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External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

Cyprus University of Technology

- **Town:** Limassol

- **School/Faculty:** Engineering/Civil Engineering and Technology

- **Department:** Civil Engineering and Geomatics/Civil Engineering

- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο πολιτικών μηχανικών

In English:

BEng in Civil Engineering

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα σχολής πολιτικών μηχανικών

In English:

M.Sc. in Civil Engineering & Sustainable Design

Programme 3

In Greek:

Διδακτορικό πρόγραμμα Πολιτικών μηχανικών

In English:

PhD in Civil Engineering and Geoinformatics

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee members visited the University virtually during the period of February 15 and 16 2021 due to Covid-19 related restrictions. Nonetheless, they were provided with a significant number of resources that helped with the evaluation.

The members of the Department gave extensive and detailed presentations and were very willing to answer questions asked by the committee and offer additional data and complimentary information. The committee believes that the following report has not been affected by the virtual nature of the visit. This is thanks to the efforts of all the parties involved.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	Professor	Politecnico di Torino, Italy
Emmanouil Chatzis	Associate Professor	University of Oxford, UK
Dimitrios Lignos	Associate Professor	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland
Andrea Maria Lingua	Professor	Politecnico di Torino, Italy
Alexis Valiantis	Professional Civil Engineer	Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus
Aimilia Patouna	Student Member	University of Cyprus, Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*
- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:	<i>Non-compliant</i>
3:	<i>Partially compliant</i>
4 or 5:	<i>Compliant</i>

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*
- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*
- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - 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 followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.1 Mission and strategic planning		1 - 5
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	5
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	5
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	4
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	5
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	5
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	5
1.1.7	The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective.	4
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Overall, the department demonstrates considerable preparation and planning to fulfil its strategic mission. While the vision and strategic planning is evident, it may be best to clearly list the short and medium-term goals and objectives in the website link as well. However, these short and intermediate objectives were clearly conveyed during the conversations with faculty.

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).

After careful review of the programmes within the department, it is clear that they are very coherent. In the bachelor cycle a number of courses set the state early on and prepare the bachelor students adequately on the fundamentals including practical work. The graduate programs are carefully designed in a way to allow graduate students to deepen their understanding in a number of areas in civil engineering. Moreover, the doctoral program offers a number of interesting opportunities including the use of high-quality experimental facilities, computational resources among others.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Based on potential future findings the department could potentially enhance its programmes with courses related to finite element analysis, nonlinear analysis. However, this is clearly in the current planning based on discussions with the faculty.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society

1 - 5

1.2.1	The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.	5
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	4
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	5
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

During presentations, it was clear that the department has effectively developed strategies to stay linked with its graduates, connect with society and reach out to stakeholders for effective communication.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.3 Development processes

1 - 5

1.3.1	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.	5
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	5
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	5
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department has established a transparent procedure on how to proceed with 4 anticipated faculty positions to ensure a high quality of education along with research excellence. Moreover, the department appears to have a coaching program for new faculty to assist them establish their research program. This is attested by several successful examples among faculty and the high number of research projects within the European Union among others.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students: BEng: 25 to 30 per year, MSc 10 to 15 / 1-2 International (Erasmus program)
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country:

Spain, Greece, Czech Rep. Italy, UK, Slovakia, France

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The department has developed coherent programmes both in the bachelor and graduate school that effectively prepare students for their professional development. Besides, a number of students enrol to highly competitive graduate programs from abroad (e.g., UK), which effectively demonstrates the level of preparation during the bachelor program. With regard to effective communication to the community and former graduates, several successful examples were demonstrated. Moreover, the department has a clear plan on maintaining its current program and expanding in emerging areas.

Strengths

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

1. The department presented several examples involving both practical works along with emphasis on the fundamentals, which is key for the professional development of potential future graduates.
2. Students have several opportunities to collaborate in multidisciplinary projects. Examples evolve both at the local level (e.g., building design) as well as the urban scale level (e.g., city/network).

