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Date: 27.09.2025

# External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty:** Business School

- **Department:** Digital Innovation

- **Department's Status:** Choose status

- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation:**  
**Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**Blockchain and Digital Currency (1.5  
academic years, 90 ECTS, MSc)**

## Programme 1

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Blockchain and Digital Currency

## Programme 2

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Blockchain and Digital Currency (DL)

## Programme 3

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

**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].**



**Department's programmes (to be filled by the CYQAA officer and verified by the EEC):**

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>PROGRAMMES OF STUDY</b>
Department of Digital Innovation	Blockchain and Digital Currency (1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, MSc)
	Blockchain and Digital Currency (1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, MSc) (Distance Learning)



## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The site visit took place on 25th of September 2025 according to the following schedule:

### 09:00 – 09:10

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Title/University</b>
Chair	<b>Professor William J Knottenbelt</b>	Professor of Cryptocurrency/Blockchain, Department of Computing, Imperial College London, UK
Member	<b>Professor Michel Avital</b>	Professor of Digitalization, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Member	<b>Professor Katinka Wolter</b>	Professor of Computer Science, Free University of Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin), Germany
Member (E-Learning expert)	<b>Professor Santi Caballé Llobet</b>	Full Professor of Learning Engineering, Faculty of Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain
Member (Student)	<b>Paraskevas Kyriakou</b>	PhD Student, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, University of Cyprus, Cyprus



### 09:10 – 09:40

- A meeting with the head of the institution and the vice rector of academic affairs
  - Short presentation of the institution and discussion
- A meeting with the members of the internal evaluation committee

#### *Name(s) of presenter(s)/participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Prof. Demetris Vrontis	Vice-Rector for Faculty and Research
Prof. Angelika Kokkinaki	Dean, School of Business
Prof. Marinos Themistocleous	Associate Dean, School of Business / Member of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee
Prof. Soulla Louca	Head, Department of Digital Innovation
Prof. George Giaglis	Coordinator Blockchain and Digital Currency (Conventional and E-Learning) programmes
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

### 09:40 – 10:40

- A meeting with the dean of the school, the head of the relevant department and all faculty members for a short presentation of the school's / department's structure
  - Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
  - Connecting with society
  - Development Processes – Action Plan

#### *Name(s) of presenter(s)/participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Prof. Angelika Kokkinaki	Dean, School of Business
Prof. Marinos Themistocleous	Associate Dean, School of Business / Member of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee
Prof. Soulla Louca	Head, Department of Digital Innovation
Prof. George Giaglis	Coordinator Blockchain and Digital Currency (Conventional and E-Learning) programmes
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

### 10:40 – 10:50

- *Coffee Break*

### 10:50 – 12:00

- A meeting with the head of department and coordination committee of the programme.
  - Discussion regarding the content and the standards of the programme of study
  - Discussion regarding the information for the effective management of the programme of study
  - Discussion on the process of teaching and learning and the student-centred teaching methodology, the practical trainings and the student assessment
  - Discussion on the student admission, processes and criteria, progression, recognition and certification

#### *Name(s) of presenter(s)/participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
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Prof. Angelika Kokkinaki	Dean, School of Business
Prof. Marinos Themistocleous	Associate Dean, School of Business / Member of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee
Prof. Soulla Louca	Head, Department of Digital Innovation
Prof. George Giaglis	Coordinator Blockchain and Digital Currency (Conventional and E-Learning) programmes
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

### 12:00 – 13:10

- A meeting with the head and members responsible for the E-Learning unit for a brief presentation and a Q&A Session and the E-Learning Programme.

