

Date: 11 July 2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Limassol International University
Formerly Cyprus International Institute of Management
- **Town:** Initially, headquarters in Nicosia with a Branch in Limassol (This will be reversed as of Academic Year 2025-26 when the new university campus in Palodia, Limassol, currently under construction, will be completed. The Palodia Campus will become the University Headquarters and the current Nicosia campus will become LIU's Nicosia Branch).
- **School/Faculty:** School of Technology and Innovation
- **Department:** Department of Information Technologies
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

BSc Computing and Business Technologies (4 years full-time or 6 years part-time, 240 ECTS, 1st cycle)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MSc Business Intelligence & Data Analytics (14 months full-time or 24 months part-time, 90 ECTS, 2nd Cycle)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MSc Green and Digital Management (14 months full-time or 24 months part-time, 90 ECTS, 2nd Cycle)

- **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 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.*

1. Department’s academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

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

Overall the Department (as part of the School and the LIU) scores high when it comes to its vision and mission and the associated plans for fulfilling them. Although thought and effort has been invested in preparing the plans necessary for the transition, more focus and urgency is needed when it comes to addressing the inherent challenges of scaling up and of the higher expectations set by the new LIU vision. Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.
2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

The programs are in line with the themes expected by such a Department. Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Although the Department scores high in most areas related to development processes, more can be done when it comes to recruiting academic staff to underpin the new vision. Similarly, more can be done to ensure consistency in student recruitment.

As provided in the hiring plan three additional computer science faculty and one specializing in digital sustainability will be recruited in the next two years to reinforce the existing six-member team.

Findings

The EEC notes that this is an exciting time for LIU and a unique opportunity for colleagues involved in not just shaping but also effectively establishing a new Department within a new School and a new University. This makes it possible to address existing structural challenges and create a solid foundation for the future.

The Department aims to operationalize the strategy set the University level in the context of research and teaching in the area of Information Technologies. More specifically, the vision of the University is to become a premier international University, a catalyst for innovation and change, known and chosen for its educational quality, frontier research, innovation, and transformative culture in addressing real-world problems. The vision is expected to be implemented by a) providing a conducive environment for students and faculty to learn, to research and to innovate b) delivering an education that motivates students to explore, to create, to challenge, and to lead c) generating and disseminate new knowledge.

When it comes to the research a number of new strategies are planned in order to encourage and facilitate research. As far as teaching is concerned the Department of Information Technologies aims to provide relevant postgraduate courses continuing on well-established track record of CIIM. It also aims to introduce a BSc programme and a PhD one later on.

In both cases the investment in people and infrastructure (especially when it comes to the campus) signals senior management commitment to the success of this new venture.

Strengths

The mission and vision set are on par with what one would have expected from a new Higher Education Institution that aspired not just to create knowledge and train the next generation of professionals, but also to create an impact to its community and beyond.

There is significant financial commitment that underpins the transformation of CIIM into LIU which opens up new opportunities for the future. Having the opportunity to create a new University by maintaining all the positive aspects of the existing practice and addressing areas of weaknesses can give the new Institution a major boost in its first steps.

Strategic plans appear to be pragmatic and feasible. The governance put in place is in line with good practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Although a plan may be in place for the new University, its Schools and Departments, the challenges associated with the changing nature of the Institution aspirations as well as its scale should not be underestimated. This is especially true as More urgency is necessary when it comes to the recruitment, induction, and further development of both academic and support staff so that when the new campus is ready, and the new programs are offered the transition is a smooth one. Considering the current workloads involved, the additional demands for planning and implementing the Department/School, the move to the new campus, the launch of the new program and all the external surrounding uncertainty (e.g. pandemic relapses; the war continues and expands; economic disruptions and inflation accelerates etc), the current approach may not result in recruiting the numbers necessary for underpinning the vision of LIU. An effectively executed recruitment strategy will plan the seed for the long-term success of the Department. Manageable workloads will make it possible for colleagues to focus their attention where it matters and deliver the expected results. This is imperative when it comes to creating a thriving research community, which is going to be a key metric of the success of LIU.