3. Sustainable design is integrated in both courses as well as practice-oriented work. This is key to create a culture on sustainability in future projects.
4. Assessment of existing structures: the department integrates a nice transition from teaching the fundamentals in mechanics/statics early on in the bachelor program to emphasizing with more focused courses (e.g., monitoring, assessment of existing structures under earthquake hazards) in the graduate program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The department should consider hiring one or two professors in the general area of finite element analysis/computational mechanics; however, this recommendation is already taken into consideration. Based on discussions with existing faculty, it seems that the focus of potentially new hires will be in this area.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Compliant

2. Quality Assurance

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: Non-compliant*
- 3: Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
2. Quality Assurance		
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy		1 - 5
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	5
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	5
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	5
2.1.4	The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1	Teaching and learning	5
2.1.4.2	Research	5
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	5
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	5
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

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2. Quality Assurance

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study		1 - 5
2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	5
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	5
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective.	5
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	5
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	5
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	5
2.2.7	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.	5
2.2.8	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	5
2.2.9	The Department flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods.	5
2.2.10	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	5
2.2.11	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	5
2.2.12	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
2.2.12.1	Building facilities	4
2.2.12.2	Library	5

	2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	5
	2.2.12.4	Technological infrastructure	5
	2.2.12.5	Academic support	5
2.2.13	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.		5
2.2.14	The Department's mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.		4
2.2.15	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.		5
2.2.16	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.		5
2.2.17	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.		5
2.2.18	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.		5
2.2.19	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.		5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department has presented a clear and effective procedure for quality control and assurance, to the satisfaction of the evaluation committee and therefore the resulting score is high.

With regards to the fields marked as 4 out of 5, regarding student diversity it is noted that the school programs are in Greek language, which affects the diversity of the student population since it is difficult for non-Greek speaking students to attend.

With regards to building facilities although they are well sufficient and well equipped, one cannot overlook the advantages of a unified campus with modern facilities fully accessible to disabled students with centralised facilities which the department lacks as its facilities are dispersed within the city.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The applied procedures presented are fully satisfactory. We note the academic members concern and interest in new and emerging trends in the fields of civil engineering and the efforts to follow these evolvments in order to adapt the departments curriculum.

Strengths

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

We note the variety of modes of conduct e.g. the strong and effective connection of the faculty members and the students with the industry and professional bodies, the links with other universities and research centres, the collaboration with the public and private sector and the obligatory practical training, result to the effective transfer of knowledge through various channels, which assures successful learning.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

It is suggested that the members of the Department engage in a more frequent communication with the representatives of the Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK) who is a significant stakeholder. E.g., the committee finds ETEK's recommendation of the inclusion of Wood Structures / and or Masonry Design and Analysis a useful suggestion. The Department members informed the committee of their agreement to this remark and convincingly argued that those advanced courses would be hard to incorporate in a BEng programme. Such an explanation and discussion with ETEK would be beneficial for both parties.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	Compliant
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	Compliant

3. Administration (ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
3. Administration		1 - 5
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	4
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	5
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	4
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	5
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	5
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	5
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	5
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	5
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The administrative staff is composed by a single person, which probably is not enough for all the needs of the department's affairs. This is way we did not evaluated with the maximum vote point 3.1 and 3.3. For the other aspects, the department appears to be made up of a close-knit and active group, demonstrating the amount of research it carries out, albeit with a modest number of teachers.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The pandemic period obviously did not the possibility to the ECC members to enter directly in the department life, so that many of impression from a gelid visit on web could be not very reliable. From the presentation it comes out that the department has four different sites, and this could be a little bit dispersive.

Strengths

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

The high number of PhD student, with respect to the global number of students is very interesting, and this permits to focus the main effort in research, as it is possible to observe by considering the high number of contacts with abroad universities and stakeholders. Also, the participation in EU research programmes is very impressive.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

One aspect that the department should front in the future is to consider the institution of courses in English in order to increase the attraction for students from abroad. In fact, the participation of Erasmus students is very low. Moreover, the master programme could incorporate course offerings in English.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
3. Administration	Compliant

4. Learning and Teaching

(ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study
- 4.2 Organisation of teaching

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.1 Planning the programmes of study		1 - 5
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	5
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	4
4.1.3	The content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	5
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The Department scores very high in all the previous categories and its policy is marked as compliant for all of the above categories.

4.1.1 The Department has a very efficient policy in reviewing academically its programme of study through regular external evaluations, and through internal evaluations of the programme of study by internal committees.

4.1.3 and 4.1.4 The assignments and final exams are of the appropriate level, the program of study corresponds to a 4 year BEng programme rather than 3 to ensure that the students of the Department receive professional

accreditation upon graduation from the ETEK and can be considered for accreditation in the professional institutes of several other European Countries.

4.1.5 The Department has achieved a good balance between necessary theoretical courses and several more practical- design based- courses.