#### *Name(s) of presenter(s)/participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Prof. Angelika Kokkinaki	Dean, School of Business
Prof. Marinos Themistocleous	Associate Dean, School of Business / Member of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee
Prof. Soulla Louca	Head, Department of Digital Innovation
Prof. George Giaglis	Coordinator Blockchain and Digital Currency (Conventional and E-Learning) programmes
Dr Christos Anagiotos	Director of E-Learning and Pedagogical Support
Ms Eleni Neocleous	Director of Distance Learning Unit
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

### 13:10 – 14:10

- *Lunch Break*

### 14:10 - 15:10

- A meeting only with members of the teaching staff on each course of the programmes for all the years of study.
  - Self-Presentation on any other duties in the institution and teaching obligations in other programmes.
  - Discussion on the design, structure and content of each course and its implementation, the criteria used for the development of the program.
  - Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.
  - Discussion of prescribed and recommended reading for each module.
  - Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

#### *Name(s) of the teaching staff:*

Full Name	Position
Dr Haris Savvides	Faculty member
Dr Elias Iosif	Faculty member
Prof. Spyros Makridakis	Faculty member
Dr. Ifigenia Georgiou	Faculty member (Dept. of Accounting, Finance & Economics)
Dr Theodosios Mourouzis	Adjunct Faculty
Dr Kostas Karasavvas	Adjunct Faculty



Dr Klitos Christodoulou	Adjunct Faculty - Online
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### 15:10 – 16:10

- A meeting with external stakeholder(s) for the programmes.

#### *Name(s) of participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Jeffrey Bandman	COO at 6529 Capital and 6529 NFT Fund; Principal at Bandman Advisors; Former Senior Official at U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission

### 16:10 – 16:50

- A meeting with only students and graduates (5 – 15 participants) of the programmes.

#### *Name(s) of participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Mr Robert Horne	Student - online
Mr Francisco Cordoba	Student
Mr Stamatis Papangelou	Student - online
Ms Monique Morrow	Alumni - online
Mr Trey Edwards	Alumni - online
Mr Edward Manoukian	Alumni - online
Mr Heraklis Anastasiou	Alumni
Mr Pablo Zanetto Ferraro	Alumni - Lawyer

### 16:50 - 17:00

- *Coffee Break*

### 17:00 – 17:40

- A meeting exclusively with members from the administrative staff

#### *Name(s) of participant(s):*

Full Name	Position
Dr Nicolas Ioannides	Director of Academic Affairs
Mr Christos Theocleous	Director of Academic Advising
Ms Eleni Neocleous	Director of Distance Learning Unit
Ms Mina Charalambous	Director of Library
Ms Emilia Theodoulou	Library Officer
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

### 18:05 – 18:20

- *Working Coffee Break*

A meeting ONLY between the EEC members before the Exit Discussion

### 18:20 – 18:50

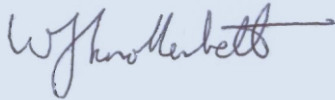
- Exit Discussion with the dean of the school, the head of the relevant department, the



coordinators of the programmes - and the directors of academic quality and compliance.

**Name(s) of participant(s):**

Full Name	Position
Prof. Angelika Kokkinaki	Dean, School of Business
Prof. Marinos Themistocleous	Associate Dean, School of Business / Member of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee
Prof. Soulla Louca	Head, Department of Digital Innovation
Prof. George Giaglis	Coordinator Blockchain and Digital Currency (Conventional and E-Learning) programmes
Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou	Senior Administrative Officer, Office of the VRAA

CHAIR of the EEC	<b>Signature:</b>
FULLNAME: William J. Knottenbelt	
Or	
Representative of the Institution (Head of the relevant department or the Coordinator of the programme)	<b>Signature:</b>
FULLNAME:	
End of the Site Visit to the Institution	<b>Time: 7pm</b>



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
William Knottenbelt	Professor	Imperial College London
Michel Avital	Professor	Copenhagen Business School
Katinka Wolter	Professor	Free University Berlin
Santi Caballé Llobet	Professor	Open University of Catalonia
Paraskevas Kyriakou	PhD Student	University of Cyprus



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

- *The external evaluation report refers to the Department as a whole (programmes offered, teaching staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, resources, etc.).*
- *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:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