Although CIIM has very strong links with the local community and beyond these relationships do not seem to inform its strategy and operations as much as they could have done. The EEC considers these relationships as one of the most valuable assets of LIU. They can help shape and operationalize the vision of the University (and in turn the School and Department) in a distinctive manner. Such links are of vital importance not just for teaching and learning but now also for research and impact. As such the EEC recommends that there needs to be investment in systematically managing these relationships in order to maximize their utility for all stakeholders involved.

Our response:

*It is very encouraging to receive the EEC's assessment that **"Overall the Department (as part of the School and the LIU) scores high when it comes to its vision and mission and the associated plans for fulfilling them"**. We also share EEC's view that "although thought and effort have been invested in preparing the plans necessary for the transition, more focus and urgency is needed when it comes to addressing the inherent challenges of scaling up and of the higher expectations set by the new LIU vision".*

Scaling up is not simply a matter of quantity but quality as well; therefore, our scaling up will be gradual and cautious, and largely organic. Furthermore, if we have learned anything from the Covid pandemic and the unexpected break out of war, inflation and energy crisis on the heels of the pandemic, the only certainty is uncertainty and planning under uncertainty is not easy. This is why we are engaging outside consultants to assist us in preparing more detailed transition plans with more resources for contingencies and alternative scenarios.

1. Coherence and compatibility among the MSc programmes of study offered by the Department, and listed below, are ensured by design: they share several core and elective courses in the information technology area and have common faculty, common criteria of admissions and identical mode of delivery, yet differing scope and focus.

- MSc Applied Information Technologies*
- MSc Business Intelligence & Data Analytics*
- MSc Green & Digital Management*

The BSc in Computing & Business Technologies, on the other hand, is a standard undergraduate computer science programme but with a difference: it produces graduates with expertise in computer science and literacy in the fundamentals of business and economics. As such, they are job-ready in digital transformation of business as well as academically-ready to pursue postgraduate studies.

2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs) does not arise since the School has only one Department. A second Department is not planned in the foreseeable future (4-5years).

*According to the EEC **"the Department scores high in most areas related to development processes"**, yet more can be done when it comes to recruiting academic staff to underpin the new vision. Similarly, more can be done to ensure consistency in student recruitment. We agree on both points, and we have been working to do more in both respects. With regard to recruiting academic staff, as indicated below, a faculty recruitment strategy has been in operation for a year through which four new faculty members have been hired for the Department, two senior and two junior, out of some 150 applicants. Four additional faculty members are scheduled to be recruited for the Department over the next two years. With regard to maintaining consistency in student recruitment, this is ensured through published clear admission criteria consistently applied and the mandatory personal interview of every candidate by a panel of Department faculty along with the admissions officer.*

It is indeed a challenge to undergo the transformation into a University while maintaining continuity of existing activities and subsequently undergo transition to a new campus. The Temporary Governing Board is fully equipped and prepared to oversee the transformation guided by an operational plan and a transition committee will oversee and coordinate the shift to the new campus. A faculty recruitment strategy has been in operation for a year through advertising in multiple academic job sites. We received over 1,000 applications with some 150 applications for faculty positions in the Department of information Technologies which were assessed by the Faculty Selection & Promotion Committee. Four new faculty members were hired for the Department, two senior and two junior. Four additional faculty members are scheduled to be recruited for the Department over the next two years. Teaching and administrative workloads have been reduced by 20-40% to enable faculty, especially new junior recruits to focus on their research and deliver the expected results, as we consider them the seeds for the long-term success of the Department.

The EEC considers our community relationships as one of the most valuable assets of LIU; we will not disagree with this. We also concur with EEC recommendation that there needs to be investment in systematically managing local community relationships in order to maximize their utility for all stakeholders involved. This is exactly an area in which CIIM, as a not-for-profit charitable institution for 30 years, has invested huge levels of effort, time and money to community service and continues to do so building on the tradition and the relationships established over the years (see ANNEX 1).