4.1.2 The Department is doing very well in this category. Perhaps, it would be beneficial in the future to hold more frequent meetings to discuss and explain the Department's policy to ETEK including representatives of the student body in those meetings. Nonetheless, the Department has an existing good mechanism to do so and this mark is in reality between 4 and 5.

4. Learning and Teaching

4.2 Organisation of teaching

1 - 5

4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	5
4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	5
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	5
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	5
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	5
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	5
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Full marks in all of the above categories. For 4.2.1 the admission criteria are clear as this a state University and admission is clearly linked to the Pan Cypriot entry exam. The state nature of the University ensures very good compliance for 4.2.2 and 4.2.7. For 4.2.3 to 4.2.6 and 4.2.8. The provided facilities and labs are well equipped to accommodate the number of students admitted per year. This is a small number that allows for the lecturers to indeed achieve student-centre learning, provide specific and immediate feedback and effective student-teacher communication. The online course demonstrated that, as the Department already applied (before Covid-19) the use of an online platform for students to answer questions online, and for the lecturer to recognize the student that performed best in the during-the-lecture quiz. This is a very useful idea that strengthens the performance of

the Department in the previously mentioned categories. Additionally, the Department provides lectures, homeworks and tutorials which further improve the student-centred experience.

Finally, the University and Department clearly indicated that teaching administrators monitor courses and the performance of students and where poor performance is observed the Department offers additional tutorials to cover identified weaknesses of the students. Another very productive idea.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The virtual visit and tour, and the discussions demonstrated that the policy of the department is compliant in all of the categories examined above. As indicated by the strengths below, the Department has taken several measures to provide a well-thought 4 years BEng degree that ensures the professional accreditation of students by ETEK. The program offers a good balance between theory and application. The courses are of high level. The delivery is clearly student-centred, and the facilities provided to the students are very reasonable to accommodate the number of students the Department admits.

Strengths

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

The following are innovative solutions and strengths of the teaching policy of the Department:

- The Department offers additional tutorials to courses where the students are identified to have weaknesses.
- The decision on the above tutorials is monitored by independent academic staff and not the Lecturers of a course.
- The Department had already incorporated online means of teaching that help student-centred teaching. Those have become further important during the Covid-19 outbreak but are a very productive way to engage with students.
- The Department marks on the basis of homework, midterms and final exams and the marking scheme is announced to the students prior to the beginning of the course.
- The Department has provided a well-designed 4-year BEng course, and has intentionally not offered a 3-year option to avoid the discrepancy of the 4-year requirement for accreditation from ETEK.
- The Department is teaching courses that correspond to the state-of-the-art in terms of research and industry needs. The Health monitoring, infrastructure and sensor related courses are very novel and very useful for the students.
- The Department offers courses that are of high theoretical value for a BEng degree. The choice to offer more advanced courses on Earthquake Engineering is a good choice justified by the seismicity of Cyprus.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

There are no serious weaknesses identified during the inspection and this is reflected in the above marks of compliance in various categories.

- A suggestion could be that it would be beneficial in the future to hold more frequent meetings to discuss and explain the Department's policy to ETEK including representatives of the student body in those meetings. Nonetheless, the Department has a good existing mechanism to account for the views of students and other stakeholders.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	Compliant
4.2 Organisation of teaching	Compliant

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
5. Teaching Staff		1 - 5
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	5
5.2	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.	5
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	4
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	5
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	4
5.6	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

While the quality of the program is ensured with efforts of existing faculty; it would be an asset for the department to be given 2 to 4 new faculty positions to potentially expand in future existing areas and maintain the high quality of established standards within the existing program.

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: 16
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: 1
- Number of visiting Professors: NA

- Number of special scientists on lease services: 19

Of particular interest is the fact that the department hosts 20 research fellows as well.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Based on the presentation sessions during the virtual visit, the department has 16 faculty members and 1 special teaching staff. Each one of them teaches, on average, 3 to 4 courses per academic year, which is deemed reasonable based on international standards. This enables balance between teaching, research and administrative duties. Moreover, the department hosts 19 special scientists and 20 research fellows along with 1 administrative officer. Overall, the administrative load is fairly balanced, and the role of each faculty member is clear. This stipulates a healthy academic environment and ensures high quality in both teaching and research.