- *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 EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), **which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report.***
- *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 (including SWOT analysis)

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 (including SWOT analysis)		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.	4
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.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The mission statement for the department is publicly available and easily accessible</li><li>• The planning of strategies and the involvement of external stakeholders could follow a more formal and structured process e.g., through the introduction of an external</li></ul>		



stakeholder advisory board at the departmental level, comprising industry experts, alumni, etc.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

**1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.**

- The programmes under evaluation appear coherent and compatible, differing only in their mode of delivery. We are satisfied that the mode of delivery does not affect the respective quality of the programmes.
- The other programmes of study offered by the department relate to the MSc Metaverse, which complements the programmes under evaluation by focusing on the convergence of blockchain technology with virtual reality, AI and IoT. We understand these programmes are currently paused and subject to revision.

**2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).**

- There are three departments which jointly offer MBA and PhD programmes. These programmes appear well coordinated.
- There appears to be collaboration in terms of teaching between departments as we met members of other departments teaching modules in the Department of Digital Innovation according to their expertise, which broadens the scope and enhances the quality of teaching.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

N/A

**1. Department’s academic profile and orientation**

<b>1.2 Connecting with society</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	5
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.	4

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

- The alumni we spoke with expressed the desire for communication with the graduate community to be improved through networking with fellow alumni and current students.

**1. Department’s academic profile and orientation**

<b>1.3 Development processes</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	4



1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	4
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.	4

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

- While the staff retention rate is high, the department appears to the panel to be understaffed at the junior level.
- According to Table 24 of the application, the department plans to hire just one new member of staff per year for the next four years. We recommend a more proactive recruitment strategy. Moreover, the thematic area of Blockchain and AI ought not to be delayed until 2028.
- The free MOOC very effectively attracts new students to the MSc Blockchain and Cryptocurrency.
- The budget presented in Annex 6 lists significant expected income from the MSc Metaverse programme that is currently paused, which is concerning.
- The continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study may be hindered by the strict and extended processes relating to the substantial modifications that are needed in a fast-moving technical area. The department provides a sensible and pragmatic solution by offering several modules on the theme of emerging topics.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and the number from each country
  - The department expects 100+ students this year, with a distinct majority of international students. Cypriot students form just around 10% of the intake of the MSc Blockchain and Digital Currency.
  - The majority, roughly  $\frac{2}{3}$ , of students come from North America and Europe.

### Findings

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

The Department of Digital Innovation has established itself as a global centre of excellence in relation to disruptive digital technologies and their impact on society. It has a clear mission and vision, built around four strategic pillars: 1) education, 2) research, 3) connections with society, and 4) outreach and partnerships.

While the department has built on its pioneering MSc in Blockchain and Digital Currency, adapting well to major challenges such as the financial crisis in 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenge now is to maintain momentum and alignment with current and upcoming technological disruptions.



The site visit was conducted in person on Thursday, 25th of September 2025, beginning 9am and concluding at 7pm. It included several presentations from the university, school, and department leadership as well as discussions with faculty members, administrative staff, external stakeholders, students and alumni.

Strengths

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

- The University of Nicosia took the bold step of being amongst the first universities worldwide to establish a teaching programme on blockchain technology and it continues to reap the rewards of this initiative.
- Current students and alumni are very enthusiastic about the knowledge, expertise, and personality of their instructors. They also praise the interdisciplinary content of the course, which covers topics from technology to law.
- The student population of the university and the existing Master's programme in Blockchain and Digital Currency is highly international, which indicates that this programme is attractive for a diverse worldwide student population.
- Many alumni occupy senior positions in established companies or have founded start-up companies.
- The quality of administration supporting the delivery of the degree programme is unusually impressive from both strategic and operational perspectives.
- At the previous evaluation, continuous training of the faculty was highlighted as an area that could benefit from improvement. We feel this has now been very effectively and comprehensively addressed through the wide range and frequency of staff training that has been established.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- The Department has been at the forefront of digital innovation since its founding. The challenge is to keep the momentum going. Agile processes are needed to keep up with the rapid technological changes.
- Demand for the department's degrees fluctuates with external global market forces and trends. While these are beyond the control of the department, the department could be more agile in responding to these factors.
- The Department appears to have been a little slow in returning to conventional (non-remote) teaching following the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, distance learning courses can feel isolating for participants, who sometimes only meet each other in person at the graduation ceremony. More efforts should be made to organise social events, not only including students in the current cohort, but also alumni, who can provide advice, mentoring, insights and opportunities to current students.

