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External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- Higher Education Institution:

University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)

- Town: Larnaca
- School/Faculty: School of Sciences
- Department: Sciences
- Programme(s) of study under evaluation
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Πληροφορικής, 4 years/ 240 ECTS

In English:

Computing (BSc Hons), 4 years/ 240 ECTS

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό στην Ασφάλεια Κυβερνοχώρου
Πληροφορική

In English:

Computing (1 year / 90 ECTS, Master of Science)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό στην Ασφάλεια Κυβερνοχώρου

In English:

MSc in Cybersecurity (1 year / 90 ECTS, Master of Science)

- 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.

Members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) reviewed and examined the accreditation reports provided by the School of Sciences at the University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus) relating to Computing B.Sc. Hons program, M.Sc. in Computing, and M.Sc. in Cybersecurity. The EEC members evaluated the reports individually before the remote site visit on 7-8 January 2021. The EEC had a preliminary remote meeting on 5 January for preparing for the site visit and to discuss the overall evaluation process and the provided reports and documentation. The committee was provided access to video and presentation materials (a virtual tour) of the facilities. The EEC work was supported by digital office tools for the virtual site visit (Zoom) and the preparation of the evaluation report. During the remote site visit, the EEC was presented with the detailed organization, structure, and curricula of the School of Sciences and the three degree programs being evaluated. The EEC had meetings with the university, School and degree program leadership, professors, teachers, and current and past students of the programs. The EEC identified open questions and discussion points based on the provided materials. The EEC received answers to identified open questions during the remote site visit. In addition, the EEC received significant additional details and information regarding the degree programs and the School of Sciences pertaining to their operation, structure, and future plans. Based on the provided information, namely the three accreditation reports, and the remote site visit, the EEC can conclude that the School of Sciences and the three programs being evaluated have high standards and meet the quality expectations. This evaluation report describes how the standards are met and provides additional recommendations for improving the programs.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Sasu Tarkoma	Professor, Head of Department	University of Helsinki, Finland
Gregory O'Hare	Professor	University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland
Kevin Curran	Professor	Ulster University, UK
Prokopis Antoniou	Student	University of 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:	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 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.	4
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	4
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.	4
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	4
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.		

Click to enter text.

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).

Overall the programmes reviewed by the EEC were cohesive and represented broadly logical and coherent programmes of study appropriate for and in line with the levels of award

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Click to enter text.

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.	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.

Click to enter text.

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.	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.	4
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.	3

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

Internal processes of the University could be more transparent, for example policies and procedures associated with protocols for requesting and securing additional full-time faculty, and applying for discretionary resources for research, policies around sabbatical leave, Ph.D. supervision policies.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

University level international student intake is approx 20%. These students are drawn from the EU and Asia predominantly.

Findings

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

The University and the School advocate student-centered learning and the three evaluated programs have a relatively small number of students resulting in a favorable student-teacher ratio. The students appear to enjoy excellent tutoring and mentoring in the programs. The small numbers engender familiarity with the staff and render them more accessible and potentially more approachable. There would seem to be a significant emphasis upon student learning support and the students themselves seem to both recognize and value such.

As a private university, there is a focus on education with an emphasis on degree programs that are self-sustaining in terms of finances. Thus the workload profile of the staff is teaching-oriented; however, research is an integral part of the strategy and the aspirations of the university, and while this is clearly evident an environment needs to be maintained that fully recognizes, measures and rewards research endeavor.

UCLan Cyprus has excellent synergies with UCLan UK at Preston. Joint planning of education appears to work very well. It is important that UCLan Cyprus continues to leverage resources and skills at UCLan Preston and conversely that UCLan Preston leverages emerging expertise at UCLan Cyprus. This relationship can prove mutually beneficial.

Strengths

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

The School is well managed and the small size of the faculty supports the joint planning and delivery of education. The team spirit appears to be very good with a palpable sense of collegiality.

The degree programs and their modules have been aligned with industry certification. The industry relevance of the programs is commendable; however, the programs should also ensure that core computer science is in a key role in the degrees and complemented with professional-oriented content and modules.

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 recommends to further leverage the synergies between UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK while taking the challenges introduced by Brexit into account, for example differing privacy and other regulations. The joint delivery of education is a significant opportunity that should be explored and which may yield critical mass in certain programmes and afford better economies of scale.

The School is focused on developing and improving the current programs. The EEC commends this strategy and encourages a strategy of managed growth of the School and its programs by leveraging the synergies with UCLan UK and developing programs based on the current strengths and perceived opportunity.

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.	4
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	4
2.1.4.2	Research	4
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	5
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	4
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.		

The School has a systematic policy for quality assurance that is reflected in the planning and implementation of the degree program and other activities. The staff is aware of the quality assurance policy and there is clear evidence that student feedback is taken into account.