We respectfully beg to disagree with the EEC, however, that these relationships do not seem to inform the institution's strategy and operations as much as they could have done. To the contrary, these relationships have helped pivotally in shaping and operationalizing the vision of CIIM for three decades and most recently they have done the same for the vision of the University and the School of Technology & Innovation. It is out of these relationships that the vision of the transformation of CIIM into a University has emerged, in the pursuit of balanced teaching and impactful research. Perhaps what gave the wrong impression to the Committee, it was our failure to communicate clearly the foundational role of community relationships in the genesis and development of CIIM and its successor, the Limassol International University. CIIM was established by a group of business leaders and a team of prominent academics representing some of the world's top business schools. The involvement of business leaders has been a part of the design of CIIM academic programmes from the very beginning, and continues to be so today. We will continue to invest 10% of the time and effort of our faculty and senior management in community outreach and the fostering of community relations which will continue to inform our strategy and operations as a University for many years to come, as they did in the case of CIIM for three decades.

2. Quality Assurance

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

The scores indicate that overall although there are systems in place with regards to quality assurance, there is room for improvement when it comes to how the policy is communicated and what it aims to achieve as well as how it involves external stakeholders.

Overall although quality assurance is broadly operationalized as expected admissions need to become more consistent.

Findings

The EEC finds that the department has a quality assurance policy in place. Internal stakeholders develop and implement the quality assurance policy through structures and processes that are appropriate in their design. The department's teaching staff has the responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the department's programs of study. The quality assurance policy supports guarding against intolerance or discrimination against both students and staff, and covers all functions and sectors of the department. Student evaluation and feedback is part of the quality assurance process.

The EEC further finds that the assessment of student performance meets the standards of CYQAA, and that the policies for handling plagiarism, academic ethics and grade disputes are effective. Adequate information related to the programs of study are published by the department. Admission criteria for students are consistent to the department's policy.

Graduate employment information is also collected.

With respect to teaching, a variety of teaching methods is used. Resources such as building facilities, library, theoretical and practical teaching rooms, technological infrastructure and broadly academic support and student welfare services are offered. Student diversity is handled appropriately. Student mentoring is offered. Clear policies on authorship and intellectual property are in place.

Strengths

The department's management, administration and teaching staff are willing to improve their modus operandi with respect to quality assurance. There is a common culture of working together, learning from past mistakes, and improving practices. Such dynamics are a definite strength.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The minutes of the meetings of the quality assurance committee can be accessible upon request, but are not publicly available by default. The EEC recommends that this practice is amended, so that the schedule of the planned meetings of the quality assurance committee and their respective minutes are posted on the institution's website and made accessible to all.

Minutes should be detailed and adhere to the usual standards. They form evidence of quality assurance. Such administrative practices should be exercised appropriately.

External stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process on an ad hoc basis. The EEC recommends that external stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process in a structured and systematic way, not only on an ad hoc basis.

The EEC noted that, on few occasions, items that had gone through the quality assurance process, were incomplete (for instance, course descriptions without workload specifications) or substandard (for instance, listing "Object-Oriented Programming for Dummies" as the primary textbook for a bachelors programming course). The EEC recommends that the quality assurance process is carefully monitored, so that results meet CYQAA standards and so that a culture of quality is promoted.

Our response:

With regard to the EEC recommendation that the schedule of the planned meetings of the quality assurance committee and their respective minutes are posted on the institution's website, we confirm that since the beginning of 2022 all administration and faculty committee meetings, including those of the Quality Assurance Committee are scheduled for the year on fixed dates and recorded in the Outlook Calendar of the institution (ANNEX 2), available to all concerned. Minutes are kept but they cannot be made accessible to all; their dissemination is restricted to stakeholders on the "need to know" basis, in each case, for GDPR reasons.

The EEC recommends that external stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process in a structured and systematic way, not only on an ad hoc basis. CIIM was established by a group of business leaders and a team of prominent academics representing some of the world's top business schools. The involvement of business leaders has been a part of the design of CIIM academic programmes from the very beginning, and continues to be so today. Regular meetings take place between the Dean, the Programme Directors, and the external stakeholders. Through such consultation meetings, CIIM has, in recent years, designed and launched new programmes such as the MSc Financial Law and International Taxation, the MSc in Applied Information Technologies, and the Master in Green and Digital Management. When CIIM's operations will be transferred to the Limassol International University, we will continue to involve our external stakeholders, to even greater degree as Limassol is the economic and business centre of the country with many local and international companies, such as AMDOCS, MSC Ship Management, Interorient Navigation, Medochemie, Lanitis Group, Galatariotis Group, Anchoria Bank, Prime Real Estate, Eureka Group, Paradisiotis and others with which we maintain close relationships and, with some of them, partnerships. Many we will keep involving in the design of our programmes and others in their review as members of a wider quality assurance process.