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		
<b>2. Quality Assurance</b>		
<b>2.1 System and quality assurance strategy</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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	4
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	5
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	5

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

- While the quality assurance processes do appear to support the quality of teaching and research, in some cases it appears to be unnecessarily rigid, inhibiting dynamic alignment of syllabi with current trends.



- We are pleased to note the improvement to policies related to sexual harassment and cyber-bullying since the last evaluation.
- While there is evidence of the department making efforts to connect with society, we could not find tangible evidence that this aspect is evaluated and supported by the departmental quality assurance processes.

## 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, which have been presented and discussed.	4
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	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	5
2.2.9	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	5
2.2.10	The Department flexibly uses a variety of teaching methods.	5
2.2.11	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
2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	4
2.2.13	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	5



	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
2.2.14	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.		5
2.2.15	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.		5
2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.		5
2.2.17	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.		5
2.2.18	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
2.2.19	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.		4
2.2.20	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.		3

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

- While many quality considerations are discussed and documented, few of them are easily measurable and explicitly stated. At present it appears that student satisfaction and dropout rate are monitored, but not used as indicators, for example.
- Comprehensive graduate employment information/destinations could not easily be found by the panel although some destinations were highlighted and selected statistics relating to employability were provided in presentations.
- The EEC could not find details of how doctoral candidates (as opposed to members of staff) are supported in terms of writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates; we presume this works on a per-project funding basis.
- Nor could we find a policy on authorship and intellectual property (beyond the need for intellectual integrity, and the need to avoid plagiarism and other misconduct) in the Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral programmes, nor could we find it on the Department's website.

### Findings

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

The Department of Digital Innovation has a very dedicated committee for quality assurance, especially concerning the quality and oversight of the distance learning tools and processes. The



Department currently seems to be actively teaching one distance learning course, which receives much acclaim and excellent technical support. While the students and alumni in the session were very enthusiastic about the programme, the EEC were only presented with aggregated quality indicators. Quality of teaching and student well-being are major considerations; however, it is often cared for in a qualitative rather than a quantitative manner. The teaching and administration staff are very dedicated, but this is not fully supported by clearly defined indicators.

Strengths

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

- The current structure of the Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC) facilitates a sufficient participation of different groups from within the university. Processes have a visible degree of personal involvement and dedication.
- Interviews with former and current students confirmed that the department appears to care very much about student satisfaction and wellbeing.
- The department has strict policies in place to ensure compliance with international standards.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- The EEC was not able to assess some areas of quality assurance due to lack of information. The quality indicators are not always very formalised.
- Consideration should be given to using the ABS ranking system framework (in addition to Scopus) with respect to the publications of faculty.
- Processes are not always rigidly outlined in great detail and it is not always very clear how to trigger the respective processes.
- Ad hoc personal interactions seem to play a non-trivial role in quality assurance.

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		
<b>3. Administration</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	5
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.	5
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
3.11	Internationalization of the Department and external collaborations.	N/A
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		



**Findings**

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

The EEC had a very positive impression of the department's administrative support. All interviewed students and graduates confirmed the effectiveness and efficiency of current administrative operations. Administrative processes are highly automated, transparent and efficient.

