

Doc. 300.3.2

# Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

Date: February 17, 2021

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
American University of Cyprus (AUCY)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty:** Arts & Humanities
- **Department:** Design
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## Programme 1

### **In Greek:**

ΠΡΟΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΑΣΜΟ ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ ΧΩΡΩΝ

### **In English:**

BA in Interior Design, 4 years, 240 ECTS

## Programme 2

### **In Greek:**

ΠΡΟΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΑΣΜΟ

### **In English:**

BA in Graphic Design, 4 years, 240 ECTS

## Programme 3

### **In Greek:**

Programme Name

### **In English:**

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** New



**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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].**

## A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

## 1. Department's academic profile and orientation

### Sub-areas

**1.1 Mission and strategic planning**

**1.2 Connecting with society**

**1.3 Development processes**

**Point 1.1.1: A slight discrepancy between the mission of the Department and the mission of the School emerged during the visit (see the Dean's statements and the Department description on the website).**

We'll accordingly revise the Dean Statement and Department mission in alignment with the comment.

### **Point 1.1.2**

At this stage, we are publishing our minimal information on the website and brochures, waiting and abiding by the rules and regulations set by DIPAE.

**Point 1.1.3: just short-terms objectives are described (see the SMART objectives described at p. 19-20). Moreover the mechanism for updating and revising the department strategies is not so clear.**

The Department Strategic Planning Committee together with the stakeholders periodically will revisit the SMART objectives and plan ahead for the next 2-3 years.

**Point 1.1.6 : this is not addressed anywhere.**

This will be addressed after we have students and graduates. Accordingly we will form committees to continuously enhance and improve our programs.

**Point 1.2.2. The current website of AUCY ([http://aucy.com.cy/about\\_us](http://aucy.com.cy/about_us)) offers very poor information on both the University and the Department.**

The website will be updated and aesthetically ameliorated within the next week. All the updated information will be published after securing the full approval from DIPAE.

**Point 1.2.4: Since the offered Programs are new, the communication mechanism towards graduates is not yet in place. A Career Placement Office will be established.**

A Career Office will be functional at AUCY. It will correspond with all the job markets in Cyprus, Europe, USA and the Middle East. Its main function is to link our students and graduates for Training and employment purposes. The office needs to organize a yearly Job Fair where institutions from all the above stated regions participate for recruitment purposes.

Point 1.3.1: Most of the senior members of the Faculty have an educational background in architecture, furniture or spatial design. There is a significant absence of senior faculty members educated in graphic design, which suggests a lack of an appropriate recruitment strategy to locate qualified teaching personnel for the program in Graphic Design.

We had recruited 5 Senior Faculty Members in Graphic Design: Kelly Sozou (Cyprus), Polychronis Giannikopoulos (Greece), Dr. Sophia Mytilinaiou (Greece), and Eleni Glinou (Greece)

**Point 1.3.2: The uncertainty relating to the exact number of students that will be enrolled in the next few years have suggested AUCY to adopt a conservative recruitment strategy. As a result, in the presented two programs, several members of the teaching staff seem to be overwhelmed by teaching activity. The answers provided to specific questions by the EEC on this point were a bit evasive, always referring to the need to remain flexible not knowing exactly how many students they will attract.**

Based on an estimate of 100 students within the school we will commit 5 FT and 8 PT faculty members according the teaching needs for the first year and abiding by the rules and regulations ratio pertaining to this subject.

**Point 1.3.3: It is not fully clear how foreign students will be attracted, especially in the first year. Indeed, the web site of AUCY is quite poor and the strategy for students' recruitment described in the application heavily relies on on-site visits of the Campus and in person visits to private and public high schools by members of the Department. This seems to limit the outreach of these actions to a local context. The provided SWOT Analysis (see page 25) is a bit shallow.**

9. Strategy for recruiting students (*M. Specific Guidelines*)

## **Orientation and Marketing**

Orientations to attract new students will be conducted in various markets in Cyprus, Greece, Europe, China, Russia and the Middle East.

Our promotion of the University will be worldwide using all kind of Media Networks and Social Media platforms, thus using all marketing techniques.

Our Marketing and Orientation staff will be visiting schools and participating in international exhibitions all the countries mentioned above and promoting AUCY and Cyprus as well.

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

Point 2.1.1: in the description of the QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND SYSTEM (p. 26 of the Department Application), the validation of new programs is described. Here the involvement of external reviewers is mentioned but not enough details are provided in this regard.

Three colleagues at the National Technical University of Athens (two Associate Professors in Design and one Professor in Architecture) had reviewed our two programs and gave their feedback based on their academic and professional experience regarding the validation of our new programs

Point 2.1.3 Dyslexia, a common disability among design students, is not addressed

**Dyslexia** is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Also called reading disability, **dyslexia** affects areas of the brain that process language. At AUCY our social and psychological departments will be assisting students to achieve their goals.

Point 2.1.4.2: the area of research is not explicitly addressed in the description of the Quality Assurance Process (see page 27). However, one of the indicators listed at page 40 is “Research productivity and publication of academic manuscripts in high rank journals. Authorships of books, chapters in books, case studies.”