The EEC recommends that the quality assurance process is carefully monitored, so that results meet CYQAA standards and so that a culture of quality is promoted. We fully agree with this recommendation, and this is why we have established separate Quality Assurance Committees for each Department in order to ensure that the academic programmes of each Department are carefully monitored and in accordance with the CYQAA standards.

The operation of the QA committee is made more transparent and integral to the University community with regular feedback from both internal and external stakeholders. External stakeholders will from now on be involved in the quality assurance process in a structured and systematic way. Furthermore, external advisors from partner universities, relevant to the subject matter on the agenda being discussed, are invited to take part in the QA meeting. The quality assurance meetings are planned to take place every first Monday of each quarter, announced in advance with relevant stakeholders being invited via Outlook Calendar. All the meetings are recorded and minutes are taken (including the list of participants, topics of discussion, decisions taken, actions arising and next steps) and shared via email along with the link of the recorded video. Minutes are posted on the website to the extent that GDPR are not violated. The Chairman of the QA Committee is responsible to oversee the process and ensure all necessary measures are taken to comply with the decisions taken and actions arising.

3. Administration

Although the Department scores high in most areas related to administration practices, more can be done when it comes to disseminating and implementing their decisions. Similarly, The Department must act with respect to the statutory sessions. Minutes should be kept of these sessions and be made available to all stakeholders.

Findings

The department has a clear administrative structure as presented in the committee, which is in line with the CIIM mission to become a premier international University.

Teaching, administrative staff and students participate in the department's procedures.

Administrative staff is actively involved and supports the operation of the department.

Procedures are in place to ensure transparency in the decision-making process and to control academic misconduct. With respect to the student body, procedures are also designed to effectively deal with complaints.

Strengths

The department has a clear organogram in line with the organization's mission to excel through its novel MSc programs and its research focus.

Academics, administrative staff and students are involved in the procedures set in motion to manage the department.

Emphasis is placed on the Department's internationalization and the external collaborations.

The Department is actively engaged to recruit new members of academic staff from international institutions based on their strong research profile. There is also commitment to increase the number of new academic staff recruited from international universities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Although the administrative structure is clear and a number of committees have been specified to participate in the administration process, there is little/no evidence that these committees are in place. No evidence with respect to the members and the role of these committees has been provided. Action should be taken with respect to naming these committees, identifying their members, clarifying their role, and making all the above publicly available on the department's website.

Statutory sessions and their minutes should be kept. There is no evidence that minutes are kept now.

The Department's prevention and disciplinary control policies should be clearly stated to all stakeholders. A formal complaint process should be clearly defined and made public in the website.

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Statutory sessions and their minutes should be kept. There is no evidence that minutes are kept now.

The Department's prevention and disciplinary control policies should be clearly stated to all stakeholders. A formal complaint process should be clearly defined and made public in the website.

Our response:

We appreciate the EEC's assessment that "the Department scores high in most areas related to administration practices". We agree that more can be done when it comes to disseminating and implementing decisions, in particular, keeping detailed minutes of sessions and making them available to all stakeholders. Since the beginning of 2022 all administration (and faculty) meetings are scheduled for the year on fixed dates and recorded in the Outlook Calendar (ANNEX 2) of the institution that is shared by all concerned. Minutes are kept but their dissemination is restricted to the "need to know" group of stakeholders in each case for GDPR reasons.

A list of all Committees, their role and members is available in several official documents: a) Internal Regulations document (ANNEX 3), b) Student Handbook (ANNEX 4), as well as, on the website under section "CIIM Governance": <https://www.ciim.ac.cy/about/ciim-governance/> .

The Department's prevention and disciplinary control policies, as well as, formal complaint process are stated in the Faculty Handbook (ANNEX 5), as well as, in the Student Handbook (ANNEX 4). These are also explained to each new faculty and student member during the induction and orientation session. They are being made available in LIU University website.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

Findings

The EEC finds that the department has effective practices in place for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing its programs of study. Intended learning outcomes, content, assignments and final exams meet CYQAA standards and comply with local legislation. Theory and practice are integrated in a balanced and effective way.