**Strengths**

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

- The positive assessment of the EEC is based on the convincing motivation and competencies of the staff members. The administrative staff seem not only to support effective operational processes, but also to be continuously and proactively looking to the future with the aim of better supporting students and staff.
- The distance learning MSc programme has been offered for several years and the overall aggregated evaluations demonstrate an impressively high level of student satisfaction.

**Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

- While all processes seemed to be highly efficient through automation, it remained unclear how exceptions were being handled. That said, the provision for students with disabilities seems excellent.
- The junior teaching faculty expressed a desire for more administrative support, but without being more specific.

**Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:**

<b>Assessment area</b>	<b><i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i></b>
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		
<b>4. Learning and Teaching</b>		
<b>4.1 Planning the programmes of study</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	5
4.1.3	Intended learning outcomes, 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.	N/A
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	4
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EEC is not familiar with the minutiae of existing legislation, nor are we familiar with the professional qualification requirements. Hence we have scored this area N/A.</li> <li>While there are some excellent examples of the effective integration of theory and practice through coursework, such as the forensic cryptocurrency tracing exercise that makes use of state-of-the-art tools, the integration of theory and practice could be further improved by strengthening the connection of current students with the alumni of the MSc study programme.</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Learning and Teaching</b>		
<b>4.2 Organisation of teaching</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>



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.

Teaching is at a very high level and is constantly being monitored and improved where necessary. Class size on the distance learning programs is deliberately kept at a very modest level (30 students or below); this may improve student experience, but may place a burden on staff in terms of needing to repeat teaching sessions.

### Findings

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

The Department of Digital Innovation builds on a solid organisational structure and previous experience with designing and performing research and teaching related to blockchain. The EEC found that the processes for the administration of learning and teaching are very efficient, straightforward and well-structured.

### Strengths

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

- The Department of Digital Innovation follows an elaborate system for creating, modifying and delivering educational programmes which features many points of quality control.
- Experience with the distance learning programme illustrates that the current system is effective and appealing to a worldwide target population of students. The EEC found that students are actively involved in designing the programme and given the opportunity to provide ample feedback, which in turn is used to further improve the programme.



- The admission criteria can be found on the website and are outlined in great detail. Clear guidelines exist on how credit can be transferred. Especially the free MOOC offers an excellent entry point to the MSc programme on Blockchain and Digital Currency.
- A strength of the department is the close relationship with its students, evidenced by frequent communication and feedback. This was confirmed by discussions with staff members as well as students.

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 administration is very efficient, the handling of exceptional cases has remained unclear. It would be good to consider exceptions and make sure capacity is there to cater for emergencies.
- The EEC finds that a stronger integration of theory and practice could be provided by connecting students and alumni through networks as well as on-site events.
- A compulsory (or more encouraged) thesis could potentially help students not only to gain academic skills but also to show their ability to design and carry out a comprehensive research project, perhaps co-supervised by industry.

**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		
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.	5
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.	5
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.	5
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.	5
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 ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality and delivery of the programme of study, the ability to manage this seems to depend to a great degree on the frequent use of adjunct teaching staff to boost capacity. This in turn places a greater burden on the permanent teaching staff with respect to ensuring continuity.

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work
- Number of visiting Professors
- Number of special scientists on lease services



- In the application for departmental evaluation 7 members of the academic staff are listed with teaching hours ranging from 6 to 15 per week. A significant proportion of the teaching appears to be done by a lecturer and an assistant professor.
- In the application for departmental evaluation 3 visiting and 7 adjunct teaching staff are listed. It is unclear how much teaching they actually deliver.
- Seven industry experts support the MSc in Blockchain and Digital Currency (the actual amount of teaching is not specified).

Findings

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

The EEC found that the Department of Digital Innovation has a sufficient number of teaching staff with a broad variety of teaching expertise. Teaching is done by both internal and external instructors which ensures an inflow of new ideas and best practices from the industry. The teaching staff have the necessary qualifications and, based on evaluation results also the general pedagogical ability to convey concepts and course content effectively.

