

Doc. 300.3.2
Date: 12/12/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** Humanities and social sciences
- **Department:** Design and Multimedia
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Γραφιστική και Ψηφιακός Σχεδιασμός (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Graphic and Digital Design (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Διαδραστικά Μέσα και Κινούμενο Σχέδιο (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Interactive Media and Animation (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

- **Department's Status:** Currently Operating



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. 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.*

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and thorough work during the onsite evaluation of the Department and our two BA programmes. We would also like to express our appreciation for their collegial and constructive approach to the evaluation. The Department has been found by the EEC to be fully compliant with all standards and guidelines. No deficiencies in the quality indicators were identified.

We would also like to highlight the EEC's general statement on page 9, which summarises the Department's and its programmes' strengths: "The department conforms to our expectations of a well-run, internationally-oriented Department of Design and Multimedia. External stakeholders, students and faculty appear to agree on the Unique Selling Points (USPs) of the department and this results in a coherent set of programmes with apparently satisfied graduates."

We do welcome the Committee's recommendations for improvements, which are addressed in the corresponding sections below and will enhance the quality of our Department.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

1. Department's Academic Profile and Orientation

The 15 quality indicators in Section 1 relate to the Department's academic profile and orientation. On average, they are rated 4.7 out of 5 by the EEC, and all sub-areas are rated as compliant. The Department is pleased to note the EEC's highly positive observations regarding the programmes' clarity of identity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and strong sense of community among students, alumni, and external stakeholders. We also value the recognition of the Department's outward-looking orientation, evidenced through its public-facing events, publications and University Social Responsibility initiatives. We greatly appreciate the EEC's acknowledgement of our research-active staff, their diverse specialisms, and our coherent, internationally oriented academic structure. This reinforces our ongoing commitment to excellence in design and multimedia education.

Recommendation / observation

1. The short medium and long term objectives were implied by the mission statement but were not codified as such.
2. Stakeholders clearly influenced the department's developmental strategy but we observed no formal mechanism for this process and this might be usefully addressed.
3. There is no mention of Equality Diversity and Inclusion principles in the very detailed and otherwise excellent hiring policy. This should be addressed. Funding processes are described but it is not clear how they are communicated and thus transparent.

Response

1. The Department acknowledges the EEC's observation and will ensure that the short-, medium- and long-term objectives are explicitly articulated and clearly codified in future documentation, building upon the framework already implied within the mission statement.

2. The Department acknowledges the EEC’s observation and would like to note that a formal mechanism for stakeholder input is already in place through the internal evaluation process, which includes external members on the Evaluation Committee. This structure ensures that stakeholder perspectives are systematically incorporated into the Department’s developmental strategy and quality assurance processes.

3. The Department acknowledges the EEC’s observation regarding the explicit reference to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles in the hiring policy. We would like to note that these principles are actively embedded within the University’s broader institutional framework through the Centre of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI). <https://www.unic.ac.cy/unic-now-has-an-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy/>

CEDI is a multidisciplinary research and policy centre comprising academic and administrative staff with expertise in issues of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Its mission is to promote a culture of inclusion, equity, and pluralism, to advance gender mainstreaming, and to foster a respectful and supportive working and learning environment where the rights and dignity of all individuals are upheld.

The Department aligns fully with the University’s EDI policies and practices, and these principles underpin all aspects of our recruitment, teaching, and research culture. With regard to the EEC’s point on funding transparency, we acknowledge the importance of clear communication and will continue to make funding opportunities and processes accessible and visible to all staff members through established institutional channels.

2. Quality Assurance

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

The EEC awarded a score of 5 to all 30 indicators in sections 2.1 and 2.2, thereby commending our “extremely robust quality assurance process”. The Department appreciates the EEC’s positive assessment and conclusion that this section is extremely thoroughly covered with no recommendations required. We also acknowledge the EEC’s thoughtful observation regarding the time demands of quality assurance processes and the potential impact on teaching and research. The Department values this recognition and shares the view that the balance between rigorous quality assurance and academic workload is important. We will continue to engage constructively with institutional bodies to ensure that these processes remain effective, proportionate, and supportive of our core academic missions.

Recommendation / observation

However, the panel observes that these QA processes, and this external one in particular are extremely time-demanding on staff to the degree that they may detract from the core missions of teaching and research. We would like to represent this view which was also expressed by faculty in this report and recommend that a lighter touch process is considered.

3. Administration

No areas of improvement were identified by the EEC members for any of the indicators in Section 3 and all were marked with a score of 5. The Department welcomes the EEC's positive remarks confirming that administrative procedures are clearly defined and that administrative staff are appropriately allocated to support departmental activities. We appreciate the committee's acknowledgment of the effectiveness and clarity of our administrative structures, and we are pleased that no recommendations were deemed necessary in this area.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

On average, the 5 quality indicators in Sub-area 4.1 scored 4.6 out of 5, whereas Sub-area 4.2 received a score of 5 out of 5. Both were rated as compliant. The Department welcomes the EEC's positive comments on the clarity of the assessment criteria and learning outcomes at course and programme level. We also value the recognition of the effective integration of theory and practice, a core pedagogical principle that remains consistent across all our programmes.

Recommendation / observation

We were not introduced to formal mechanisms by which students are able to influence the ongoing development of the programme and could not find evidence of this in the submitted documents. In all other institutions we have observed there are student representatives, staff-student committees or other structures that support student involvement in the direction of the programme.