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.	4
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.	4
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective.	4
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	4
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.	4
2.2.9	The Department flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods.	4
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.	4
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		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		4
2.2.12.5	Academic support		4
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.		N/A
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.		N/A
2.2.18	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.		N/A
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 EEC observed that the quality assurance policy is implemented in the operation of the degree programs. The relevant quality assurance performance metrics are followed regularly and necessary actions are taken to develop the programs based on feedback and gathered information. The degree programs and the courses have clearly articulated learning goals and this information is publicly available as well as grading related information. The degree programs emphasize real-life relevance and graduate employment situation as well as industry requirements and needs are routinely monitored. The building facilities are excellent and remote education is implemented following good practices. The laboratories and IT infrastructure support studies and research activities. The students benefit from a very good student-teacher ratio and student feedback is very positive.

Findings

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

The academic development follows the cycle agreed by the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC) that is normally between five or six years. ASQAC is an internal quality committee for the institution and it is responsible for the quality standards and indicators as well as reviewing policies and processes. External examiners play a key role in assuring academic standards.

The degree programs result in a degree from UCLan Cyprus and a degree from UCLan UK, accredited by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (DIPAE) and respectively by the Quality Assurance Agency UK, respectively. Thus, the planning, implementation, and quality assurance of the degree programs are synchronized between Cyprus and UK committees and boards drawing from best practices in the two countries.

New courses are planned early at least two years prior to the start of the course. A course approval panel provides written comments on proposals and a course approval event is organized. The process for introducing new courses into the course teaching program appears to be well designed and thorough with interactions and feedbacks concerning the key stakeholders.

The School Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee chaired by the Head of School processes ideas for new courses. The Course Planning Committee (a sub-committee of the Senate of UCLan Cyprus and the Academic Board of UCLan UK) approves a new course proposal for inclusion into the Course Approval Schedule. A new course is deployed typically with a 2-year lead time; however, there are possibilities in fast-tracking a course.

The periodic review system supports the medium-term development of the degree programs and the courses. The university reviews courses annually. The annual review takes student and teacher feedback into account. Feedback is gathered via module feedback questionnaires. The student Experience Committee will examine the feedback and take action to improve the course experience. Student representatives are involved in the process of giving feedback to the Head of the School regarding the courses.

Overall, the longer-term planning of the courses and programs (introduction of new courses) and the medium-term periodic reviews for improving the learning experience and outcomes provide a very good basis for ensuring the quality of the educational programs.

The EEC interviewed and discussed with the leadership, staff, and students of the university during the site visit and found that quality assurance is an integral part of daily operations and routines. In summary, the quality assurance processes at UCLan Cyprus follow established practices and meet the expectations.

Strengths

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

The EEC observed that the quality assurance policy is implemented in the operation of the degree programs. The relevant quality assurance performance metrics are followed regularly and necessary actions are taken to develop the programs based on feedback and gathered information.

The degree programs emphasize real-life relevance and graduate employment situation as well as industry requirements and needs are routinely monitored.

The building facilities that were assessed based on the provided videos appear to be excellent and remote education is implemented following good practices. The laboratories and IT infrastructure support studies and research activities.

The staff is well aware of the quality assurance policy and it is an integral part of the everyday operations.

The students benefit from a very good student-teacher ratio and student feedback is very positive.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The School would benefit from more systematic scientific and industrial feedback regarding the degree programmes helping to ensure academic relevance while anticipating near-future industry needs. The degree programs emphasize professional aspects in Computer Science and having a wider scope in this would make the degrees more relevant for the future needs of the industry. To this end, an industry advisory board is recommended as an instrument for supporting the longer-term development of the School and the degree programs.

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

The EEC found the administration well-founded and supporting the teaching and research activities of the School.

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 materials provided and the virtual site visit the administrative structure is in line with the legislation meeting the requirements of the two countries Cyprus and the UK for the dual degree and the structure supports the operations of the School and its degree programs. The staff and students were familiar with the administrative processes and the administrative staff gave a very positive impression with their attitude and clear description of the processes.

Strengths

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

During the discussions, the teaching and administration staff had a positive and forward-looking attitude giving the impression that the degree programs have a solid basis. Interviews with the students supported this view.

Student feedback, complaints, and ideas are taken into account. The students reported that improvement ideas have been considered and there was an example of a course improvement initiated by a student. The students were of the opinion that their voice was heard and their views did matter.

UCLan Cyprus has excellent synergies with UCLan UK at Preston. Joint planning of education appears to work very well.

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 recommends developing a more systematic approach to monitoring the key performance indicators of the School and the degree programs. This monitoring and the analysis of degree program data will help in further developing the programs and be very helpful in supporting the growth of the programs.