The teaching is supported by a large number of adjunct teaching staff, many with an industry background. This not only enables the Department to flexibly react to fluctuating student numbers, but also strengthens the connection with industry and ensures that teaching continuously meets industry needs.

The frequent involvement of visiting professors ensures a fruitful exchange of ideas with other academic institutions.

Strengths

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

- The Department of Digital Innovation has demonstrated its capability in designing and administering MSc programmes in areas characterised by the need to constantly update course contents and also the qualifications of the staff members.
- The current programme has shown its capability to attract a worldwide audience of students and the EEC is confident that this teaching focus will also be successful in the future.
- The qualifications of the teaching staff play an important role in this process and our assessment in this matter was very positive. The department has shown its flexibility not only when it comes to updating content but also when dealing with strong fluctuations in student numbers.
- External honorary faculty members who are prominent scholars may further increase the visibility of the programme and help to ease the transition of graduates to the job market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- A challenge that the EEC perceives lies in the need to continuously update and improve the skills of the workforce.
- High fluctuation in teaching staff through heavy involvement of adjunct instructors burdens the permanent staff with responsibility for the continuity of the programme.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<b>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</b>
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	Compliant



Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
Synergies of teaching and research	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		
<b>6. Research</b>		<b>1 - 5</b>
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.	4
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.	4
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.	3
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.	N/A
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.

- There seem to be two pathways for integrating research-led content into teaching: one is through the flexibility specified "Emerging Topics" modules; the other is through the thesis project (although this is currently undertaken by only approximately 1/6 of the cohort). We feel that these opportunities have not yet been leveraged to their greatest potential.



- On the other hand, the Department does seem to be very proactive in transferring its knowledge to both the public sector (e.g. training for police) and private sector (e.g. banking industry).
- While we note that the Department has enjoyed a respectable level of external funding over the last 5 years, which is a particularly noteworthy achievement for a department with a small base of core research-active academics, we find it difficult to compare this meaningfully with other Departments in Cyprus.

Findings

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

While the main focus of the Department of Digital Innovation seems to be on teaching, it also conducts numerous research activities including not only publications in academic journals and conferences, but also active service in the academic community, participation in a wide variety of funded projects and contributions to standardisation efforts. The EEC found that the research activities of the department are in line with its overall mission and the facilities for carrying out research are adequate.

Strengths

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

- The Department is actively involved in numerous third-party funded activities which not only help to raise money for research activities but also increase international visibility.
- The acquired research grants illustrate that the University and the Department have the expertise to contribute to international research projects and are active in this vibrant community. The research-active members of the Department's staff punch above their weight in this respect given the relatively small size of the department.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Making the MSc thesis compulsory, or at least strongly encouraging more students to undertake it, would allow the Department to deepen student engagement in research-related activities. This would benefit both students and faculty, as students could contribute meaningfully to ongoing research projects at the forefront of technological innovation. Alternatively, the thesis could be offered as an optional 30 ECTS module in addition to the 90 ECTS programme. This would enable students to earn a 120 ECTS Master's degree, aligning the programme with common eligibility requirements for doctoral studies across Europe.
- The results from research projects could be more integrated into teaching and the department could develop more teaching material out of their own research activities.
- The adjunct teaching staff could be more involved in connecting the teaching and research at the department with society and industry, both through their teaching and through innovative coursework..

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

<b>Assessment area</b>	<b>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</b>
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Research mechanisms and regulations	Compliant
External and internal funding	Compliant
Motives for research	Compliant
Publications	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.	4
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.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	N/A
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	5

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

- The Department appears to be in need of more permanent academic faculty in order to secure its future sustainability and to broaden its degree programme offerings.
- The EEC has no information about the findings of external financial audits of the Department and therefore cannot judge the financial sustainability of either UNIC or the Department.
- Despite the lack of detailed information, an on-site visit provides the impression that the facilities are in very good and well-maintained condition.