AUCY will seek to be recognized as one of the world’s leading research universities in Cyprus. The University seeks excellence in research and scholarship to help solve real-world problems and enhance its mission to improve the world today and the future generations. Through academic leadership and strategic partnerships around the world, AUCY will work to advance research, create knowledge, and promote innovation.

We will be allocating a respectful budget yearly for research obligations worldwide.

One publication per year per faculty in ranked journals (3 or 4 stars) will ensure the quality of the research productivity. Co-authorship within the department, school, university and other universities will be strongly encouraged and supported by the Head of the Department and the Dean.

Point 2.2.3: at page 27 we found the “Quality assurance and quality control of the learning process”, that sounds too generic. In other words, it is not a description of an already existing process, but just an overall discussion on how such a process could work. As said, the Quality Assurance office has not been established yet.

Upon the operation of AUCY in September 2021 the Quality Assurance Office will be established, therefore the office will draft in more detail all the QA processes.

Point 2.2.7: the evaluation is based on the declaration of intents. Indeed, the Student Information System is not operational yet.

In our UMS system and as discussed with the visiting committee all our evaluation forms will be electronic and obligatory to all teaching staff and students.

Point 2.2.8: the role of the students' portfolio still needs to be addressed properly.

Portfolio is an especially important part of potential students' application in AUCY. We would like to attract the best and most creative minds internationally, so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking individual portfolios into account.

Point 2.2.12.1: even if it is difficult to judge the quality of the building facilities during an on-line visit, the ECC members share the opinion that at AUCY such a quality is not completely satisfactory

The building facility underwent a huge renovation till now. The Visiting committee of the institutional license visited physically the building and all academic and non-academic facilities already exists.

1. Point 2.2.12.2: it is not fully clear how the retrieval of out-of-print books will happen. Moreover, there is not a dedicated library for arts and design, and it is unclear whether the library will be fully operating with an adeq As for the Library, AUCY Libraries strive to provide quality services by acquiring, organizing, preserving, and providing access to a variety of information resources. The libraries, thereby, support the University's mission to foster excellence in scholarship and lifelong learning and to educate students to be future leaders who can exercise reason based upon knowledge.

Recognizing that the Library is central to fulfilling the mission of the University, AUCY Libraries keep up-to date with the latest publications relevant to the major programs of study through purchases and an active local and international gifts and exchange program. The Libraries welcome and encourage donations and institutional exchanges that support the University's academic programs and the scholarly, teaching, and research interests of AUCY community.

The Library will provide access to an expanding collection of core reference and circulating materials in print, manuscript, electronic, audio, visual, cartographic, and other appropriate formats. It also provides individual and group study space for more than 100 simultaneous users, an Information Commons with appropriate support and access to information and



technology resources and a classroom for Library instruction and for quiet, individual study.

AUCY Libraries are open to the public, however, only AUCY faculty, students, staff, and alumni are currently granted borrow privileges. AUCY Libraries guests and visitors are allowed to access and use the library's resources within the confines of the library only.

We will be hosting an E-library connected to all E-Libraries in the world. Hence, articles from all over the world will be accessible by our students and guests. Researches from all can be accessed immediately.

The libraries will be connected to all servers through the PC's on a daily basis and we have a plan to open them for 24 hours, 7 days a week.

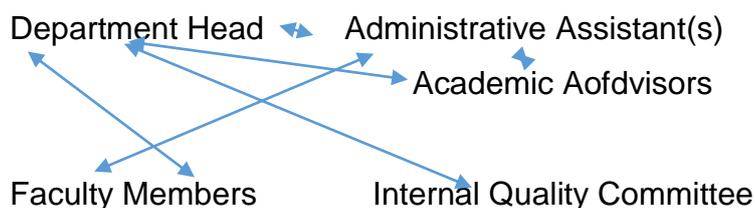
As for the Design Department and as per the recommendation of the visiting committee, a dedicated library is already in the process of being finalized very soon.

The book shop will be on Campus, selling original books as well as providing all kind of printing materials to arts students.

uate number of books for the two design programs, by the time students will arrive.

### 3. Administration

Point 3.1: the description of the Department structure is rather vague. The diagram provided in the application at page 7 is too sketchy. In it, it is not clear how the Department will interact with the Faculty and with the other AUCY offices.



Point 3.2: the participation of students to the Department council is described in a standard and general manner (see page 8 of the application). The involvement of administrative staff is not openly addressed anywhere.

- a) In each Department of the School, there is a Department Council in which the following persons participate:
  - All members of the Academic Staff of the Department.
  - Elected student representatives of the Department amounting to 20% of the other members of the Council.
- b) The duties of the Department Council cover academic matters similar to those under the jurisdiction of the Senate and its decisions are subject to School approval. In general, the Department Council:
  - Defines the general educational and research policy of the Department, and determines its strategies for development.
  - Ensures adherence to the Internal Regulations of the University as they relate to the Department.
  - Proposes to the School Dean:
    - The creation of new programs of study and necessary infrastructure support.
    - The distribution of approved funds for meeting the expenses of educational research, and other activities of the Department.
    - The hiring of faculty for the needs of the Department.
    - Modifications/improvements of pathways or specializations of the degrees offered in the Department.
- c) The election of the student representatives to the Department Council is carried out in a manner similar to the election of representatives to the Senate during specially convened meetings chaired by the Head of Department.