The EEC recommends to further leverage the synergies between UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK while taking the challenges introduced by Brexit into account, for example differing privacy and other regulations. The joint delivery of education is a significant opportunity that should be explored.

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.	4
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).	4
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.	4
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	4
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.	4
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	4
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.	4
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.	4
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	4
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	4

Findings

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

The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to. In general, we found that recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.

Strengths

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

The teaching staff of the Department seems to have regular and effective communication with their students and provide timely and effective feedback to their students. Students were very complimentary of access to staff and appreciate the criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking being published in advance. The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

It may be worth considering if labs can be open 24/7 6 or 7 days a week. This is common in other institutions. Students especially coming close to assessment deadlines often enjoy working late at night. It can be a satisfying part of student life to work into the early hours with other classmates.

The EEC encourages that a wide range of assessment instruments to be adopted including formal examinations. The EEC would advise that student workload be monitored to strive for a balanced workload throughout the year.

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.	4
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.	4
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.	4
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.	4

The number of full-time academic personnel occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the programmes of study.

The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation including subject specialisation and publications within their respective disciplines.

The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the programme of study.

Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the programme of study.

In most programmes of study, the Special Teaching Personnel do not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.

The number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work is 23. The number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work is 27. The number of visiting Professors is 3.

Click to enter text.

Findings

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

The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the programme's quality.

Strengths

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

The great majority of teaching is delivered by resident faculty that are employed on a full-time basis and all full-time staff had Ph.D. qualifications.

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 not entirely clear if the teaching/student contact load for each academic is unduly impeding their ability to conduct research, publication, and overall contribution to society. The EEC understands the limitations due to the relatively small size of the university but it seems that some staff may struggle to find time to conduct deep research.

It is observed that some staff productivity seems to have dipped since taking up the post at UCLan Cyprus.

Some measures to consider/consolidate would be:

- Ensuring the workload model takes into account publication output particularly in Quartile 1 & 2 journals;
- It may be worth also considering a one-term sabbatical scheme for staff;
- Ensuring Ph.D. supervision is weighted appropriately in the workload model;
- Recruitment of additional full-time faculty;
- Adequate *reward* for publication and grant award within the workload model;
- Creation of discretionary research monies competitively awarded across the University and/or School which recognise research achievements
- Creation of discretionary research recognition awards competitively awarded across the University and/or School which recognise research achievements;
- Research travel fund.

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.	3
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.	4
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	4
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	3
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.	4
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.	4
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	4
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.	3

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

Better University/School vehicles for internal support and promotion of research ought to be explored. While this is a small School it is important nonetheless that even modest supports are formally instigated and procedures and protocols around access to such made explicit and clear.

While research training skills are provided for students the School may consider a structured Ph.D. scheme with relevant taught modules being accumulated in year 1. The absence of a critical mass of Ph.D. students will challenge the research environment.

It was unclear as to whether dedicated research room space is provided within the University for Ph.D. students. many Ph.D. students appear to be part-time in nature a move to more full-time Ph.D. student numbers will greatly enhance the research environment.

Findings

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

There is clear evidence of an appreciation of high-quality research.

Staff seem generally motivated to engage in research and would appear to have an ambition to produce high quality and impactful research.

Strengths

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

Generally full-time staff are research active and are in many cases admitted to the UCLan REF return process. This is an important benchmark and one that ought to be sustained and indeed consolidated.

Staff seems to have an awareness of appropriate strategies for research dissemination: publication, journal rankings, citation count, field weighted citation counts, and so forth.

Staff seems aware of the need for adherence to research ethics, FAIR principles, and GDPR compliance. overall staff seems to understand research ethics.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Some measures to consider/consolidate would be:

- Ensuring the workload model takes into account publication output particularly in Quartile 1 &2 journals;
- It may be worth also considering a one-term sabbatical scheme for staff;
- Ensuring Ph.D. supervision is weighted appropriately in the workload model;
- Recruitment of additional full-time faculty;
- Adequate *reward* for publication and grant award within the workload model;
- Creation of discretionary research monies competitively awarded across the University and/or School which recognise research achievements
- Creation of discretionary research recognition awards competitively awarded across the University and/or School which recognise research achievements;

- Research travel fund;
- Ensuring promotion takes due cognizance of research outputs;
- Consider research in all its forms pure together with applied and nearer to market research with higher TRL levels.

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.	4
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	4
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	4
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	4
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>The resources of the School whilst limited would appear to support all aspects of activity.</p>		

Findings

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

Staff morale seems strong. School cohesion and working together seems strong. There is evidence that this is a small cohesive group of academics with a singular direction of travel.

Strengths

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

There are many young staff members with considerable latent potential. Curating and effective management of this human resource is of paramount importance.