The EEC further finds that student admission criteria are consistent and accommodate cases of credit transfer and recognition of prior studies. The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable presently. Feedback is provided to students in a timely and effective way. Marking criteria are clear, available to students, and match the intended learning outcomes. Student-teacher communication is regular, effective and promotes mutual respect.

Strengths

The students (present and past) that the EEC met with were motivated, reflective and engaged. They all spoke highly of their experience at the department, and praised the flexibility of the teaching approach, and their own personal gain out of their programs of study.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends that external stakeholders from local industry should be regularly and formally involved in the design and reviewing of programs of study. This is missing right now from the department's workflow.

The EEC was informed that the intended student intake will grow significantly in the upcoming years. As a result of this, the present computer laboratory facilities will not suffice. The EEC notes that the department has plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs, however these plans did not have a concrete timeline and did not specify a clear number of machines. The EEC recommends that the department commits the necessary resources to make sure that computer labs have adequate places for the growing number of students that is expected.

Our response:

As evidenced in the flowchart in ANNEX 6 concerning the “Programme Design, Implementation, Outcomes and Quality Assurance” external stakeholders from local industry should be regularly and formally involved in the design and reviewing of programs of study. In particular Alumni, employers and the Community leaders make concrete inputs in programme designed and revision. Their input is solicited at the design and review process through surveys, formal interviews, and focus groups. Regular consultation (formal and informal) takes place with industry leaders such as the Presidents and/or the Managing Directors of the Cyprus Chamber of the Commerce and Industry (KEBE), the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB), the Cyprus Shipping Chamber (CSC), the Cyprus Computer Society (CCS) and the CYHRMA Cyprus Human Resource Management Association (CYHRMA). One example of formal consultation which took place when the MSc in Applied Technologies was designed with the members of the Cyprus Blockchain Technologies, of which CIIM was a co-founder and which now count among its members all the major banks, accounting firms (3 of the Big Four), large law firms, and computer technology services providers like Oracle.

The general research infrastructure of the teaching laboratory includes hardware, software, access to countrywide resources, and access to the cloud. In terms of hardware, the laboratory has 30 computers in the Nicosia lab and 16 in the Limassol lab. These computers have reasonably fast processors (>2.5 GHz), sufficient memory storage (0.5-1 Terabyte), and RAM (>4GB). The computers have the Windows Operating System; On a first phase, there is dual boot Windows/Linux on ten computers in the laboratory in Nicosia and on five computers in the laboratory in Limassol. If more are needed, there is possibility to install dual boot on more computers. The distribution of Linux that we will install will be Ubuntu. There are GPU cards installed on five computers in Nicosia and five in Limassol, which will be used both for educational as well as for research purposes. In addition, the university also has access to the computing facilities of “The Cyprus Institute (Cyl)” that include the use of GPU computing and supercomputing.

Our plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs from the current number of 50 to 150 will be implemented in two phases: 50 new machines in advance of the launching of the undergraduate programmes and another 50 machines the following year. The expected student intake of all three undergraduate programmes will not exceed 100 and will probably lower with one third being the students of BSc computer growing at the rate of 10% a year according to our timeline.

5. Teaching Staff

Overall, following on CIIM, the Department and its resident and visiting staff have a track record of providing quality education. There is an increasing number of faculty in the Department with plans to effectively double its size.

Findings

The EEC was provided with a copy of the Staff Handbook for 2022/23. This is a comprehensive document covering all expected areas, including expectations and responsibilities, workload and performance evaluation. Overall, these appear in line with expectations.

As things stand there is a sufficient number of resident and visiting staff to deliver the postgraduate courses. Block delivery makes it possible to effectively engage with visiting staff when it comes to existing program. The ratio of resident vs visiting staff is considered reasonable.

Staff have the required qualifications and experience to deliver the programs in which they are involved.

Students provided feedback at the end of each course which makes it possible to inform its development. The EEC was provided with tangible examples in which such feedback was considered and actions implemented.

Strengths

The EEC acknowledges that plans to recruit new members of staff (such as assistants) who will contribute to teaching and help spread the workload involved. This will be a positive development. Still such appointments should not involve current students (except in the case of PhD candidates for whom such experiences would be useful for their future academic careers).