- d) The term of office of the Department Council members is:
- Two years for the Head and Associate Head of the Department.
  - One year for the student representative(s).
- e) Department Council decisions that affect other Departments within the School will have to be approved by the Dean and, if required, by the Senate.
- f) The Head and Associate Head of the Department hold the rank of Professor or Associate Professor. In case there is no faculty with this rank in a Department, then Assistant Professors can be elected as Acting Head and Acting Associate Head of Department.
- g) Department's staff will participate in the council and they have the voting right and they will put their remarks from their side of work objectively.

Point 3.3: in the application, it is written that the Department will have just one administrative assistant. It is not said if in the future more will be recruited. However, in the budget section, the cost of 2 administrative assistants is declared.

The Design Department will start by having one administrative assistant, however, based on the growth of the department we'll hire new administrative assistants.

Point 3.6: monthly Departmental meetings are foreseen. It is not clear whether minutes will be held and kept. With only one or two administrative personnel connected to the Department, there is a concern that this work load is falling unto the teaching staff.

Once the Department becomes operational and depending on the number of the faculty members, we'll accordingly assign one or two administrative assistants to take the minutes of the Department's monthly meetings.

Point 3.8: The manner in which the Department Council operates is described just in general terms (see page 8 of the application).

Even though the Department Council's (DC) duties and responsibilities are described in a rather general manner, once the Department becomes fully operational the DC's duties and responsibilities will be further streamlined.



#### 4. Learning and Teaching

##### Sub-areas

##### **4.1 Planning the programmes of study**

##### **4.2 Organisation of teaching**

Point 4.1.1. As already said, the process for periodically reviewing the programmes of study is just a declaration of intents. Therefore, it is difficult for the ECC to express an informed opinion on it. Also, everything seems to be focused on short term objectives.

The Department Strategic Planning Committee, together with the stakeholders periodically will revisit the SMART objectives of the programmes of study and plan ahead for the next 2-3 years.

## 5. Teaching Staff

Point 5.1: since most of the members of the teaching staff have a background in architecture, there are some concerns related to the Graphic Design course

Based on your recommendations we have already hired 4 Senior Faculty members with extensive Graphic



cv\_POLYCHRONIS  
GIANNIKOPOULOS.pt



cv\_Mytilinaiou\_en.pdf



KALLY SOZOU CV  
FEB21.pdf

Design academic and professional experience.



EleniGlinou\_CV.pdf

Point 5.6: in the Programs description, often the subsequent editions of a course (e.g. Interior Design I, II, II, IV) are taught by the same lecturer. However, in the first year the members of the teaching staff will teach just to freshmen students. This means that the Department has enough time to address this issue with an appropriate recruiting strategy.

Very well taken comment. We already set a recruiting strategy after the first semester's results and if needed we'll recruit more qualified faculty

Point 5.7: During the on-line visit it was said that the Department can count on 21 academics: 15 full-time and 6 part-times. There are no visiting professors.

Currently we have a total of 25 Faculty members out of which 17 are FT, 6 are PT and 2 are Visiting Professors.



## 6. Research

6.3 Our academics are affiliated with other institutions to where they continue their research. Our MoU with UMass will also develop our research outcomes. AUCY will seek to be recognized as one of the world's leading research universities in Cyprus. The University seeks excellence in research and scholarship to help solve real-world problems and enhance its mission to improve the world today and the future generations. Through academic leadership and strategic partnerships around the world, AUCY will work to advance research, create knowledge, and promote innovation.

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## 7. Resources

## **B. Conclusions and final remarks**

The department of Arts and Design fully abides by the rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education and the Accreditation committee and supervised by DIPAE.

Head hunting of Full Timers will be according to the norms. PhD holders WHO WILL BE research oriented.

Research budget will be highly applied.

Recruitment budget will be highly applied.

Dedicated budget for technological advancement.

All laboratories are ready prior to our operation.

Capacity ratio of each program will be transparent.

Learning outcomes will be analyzed on a semester basis.

Transparent and professional communication will occur.

AUCY is following an equal diversity policy. A VERY DIVERSE FACULTY have been employed. We strongly believe in equal opportunities for all.

AUCY is a new institution so continuous improvements and additions will take place. We promise that as a higher education Institution, the university will continue to invest in order to provide to our students the best learning and social environment.

AUCY is active and abide by Erasmus regulations.

AUCY invests a lot in the Career Office.

AUCY will update yearly the academic programs to meet the job market requirements.

AUCY's academic and physical facilities will be open to all the Cypriot Citizens and the community at large.

**Thank you.**



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Dr. Mark-Antoine Zabbal</b>	Rector	
<b>Dr. George Phylactou</b>	Vice President	
<b>Dr. Ioannes Michaloudes</b>	Dean	
<b>FullName</b>	Position	
<b>FullName</b>	Position	
<b>FullName</b>	Position	

Date: February 17, 2021

