, not only the hours of interaction between teachers and students.

Information on teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities and graduate employment is not readily available on the institute's website. This should be added.

The EEC recommends that the above points are addressed. This will strengthen the QA, public information and information management aspects of this programme significantly.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

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.*
 - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
 - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

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 EEC has found evidence in the documentation and during the visit that the process of teaching and learning (T&L) considers different modes of delivery (lectures, practical activities, presentation, group work, and independent study). The T&L process and activities well support student development and are suitable to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes of the courses and of the overall programme.

Moreover, students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process. For example, the 'maker' lab is going to be equipped with devices (e.g., 3D printer) and will be self-managed by the students.

From the meeting with the students, it clearly emerged that the student-centered T&L process provides adequate guidance and support from the lecturers and encourages autonomy in the students.

T&L facilities are brand-new, equipment and material used in teaching are modern, effective, and support the use of modern educational technologies. For example, some lecture rooms are equipped with technologie to allow distance learning and some rooms are equipped with computers to allow practical activities.

Students have also praised the commitment, friedlines and flexibility of the lecturers. There is a positive atmosphere that supports the learning experience. There is evidence of good practice in assessment feedback.

Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are in place, as emerged from the meetings with the students and the administration staff.

Detailed syllabi of the courses are of good standard and explicitly indicate the expected hours for the in-class activities and the assessment method with weights for each assessment component.

Strengths

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

There is a particularly positive synergy and trust between students and lecturers that indicate that the T&L process is effective in supporting the learning and generates an overall good quality of experience for the students.

The T&L facilities are of very high quality and brand new. The new buildings allocate current and future requirements very well, demonstrating an excellent strategic vision and planning.

The new campus has potential for future needs and development (e.g., sport facilities), and even for further expansion of the capacity.

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 recommended that a dedicated server with a powerful GPU is added to the computing infrastructure to allow students and research staff to carry out projects with the latest AI technology (e.g., fine tuning of LLMs).

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

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

2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
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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.

There are robust processes in place to ensure high competence among the teaching staff. The processes of staff recruitment and development are transparent, fair and clear for both faculty and non-permanent lecturers. The teaching staff has more than adequate qualifications to achieve the programme's objectives and learning outcomes.

There are clear processes of promotion that consider both teaching and research quality, as well as personal development and mobility.

Currently, the number of teaching staff is adequate to support the programme. There is a plan for increasing the number of students, but this is accompanied by a hiring plan for teaching staff. Therefore, the overall strategy is feasible.

The rank and status of the teaching staff is appropriate to offer high quality education as part of this programme. Visiting staff does not appear to exceed the number of permanent staff. In the previous statement, staff from the main American University of Beirut in Lebanon is excluded.

Despite the short operation life of this institute, there is already evidence of promising links between teaching and research, with respect to outside partners from Cyprus and abroad, as well as scholarly activity to encourage linking research to teaching. The publications of the teaching staff are within the disciplines covered in the programme.

Strengths

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

High quality teaching was observed during the onsite visit. This is a definite strength for such a new programme.

The appointment of a formal university director of teaching and learning provides guidance and support to the overall quality of teaching offered, including innovation in teaching delivery. This is commendable.

The allocation of teaching, research and administration workload is excellent, allowing staff to contribute both to research and teaching in balanced ways that also reward their skills development in attracting external funding. This is particularly important for the two assistant professors of the department of Computer Science, and it is highly commendable as a practice.

It is a strength that newly hired academic staff is offered seed funding and opportunities to grow.

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.

For teaching assistants and research assistants, the processes of recruitment and development could not be assessed, because this information was unavailable. It is therefore recommended that these processes are specified in written form and made publicly available. The institute offers opportunities for teaching skill development, in the form of seminars and workshops. This is an excellent initiative. However, these are not compulsory to new staff, or staff with limited teaching experience. It is therefore recommended that a basic package of pedagogical training is made compulsory to all newly hired staff. This applies also to staff with shorter-term contracts. This will ensure that no teacher, of any rank, interacts with students without some basic training in pedagogy and didactics.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

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 university has all the needed information, regulations and entry requirements for student admission publicly available on their website. There is also evidence that they respond timely to student applications and any enquiries. In the meeting and discussions with the students, the EEC found out that admission processes are indeed implemented consistently and in a transparent way.

There are regulations regarding student progression and these are available to students. Also, the students have up to date access to their progression using university learning environments (e.g. moodle).

The university has pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition. They have procedures for recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning. They do not currently have recognition of any non-formal and informal learning, as explained below under recommendations. There exist appropriate recognition procedures in place that are in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

It is compulsory for the students to spend some time on the mother campus in Beirut, which the EEC finds beneficial for students. The university is working towards implementing Erasmus exchanges as well.

The university is subject to accreditation from quality assurance agencies from the EU (as it is located in Cyprus, an EU country) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) quality standards (as the university is registered in New York, USA). The EEC was informed, during the onsite visit, that in case of conflicts, the CYQAA policies take precedence.

Since the university has no graduates yet, and this programme is not active yet, there is no evidence of certifications explaining the qualifications gained by students. Nevertheless, the university has a plan on how to proceed with this issue which the EEC found convincing.

Strengths

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

It is a strength that, in general, the university follows almost all standards for student admission, progression, recognition and certification. For some remaining standards, the university is currently working on adopting good solutions.