It is positive to see that there is an EDI strategy that can help shape the development of the Department.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The 2022/23 handbook provided, states that resident academic faculty members have a teaching load of 40 ECTS and the following teaching, examination and final project supervision responsibilities. Considering that these ECTs can be delivered twice (in two different sites) this can potentially result in a significant workload balance that is likely to exceed the expected 30%. To this end it is important that workload policy is not just treated as a high-level guideline for the allocation of duties but also implemented in a way that makes it possible to provide more specific estimates of the work involved for all activities. This will not only ensure that members of staff are treated in a fair and consistent manner but also help protect their research time and career development.

The EEC notes that there may be ad hoc activities related to continuous pedagogic training and innovation. It will be useful to systematize these in order to support colleagues' development (e.g. by organizing regular T&L workshops and seminars) and the spread of good practice (e.g. via peer-observation in teaching).

The EEC's concern that the teaching load of resident academic faculty members of 40 ECTS along with final project supervision responsibilities, might be excessive, is understandable but is due to misunderstanding. The "up to 40 ECTS" teaching load applies to only a few faculty members who have been with CIIM for several years focusing more on teaching than research. They still have the option of reduced teaching to do more research if they choose and there is funding to buy off part of their teaching. Newly recruited faculty members have reduced teaching load in the range of 20-30 ECTS (2 courses in each semester, or less) and 40-55% of their time allocated to research. Furthermore, EEC's impression that the fact that ECTs are delivered twice (in two different sites) can increase the faculty's workload is not accurate since this far from increasing their teaching load is reducing it because preparation time is reduced; the number of

ECTS and the class contact hours do not change: 110-140 class contact hours per year for research-oriented faculty and 160-180 class contact hours for teaching-oriented faculty. However, everyone is expected to do some teaching and some research to fulfill their contractual obligations.

While the EEC recognizes that continuous pedagogic training and innovation takes place at CIIM-LIU recommends to systematize these activities to better support colleagues' development. The EEC is right noting that in the past these were largely ad hoc. However, since early last year they have been formalized and incorporated in the Faculty Handbook. There is now a policy and a formal process of faculty development involving regular T&L workshops and seminars and peer-observation in teaching to the spread of good practice. See Faculty Development Policy in ANNEX 7. At the same time we developed the "Learner-Centered, Problem-Based Teaching & Learning Model: an Instructors' Manual with innovative in teaching and learning methods described and tested (see ANNEX 8).

6. Research

Overall, the research undertaken is in line with expectations for such a Department.

Findings

Members of staff in the Department of Information Technology had the necessary qualifications for undertaking such research.

The EEC notes that there are a number of policies in place to encourage and support research. These apply not just to new members of staff, but also existing ones. There is seed funding for new research projects, a budget for attending conferences, sufficiently developed infrastructure for research, plans for new research centers etc.

A significant proportion of existing Faculty is research active, publishing work in relevant peer-reviewed journals and other outlets. As such there is a good basis on which to stage the development of the Department's future research strategy. New appointments are typically expected to be research active.

Strengths

Staff were very positive about the Department's prospects when it comes to generating research of an international standing.

There are many relationships with external stakeholders that can be exploited for both generating new research but also disseminating and making an impact through it.

The aspirations and commitment to developing research is reflected on the generous research allowance that staff can enjoy, subject to their contract arrangements.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

More senior appointments would help create capacity when it comes to mentoring and nurturing a thriving research environment. It is important that such capacity and such an environment is developed with much urgency as without it, it will

not be possible to launch the PhD program (for which many supervisors will be needed) that the Department envisages to launch in due course.

It was positive to see that visiting staff make a contribution to the School's existing research outputs. Going forward their contribution will need to be formalised, encouraging interactions with resident LIU staff.

The EEC notes that there is an explicit workload allowance for outreach activities. This is very positive indeed. Still, it would be useful that this is coupled to not just engagement activities but also impact-oriented ones.