### Findings

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

Overall, the department strikes us as being in good financial health with healthy (albeit fluctuating) student numbers. We have seen evidence of proactive management of course degree offerings, with some programmes being paused and other, new courses, being devised.



**Strengths**

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

- The department has been able to sustain its finances even in times of crisis and highly fluctuating demand.
- The department has a solid network of very skilled collaborators, alumni and adjunct staff.
- The programme coordinators have demonstrated high flexibility in finding the necessary staff and making timely amendments that satisfy all rules and maintain the popularity of their study programme.
- The resources of the department are underpinned by outstanding resource provision at the university level. We were particularly impressed by the library services on offer.

**Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

- According to the table of finances provided by the department, the current programmes will be able to yield a surplus, even in situations of relatively low student enrollments.
- However, the numbers are not entirely convincing as the income from the MSc Metaverse programme is perhaps not a reliable source of funding given that it is currently paused.
- Strategic planning for the future is crucial at an institution with long and complex formal processes. The department should grow its portfolio of teaching programmes and explore synergies and collaboration beyond the School of Business and Administration also into mathematics and computing.

**Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:**

<b>Assessment area</b>	<b><i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i></b>
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 Department of Digital Innovation is an asset to the University of Nicosia. Current students and alumni have high praise for the quality of the instruction they receive, and the core of research-active staff and PhD students punch above their weight in terms of research quality and funding. All of this is supported by efficient and foresightful administrative services at both departmental and university levels.

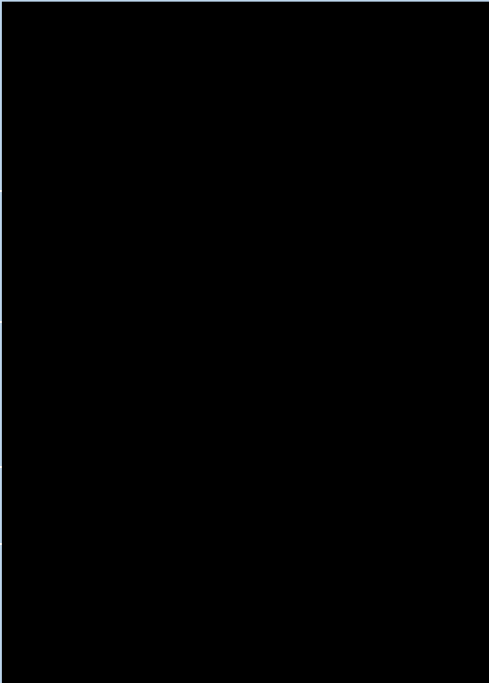
We make below a number of recommendations to improve. We hope the department will find them useful and actionable as it seeks to thrive in the face of challenges such as the current extreme pace of technological evolution, geopolitical developments and consequent large fluctuations in student numbers.

Recommendations:

- There is a thirst amongst enrolled students for more intra-cohort interaction through social events as well as a desire for more interaction with alumni, who are in turn keen to give back to their alma mater in terms of mentoring, contributing to teaching, internship and other career opportunities.
- While there are informal interactions with external stakeholders, the department could benefit from formalising this interaction through the creation of an industrial advisory board with well-defined terms of reference.
- The logical flow of the taught programmes could be strengthened by more formal monitoring of the coherence and alignment of degree module syllabi as they evolve.
- The department should hire more permanent staff, especially at the junior level, and in areas such as AI, and rest the responsibility of successful study programmes on more shoulders.
- Teaching moved online during COVID-19 and has been slow to return to conventional modes of operation; the department should consider re-introducing conventional face-to-face teaching which can take advantage of the excellent on-site facilities we have observed.
- For future evaluations we recommend that full programme statistics, student evaluations, sample marked assignments, course notes and sample exam papers are included in the application. This would greatly ease the assessment process.



**E. Signatures of the EEC**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
William J. Knottenbelt	
Michel Avital	
Katinka Wolter	
Santi Caballé Llobet	
Paraskevas Kyriakou	

**Date: 27 September 2025**