It is commendable that the programme, and the institute, is subject to rigorous quality assurance control and accreditation from both the EU and the US.

Another strength is that the institute's rigorous admission policy has resulted in very high quality students.

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.

Student mobility opportunities (e.g. participation in Erasmus programmes) are currently limited to the main campus in Beirut, while participation in the Erasmus exchange programme is under development by the university. It will be a significant contribution to the students when such mobility opportunities will be available and students can visit universities abroad.

The institute is encouraged to implement recognition of non-formal and informal learning activities, such as hackathons or competitions. Such activities can offer a broad range of learning opportunities that are outside the formal grading structures of the programme. When implemented, such activities should lead to alternative forms of recognition. Such activities are highly encouraged, as they are generally interesting and useful to students.

The EEC recommends that the Greek Apolyterion is also considered to the admission requirement specifications, as it is very closely aligned to the Cyprus Apolyterion. More generally, it would be advantageous for the institute to accept all major EU educational qualifications that are equivalent and suitable for admission to EU HEIs, thereby broadening the pool of candidates and strengthening the European identity of the university.



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

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 campus has been established recently and the premises are brand new. The vision and the effort to provide modern facilities and to maintain some feature elements (stone walls) of the old buildings is commendable. The result is a pride for the University and the city.

The library is a good study space for the students, while the actual books and material is available online from the library of the campus in Beirut. The study facilities, lecture rooms and IT infrastructure are all modern and adequate to support the study programme. All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.

There is plenty of capacity for current and near-future requirements, as well as opportunity of expansion to ensure even further increase in capacity in terms of student numbers.

The current academic and administration staff is adequate to provide the necessary support, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, admission officers and other service providers. In general, the qualified administrative staff is adequate to support the study programme.

There is a suitable plan for expanding the academic staff in the next few years to meet the expected growth in student numbers.

Students' mobility towards the campus in Beirut is encouraged and supported. The establishment of mobility opportunities towards other academic institutions, specifically towards European Erasmus partners, is in progress: applications to join the Erasmus exchange programme have been submitted and the outcome of the applications is expected in the next few months.

The programme integrates theoretical knowledge with practical experiences in the curriculum through projects.

There is some evidence that students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, though this may still be limited by the small number of local tenured academics. Further appointments will help to improve this aspect. It would be useful that a plan to appoint academic staff could include a strategic vision for research in key areas of computer science and AI.

Student feedback on the T&L process and the support services is very good.

Apart from teaching in the specific subject domain, there is strong evidence of availability of general education delivery as part of the institution philosophy. In addition, there is evidence of attention to specific modern educational needs, such as a course in AI Ethics and one in Academic Writing that includes guidelines for the use of large language models in academic activities. The EEC would recommend to offer the AI Ethics course as compulsory to the students of this programme.

There is evidence of good practices in collecting student feedback and acting upon it. The new study programme will incorporate some recommendations of the students of the existing study programme in computer science.

Students' special needs are taken into consideration with a dedicated officer.

The classrooms are equipped with modern technology, including cameras, microphones, and speakers, to facilitate hybrid learning.

The university provides dedicated buses to transport students between their dormitories and the campus.

The teaching labs (e.g., digital systems) and the robotics room are not yet equipped, but there is a plan in place for the acquisition and installation of equipment.

Strengths

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

The vision and the effort to provide modern facilities and maintain some feature elements (stone walls) of the old buildings is commendable. The result is a pride for the University and the city.

There is evidence of good practice in collecting student feedback and acting upon it.

There has been an uncompromising level of attention to provide handicap access in all parts of the campus. This is highly commendable.

It is also a strength that the campus is safe and close to the city and the dorms.

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.

Further appointments have been planned and will help to improve T&L aspects. It would be useful that the plan to appoint academic staff includes a strategic vision for research in key areas of computer science and AI.

The AI Ethics course could be offered as compulsory to the students of this programme.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant

5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*

- The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:
 - regular meetings
 - reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
 - support for writing research papers
 - participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

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?
- Are the criteria reflected in 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer

6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer
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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 EEC was presented with the application material about the Bachelor's Degree Program (246 ECTS, 4 academic years) in Computer Science and Engineering. During the site visit, the EEC met university, school and department leadership peers, professors, teachers, administrators and students. The EEC met current students of other programmes (including students from BSc in computer science). Additional material was requested by the EEC after the onsite meeting. This material was provided by the institute. The EEC reviewed and examined all the material provided before, during and after the onsite visit, and analysed the resulting findings. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the onsite visit, the EEC concludes that, overall, this is a very promising programme, with high academic value and clear links to industrial market needs and societal impact. This is achieved primarily thanks to:

- the excellent culture of professionalism and high standards, as well as enthusiasm of the staff managing, developing, and executing the program;
- the rigorous admission policy is demonstrated by the quality of students in the current programmes, and
- the strong links with highly interested and accommodating industry partners not only from Cyprus, but also internationally.

The EEC was impressed with the facilities and standards of professionalism, witnessed at all facets of the onsite visit, but also evidenced in the submitted material. The EEC therefore concludes that the programme under evaluation is largely compliant with the CYQAA standards, with few exceptions of partial compliance. This report elaborates on this matter, with guidelines for improvement.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Christina Lioma	
Giuseppe di Fatta	
Georgios Fakas	
Polydoros Skannavias	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 14 March 2025