The EEC believes that all programmes should feature a research project that is underpinned by the existing training provided in research methods. On one hand this will ensure consistency in the student experience and provide rationale as to why research skills (and not just wider analytical skills) are offered. On the other involving students in research projects can help scale up research generation (and outputs) and create a sustainable stream of PhD candidates

Our response:

The Department has recruited sufficient number of senior faculty mentoring and nurturing more junior faculty, supervise master students and create a thriving research environment. Further capacity is being planned for the next two years with the recruitment of 4 additional faculty members, a process currently underway. Regarding the prospective of a PhD in Data Science it should be clarified that such a programme has not developed yet and after it does it will not be launched until three years from now, academic year 2025-26 at the earliest. The annual intake would be 6 students at most who will have to take at least a year of courses before commencing work on their dissertation. Given this timeframe and scale of a prospective PhD in Data Science the recent and planned further faculty recruitment (see ANNEX 9) will suffice to create both the capacity for supervision and the thriving research environment to launch the PhD program in due course. It should be noted that by then two other doctoral programmes (DBA and PhD in Management) will be in their 3rd year by the time the PhD in Data Science is launched.

We share the EEC's view that all programmes should feature a research project and indeed they do but in a different form and format to suit the particular target audience: The MSc Business Intelligence & Data Analytics and the MSc in Applied Information Technologies both have a mandatory final research project and from both we expect a sustainable stream of PhD candidates. The MSc in Green & Digital Management has an optional final research project since its major target market are already employed managers who need tools and techniques to effect an efficient green transition and digital transformation of their organizations; for them the GDM is terminal degree while those interested in continuing to PhD have the option of doing a thesis instead of additional electives. Nevertheless, all students of all the Department's programmes, including the undergraduates are provided intensive training in research methods (both quantitative & qualitative) and undertake research projects as part of many of their courses, some of which are designated as capstone courses for this exact reason.

6. Resources

The Department has indicated the availability of sufficient financial resources to support its functions. New facilities are being constructed to support the programs, teaching and research activities of members of staff and students. Facilities are also being developed to support the administrative functions of the Department. Transparent management of the financial resources is evident. Although the support facilities and mechanisms are being currently developed, a review process is in place to ensure fitness-for-purpose.

Findings

The Department has secured sufficient financial resources to support its operation. New facilities are being constructed and considerable resources are being allocated to the recruitment of both academic and administrative personnel. Evidence of clear transparent management of financial resources is provided.

Strengths

Significant financial resources are allocated for the development of new facilities, as well as the recruitment of academic and administrative personnel to secure the operation of the department alongside the bachelor and MSc programs currently introduced.

Resources have been also allocated to the communication and promotion of the new programs to attract high quality students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Although there is assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programs of study, the EEC notes that the proposed new programs alongside the Departments stated commitment to excel in research activities are highly ambitious and a very strenuous task.

The Department must ensure the recruitment of new academic and administrative staff and provide support to existing members of staff in order to make the transition to a research-oriented institution.

Our response:

The Department has ensured the recruitment of new academic and administrative staff (see ANNEX 9). The Department provides generous support to existing members of staff in order to make the transition to a research-oriented institution through a variety of incentive compatible institutions and provisions, including reduced teaching and administration duties, mentorship and allowances for research assistance, conference participation, software and databases, research proposal writing support through the Research Centre (see ANNEX 10).

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The report outlines the key findings, highlights areas of strength and proposes actions to improve things further for the proposed Department of Technology and Innovation School. We hope that the feedback and suggestions provided in a constructive manner will inform plans for developing the Department underpin a positive teaching and research experience for all stakeholders.






We would like to thank all colleagues at LIU/CIIM for their cooperation during this evaluation. The EEC would also like to take this opportunity and thank the CYQAA coordinator for managing the process both efficiently and effectively.

Finally, once more, should the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education require any clarifications with regards to the points raised in the report, the EEC remains at the Agency's disposal.

Our response:

Indeed the EEC's the feedback and suggestions were provided in a constructive manner and have informed our plans for developing the Department and provide a positive teaching and research experience for all stakeholders.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Professor Theodore Panayotou	Rector	
Professor Doron Sonsino	Vice Rector and Dean of Law & Social Science School	
Associate Professor Theodosios Mourouzis	Dean of Technology & Innovation School	
Professor Waldemar Pfoertsch	Director of Research Centre and Dean of Business School	
Assistant Professor Stathis Hadjidemetriou	Chairman Department of information Technologies	

Date: 11 July 2022