Response

Students provide feedback through multiple established mechanisms. At the end of each semester, they complete online evaluations for every course and lecturer. In addition, student feedback is incorporated through the internal evaluation process, where a student representative participates in the Programme's Quality Assurance Committee. Students also have the opportunity to express their views and suggestions through their representatives at Departmental and School Council meetings, as well as through their active involvement in the Departmental Student Art, Design, and Multimedia Club. The University of Nicosia has formal mechanisms ensuring active student involvement in quality assurance and programme development which can be found in its Internal Regulations, primarily in Chapter 5: Standards and Quality Assurance. Furthermore, Students participate as full members in the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) and formally contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, and ongoing improvement of programmes.

5. Teaching Staff

The EEC members did not provide any recommendations or identify any areas for improvement regarding the teaching staff in Section 5. All 8 indicators were awarded the maximum score of 5 and all Sub-areas were rated as compliant. The Department is grateful for the EEC's positive observations regarding the healthy staff–student ratio, the high level of student support, and the commitment and qualifications of the faculty. We also appreciate the recognition of our staff's research activity, award-winning outputs, and diverse, student-centred teaching approaches, which together underpin the quality and vitality of our programmes.

Recommendation / observation

The department's submission mentions only one visiting professor per year in 2024 and 2025. The panel finds this to be a very low number.

Response

The Department acknowledges the EEC's observation and would like to clarify that information on visiting teaching staff is presented in Table 12 of the Departmental application. This table records a total of five visiting lecturers from universities abroad over the past three years. These official visits contribute to the programme through specialised workshops, lectures, and collaborative projects, enriching the academic experience with diverse international perspectives.

In addition, the Department frequently hosts visiting professionals and lecturers from Cyprus, whose contributions, though not formally recorded in the application, add significant value to our students' learning experience through guest lectures and short-term collaborations. We appreciate the EEC's suggestion and will seek to further strengthen and better document these activities in future reports.

6. Research

The EEC awarded the maximum score of 5 to all 9 indicators in Section 6, "Research", rating all four assessment areas as compliant. The Department appreciates the EEC's recognition of the strength and organisation of its research activities, particularly their international scope and its relevance to Cypriot contexts. These factors define the Department's distinctive research profile. We also value the acknowledgement that faculty research informs and enriches teaching, strengthening the academic and creative coherence of our programmes.

Recommendation / observation

As is unfortunately common, staff research in particular is negatively impacted by administrative tasks. Although the university policy specifies research leave for "members who engage in research, as defined in the University's Policy and Collective Agreement" this is not supported adequately on the ground. Ultimately this is bad for staff and bad for students and we recommend that this time is more robustly protected.

Response

We note the EEC's concern regarding the impact of administrative workload on research productivity. Under University policy, active researchers are eligible for Research Time Release (RTR), which reduces teaching hours to support major research activity. The Department continues to encourage applications for RTR and advocate the expansion of such opportunities, recognising their importance in maintaining research quality and output. Within existing institutional frameworks, we remain committed to balancing administrative responsibilities with the protection of research time and to fostering a culture that supports scholarly excellence.

7. Resources

On average, the 6 quality indicators in Section 7, "Resources", scored 4.5 out of 5 and the assessment area was rated as compliant. The Department welcomes the EEC's positive observations regarding the quality of the facilities and infrastructure, and their beneficial impact on the student experience. We are also pleased that students expressed high levels of satisfaction with their access to equipment and resources. This reflects the Department's effective management of financial resources and its ongoing commitment to maintaining a high-quality learning environment.

Recommendation / observation

We note with concern that the department feels that there is "room for improvement especially with reference to the work load, remuneration". Adequate remuneration is essential for attracting and retaining high-quality staff in any organization and particularly so in academia where the international job market is so competitive. Investment in facilities should exist in a balance with investment in research and that means supporting and thus retaining faculty.

Response

The Department appreciates the EEC's understanding of, and acknowledgment of the challenges related to workload and remuneration within the broader higher education context. We fully share the view that attracting and retaining high-quality academic staff is vital to sustaining excellence in teaching, research, and creative practice. While salary structures and workload frameworks are determined at institutional and national levels, the Department continues to support its faculty through research opportunities, professional development and recognition initiatives. We also maintain an open dialogue with the university leadership team to ensure that the needs and contributions of academic staff are appropriately represented and considered in future planning.

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The Department welcomes the EEC's positive conclusion confirming full compliance across the evaluated areas and appreciates the recognition of the many examples of good practice highlighted in the report. We value the Committee's constructive feedback and consider its observations to be a valuable contribution to the ongoing development and continuous improvement of the Department's programmes and operations.

Recommendation / observation

We have some minor comments regarding the process of the site visit:

1. We were not afforded the opportunity to observe a lesson (as specified in the schedule for the day) and this seems like a reasonably significant omission

2. We were grateful for the opportunity to tour the facilities but this was a little ad hoc and would have benefited from a more formal approach. We would have appreciated the opportunity to hear more from teaching staff rather than leadership because this would have given us more insight into the use and value of these spaces.

Response

The Department acknowledges the EEC's observations regarding the site visit process and appreciates the constructive spirit in which these comments were made. The schedule and structure of the visit were set in accordance with the agenda provided by the CYQAA, and at the designated time for class observation, no teaching sessions were taking place. We regret that this limited the opportunity for the EEC to observe a lesson, and we will coordinate more closely with the CYQAA in future evaluations to ensure such opportunities are available.

Similarly, regarding the tour of facilities and meetings with faculty, we note that these elements were conducted according to the preset schedule. We nevertheless appreciate the EEC's feedback and agree that a more structured tour and greater engagement with teaching staff would be beneficial. We will communicate this suggestion to the CYQAA so that future site visit agendas may better accommodate these valuable interactions.

Once more, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for its professional and diligent approach in providing constructive feedback and recommendations aimed at further improving our Department and its programmes.



B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Klimis Mastoridis	Dean	
Prof. Paschalis Paschalis	Head of Department	

Date: 12/12/2025