Research activity seems to be integrated effectively within the curriculum. Because of the size of the School research endeavour in all areas of Computer Science is not possible.

Choices around critical mass in chosen areas will be necessary.

Curricula growth together with research growth will need to be managed and controlled.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The School is recommended to create and maintain an infrastructure roadmap that includes a hardware acquisition plan in a systematic manner addressing the current and near-future needs of the researchers and teachers.

The School is encouraged to have a rolling equipment replenishment plan.

The School is encouraged to find innovative ways of engaging with Industry local, national and international. Measures might include annual keynote industry lecture, industry-funded industry prizes, industrial advisory committees, Final year project breakfast mornings, annual research showcase, Industry-funded(part) Ph.D. bursaries.

Possible examination of more short courses specifically for in-service training of staff. Perhaps an MSc through module accumulation through short intensive courses of a 1-week duration.

Provision of explicit resources at a School/University level to support research.

Some support for particularly research-active staff for partial teaching buy out.

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

The EEC evaluated the School of Computing and the B.Sc. program in Computing, M.Sc. in Computing, and M.Sc. in Cybersecurity based on the provided accreditation reports and the remote site visit. The School and the three programs were found to have high standards and meet the quality expectations. Based on the materials and the site visit, the EEC has identified a number of areas in which the School and the three programs can make improvements to strengthening their profile and increasing impact.

UCLan Cyprus and the School of Computing advocate student-centered learning and the three evaluated programs have a relatively small number of students resulting in a favorable student-teacher ratio. The students appear to enjoy excellent tutoring and mentoring in the programs. There would seem to be a significant emphasis upon student learning support and the students themselves seem to both recognize and value such.

As a private university, there is a focus on education with an emphasis on degree programs that are self-sustaining in terms of finances. Thus the workload profile of the staff is teaching-oriented; however, research is an integral part of the strategy and the aspirations of the university, and while this is clearly evident an environment needs to be maintained that fully recognizes, measures and rewards research endeavor.

UCLan Cyprus has excellent synergies with UCLan UK at Preston. Joint planning of education appears to work very well. It is important that UCLan Cyprus continues to leverage resources and skills at UCLan Preston and conversely that UCLan Preston leverages emerging expertise at UCLan Cyprus. This relationship can prove mutually beneficial.

The EEC recommends to further leverage the synergies between UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK while taking the challenges introduced by Brexit into account, for example differing privacy and other regulations. The joint delivery of education is a significant opportunity that should be explored and which may yield critical mass in certain programmes and afford better economies of scale.

The School is focused on developing and improving the current programs. The EEC commends this strategy and encourages a strategy of managed growth of the School and its programs by leveraging the synergies with UCLan UK and developing programs based on the current strengths and perceived opportunity.

The assignment of duties follows the regular planning process and cycle of the university and the school. There is an annual meeting for reviewing workloads and preparing for the next academic year. The workload model is based on the 40-40-20 model, in which time is divided between education and research and with a smaller percentage with administrative duties. The assignment is interactive and takes into account the teacher's situation and plans.

Faculty research productivity is paramount. In order to facilitate this faculty-student contact hours should be monitored and perhaps reduced. Research output is a key parameter in the global university rankings.

The School of Computing has ambitions of increasing the student intake during the next years that requires the optimization of resources, especially balancing education and research activities. The School has significant potential in attracting more research funding from Horizon Europe. The integral connection with the UCLan UK can help in establishing more opportunities for international research activities and projects.

The School's three evaluated degree programs have high industry relevance and the studies support competence building by being aligned with industry certifications. The EEC values the real-life industry relevance of the degree programs; however, recommends strengthening also the research connection of the M.Sc. degree programs.




The School would benefit from more systematic scientific and industrial feedback regarding the degree programmes helping to ensure academic relevance while anticipating near-future industry needs. The degree programs

emphasize professional aspects in Computer Science and having a wider scope in this would make the degrees more relevant for the future needs of the industry. To this end, an industry advisory board is recommended as an instrument for supporting the longer-term development of the School and the degree programs.

UCLan Cyprus does not have a Ph.D. program at the moment. A number of students have continued their Ph.D. studies at UCLan UK. The EEC recommends exploring the possibilities of a joint Ph.D. program with the UK campus. This could motivate research-oriented students to choose the M.Sc. programs at UCLan Cyprus. A Ph.D. program is a very necessary instrument for supporting research in general.

The university does not have an instrument for sabbaticals. The EEC recommends developing instruments for enabling both short-term and longer-term research visits. In addition, inter-sectoral staff mobility with industry would appear to be beneficial in supporting the development and exchange of knowledge and skills building on the synergies between the academic environment and the industry.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Sasu Tarkoma	
Gregory O'Hare	
Kevin Curran	
Prokopis Antoniou	

Date: 23.1.20221