Strengths

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

1. Good balance of young, mid-career and senior faculty with complementary expertise to address current and future challenges in civil engineering.
2. Great technical depth in coursework particularly in the graduate programs.
3. While the department is fairly young, it ranks 57th in the times higher education young university rankings 2020.
4. The departmental facilities and laboratory space and equipment are of high quality. Noteworthy stating the large structures and earthquake engineering lab that features a strong floor and reaction wall for multi-directional mechanical testing of components and structures along with servo-hydraulic equipment of high quality, common in European large scale testing facilities.
5. Several laboratories (3100m²) for teaching and learning complement the department facilities and ensure active learning and hands on experience for students and scientists. Of particular interest is also the remote sensing and geo-environment lab/Geospatial analytics research laboratory, which enable data-centric teaching and research activities to students.
6. Two distinct course offerings that lead to accredited bachelor's degrees in civil engineering and land surveying and Geoinformatics engineering. Moreover, the fact that the department offers accredited industrial training ensures a seamless collaboration with industry.
7. Dedicated master's program with emphasis on sustainable design.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

While the department is currently running in a fairly optimal way, the hiring of 2 to 4 new faculty could be an asset to maintain the existing trajectory and achieve even more over the next few years.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
5. Teaching Staff	Compliant

6. Research

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*

3: *Partially compliant*

4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
6. Research		1 - 5
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	5
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	5
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	5
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	5
6.5	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.	5
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	5
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	5
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	5
6.9	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

The Department scores very high in all of the previous categories. The Department receives the mark of 5, full compliant in all of the categories. This is a very successful Department in receiving external funding from various sources and has achieved a good balance between very large European grants and smaller national grants to achieve research. The labs are tailored to the needs of the researchers. The Structural testing lab has high force actuators, a reaction wall and a strong floor that allows for cyclic testing. The synergies with the Geoinformatics-oriented research provides access to numerous sensors that allow for monitoring. The Department has very cleverly incorporated the environment of Cyprus to apply their monitoring techniques, e.g. a stronger focus is given on monitoring of monumental structures which makes use of the history of Limassol and Cyprus. The PhD studies is research oriented, but students coming from a BEng are expected to complete the equivalent of 10 courses. All students receive a training course to develop their research skills.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The virtual visit indicated a very successful Department in receiving external funding from various sources, which has achieved a good balance between very large European grants and smaller national grants to achieve research. The general research position of the Department is very strong. The Department has achieved several national grants for different research projects, led by different academics. The Department holds an EU Chair on the topic Mnemosyne and is involved in several other high impact EU funded projects. The Department has also been awarded a multi-million euros project (of the order of 44 m Euros) on the use of surveying techniques. The combined worth of the research projects would place the Department as a very successful department on an international level. The numbers presented are truly impressive and show a very prosperous department that has correctly identified several state-of-the-art topics and has managed their research portfolio very well.

This is reflected in the points below where strengths are highlighted.

Strengths

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

-The Department has invested in state-of-the-art research based on the use of sensors, infrastructure resilience and sustainability, life extension of infrastructure elements which are all very important topics for various research funding bodies.

-The Department has made use of the advantages offered by the location of Cyprus and the history of the country. Examples of that are the projects on digital cultural heritage which are numerous.

-The Department has diversified the funding bodies. It is very successful in pursuing smaller grants from the national funding body, large scale projects from the FP7 and Horizons 2020 frameworks and is part of projects with multiple partners such as ITN projects.

-The Department actively collaborates in several projects with other Universities.

-The research projects are materialised in high quality research outputs which is reflected in the numerous applications in high scientific journals.

-The funding success of the Department allows for the members of the Department to advertise well paid PhD studentships that can attract high quality candidates.

-The research of the Department is well matching the expertise of the members of the group.

-The Department is in a good position in terms of the research infrastructure, labs and field sensors.

-The Department has achieved a good integration between research and teaching. Research activities have led to innovative courses, such as those to infrastructure resilience, health monitoring and sensors. The earthquake engineering courses benefit from the related lab. All sensor-related courses benefit from the sensors obtained from research projects.

-The students are exposed to research activities at a satisfactory degree, the main mechanism is the 4th year thesis.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

There weren't many weak points identified. This is reflected in the previously mentioned strong points.

A potential area that the Department may consider when planning for the future is:

-Over the next few years, the younger members of the Department will gradually need to be taking the leading roles in the preparation of large European grants. There are, however, clear indications that the Department is taking the right steps towards this direction.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
6. Research	Compliant

7. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
7. Resources		1 - 5
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	5
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	5
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	5
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	5
7.5	The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	5
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	5
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	5
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>Click to enter text.</p>		

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The web site and the virtual visits were well organized as well as the presentation performed by the director of the department. The department, as well as the university is young, and this probably is one of the strengths as it is evident the willing of growth that often in older universities is missing.

Strengths

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

The level of research in term of publication per year and the found form competitive call show an active group. The facilities are adequate for the numbers of student and well organized.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Probably a gender equality policy in the department should be encouraged. Another suggestion consists in (if it is possible) use the impressive research found obtained since 2007 for increasing the number of academical staff which appears wake, but of course this is a political decision that involves also the public law, as we are evaluating a public university. The success in research can be used for asking extra resource in this direction.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
7. Resources	compliant

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 Department under review may be achieved.

The members of the Committee found the Department to be Compliant in all of the examined categories. The three programmes of the Department have scored the highest mark, 5/5, in most of the questions asked. The remaining questions resulted in the second highest mark, 4/5. This is an indication that the Committee has indeed been convinced about the policies followed by the Department.

The Department has been very successful Department in receiving external funding from various sources, achieving a good balance between very large European grants and smaller national grants to achieve research. The general research position of the Department is very strong. This is reflected in the number of PhD students, and the publications of high impact in international journals and conferences. The infrastructure of research laboratories is well tailored to the research directions of the group, and it is expected the continuous success of the academics in funding will likely result in a further improvement of the research infrastructure over the upcoming years.

Regarding teaching, all three programs are well-structured. The BEng is a 4-year program, a year longer than most of its European counterparts, this ensures that the graduating students are accredited by ETEK. The programme of study for the BEng familiarizes students to a very good variety of theoretical and design courses. Some novel courses related to rehabilitation and inspection of existing structures, monitoring of infrastructure, and sensors are demonstrating that the Department is incorporating the latest trends in Civil Engineering in the curriculum. The same is applicable to the MSc and the courses available to PhD students.

The committee were also satisfied to hear that the Department is planning to incorporate a new course related to FE through targeting the hire of new academics relevant to that field. The Department reasonably argued that the addition of some other courses identified by ETEK would be beneficial but would be difficult to implement currently and will be considered future planning. Perhaps, more frequent meetings between the Department and ETEK, also attended by representatives of the student body, can help parties understand priorities and limitations. The committee feels that the research success of the Department should justify the expansion through the hire of new academics which would potentially allow the inclusion of new elective courses. But overall, the committee was very much satisfied with the syllabus at all levels. A parameter that the Department should consider, especially for the MSc and PhD programmes is the incorporation of a programme in English or offering some of the courses in both Greek and English. Again, that would be easier to achieve through the hire of new faculty members.

The teaching rooms and labs were very good. The small number of students admitted per year in all programmes allows for having an excellent ratio of number of students to teaching staff. The lecturers are predominantly permanent tenure-track academics. The teaching staff and students are supported by an office dedicated to Learning and teaching with good initiatives such as organizing tutorials for courses and students in need. The Department also has a very good system to collect feedback and motivate student participation and feedback on a lecture-by-lecture basis using online software.

In terms of general facilities, the classrooms, open spaces, sports facilities and libraries are very good. However, the decentralized nature of the Department has resulted in the use of buildings around the city. The Department would benefit from a central campus. This would further improve accessibility conditions. This is perhaps a decision that is related to the University; however, this Department has generally strengthened its position to request additional resources through its success in secure funding. The committee is also satisfied with the policies related to administration, the fact that the members of the Department participate in the administration several EU projects helps with the efficiency of the internal committees. Perhaps, a direction to investigate in the future in terms of both administration but especially the academic staff is to work towards increasing the ratio of female to male academic staff. This is however dependent on the national policy on the matter. Having an MSc option in English would potentially help the admissions procedure, especially in the MSc and PhD and may allow for more hires of international academic and administration staff.

Overall, the view of the committee is very positive. No serious areas of weakness were detected and in the above some areas for further improvement are suggested. This is a relatively young Department which has achieved funding

success that is impressive on an international level. The members of faculty have used this success to further strengthen their teaching courses and research.

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	
Emmanouil Chatzis	
Dimitrios Lignos	
Andrea Maria Lingua	
Alexis Valiantis	
Aimilia Patouna	

Date: 19.02.2021

