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Date: 10.02.2021

External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

- **Town: LARNACA**

- **School/Faculty: ARTS & HUMANITIES**

- **Department: DESIGN**

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

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In English:

BA IN INTERIOR DESIGN

Programme 2

In Greek:

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In English:

BA IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Programme 3

In Greek:

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In English:

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- **Department's Status: New**

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Given the current situation, an onsite visit was not possible. Therefore, an on-line site visit was arranged. It took place on the 8 of February 2021, starting at 10:00 am (EET).

This are the activities that took place during the on-line visit:

- Brief introduction of the members of the EEC;
- Meeting with the AUCY Rector and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs;
- Presentation of the Department's structure;
- Presentation of the Interior Design Program;
- Presentation of the Graphic Design Program;
- Meeting with the members of the teaching staff;
- Meeting with the members of the administrative staff;
- Discussion on the virtual visit of the premises of AUCY;
- Final meeting with the AUCY Rector.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Lucia Rosa Elena Rampino	Professor	Politecnico di Milano
Karmen Franinovic	Professor	Zurich University of the Arts
Sofie Beier	Professor	The Royal Danish Academy
Rositsa Rouseva	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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

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

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

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

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

Quality indicators/criteria		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.1 Mission and strategic planning		1 - 5
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	3
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	3
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	2
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.	4
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	3
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.	N/A
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Point 1.1.1: A slight discrepancy between the mission of the Department and the mission of the School emerged during the visit (see the Dean's statements and the Department description on the website).

Point 1.1.3: just short-terms objectives are described (see the SMART objectives described at p. 19-20). Moreover the mechanism for updating and revising the department strategies is not so clear.

Point 1.1.7: this is not addressed anywhere.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

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

The two Programmes of study are coherent and compatible both with the Department and the Faculty. Some concerns of the EEC regard the current predominance of architects over graphic designers in the teaching staff.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

The EEC recommends a future focus on employing permanent faculty members with a background in graphic design.

We also invite a stronger synergy between the mission of the Department and the mission of the Faculty. In this regard, the Faculty should consolidate a shared vision from which the Department and the whole University will profit in terms of visibility and admission numbers.

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.	4
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	2
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	4
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	N/A

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

Point 1.2.2. The current website of AUCY (http://aucy.com.cy/about_us) offers very poor information on both the University and the Department.

Point 1.2.4: Since the offered Programs are new, the communication mechanism towards graduates is not yet in place. A Career Placement Office will be established.

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.	3
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	3
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	3
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.	N/A

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

Point 1.3.1: Most of the senior members of the Faculty have an educational background in architecture, furniture or spatial design. There is a significant absence of senior faculty members educated in graphic design, which suggests a lack of an appropriate recruitment strategy to locate qualified teaching personnel for the program in Graphic Design.

Point 1.3.2: The uncertainty relating to the exact number of students that will be enrolled in the next few years have suggested AUCY to adopt a conservative recruitment strategy. As a result, in the presented two programs, several members of the teaching staff seem to be overwhelmed by teaching activity. The answers provided to specific questions by the EEC on this point were a bit evasive, always referring to the need to remain flexible not knowing exactly how many students they will attract.

Point 1.3.3: It is not fully clear how foreign students will be attracted, especially in the first year. Indeed, the web site of AUCY is quite poor and the strategy for students' recruitment described in the application heavily relies on on-site visits of the Campus and in person visits to private and public high schools by members of the Department. This seems to limit the outreach of these actions to a local context. The provided SWOT Analysis (see page 25) is a bit shallow.

Point 1.3.4: it is not possible for the ECC to express an opinion on this aspect.

Additionally, write:

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

Leveraging the geographical position of the Cyprus island, AUCY intends to attract international students from eastern Europe (in particular, from Greece), from Russia, and from the Middle east. They aim at attracting 300 students in their first year of operation. However, the specific number they expect from each Country is not made explicit.

Findings

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

The Department is not operational yet, therefore some indicators can be assessed just on the basis of a declaration of intents. Sometimes also such a declaration is missing.

In response to a specific question by the ECC, a strategy for attracting students solely based on the reputation of a single faculty member was described. According to the ECC members, while this can work quite well for both Master and Phd Students, it can be risky for attracting Bachelor students.

Strengths

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

The Department can count on an already experienced staff. Both the teaching and the administrative staff have significant past experience in delivery teaching modules and managing students. Moreover, all the members of the teaching team demonstrated a great enthusiasm for the development of the Department and they already put a considerable effort in detailing the course contents.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The Development Process is not described in a satisfactory manner. Much information is indeed missing. The ECC recommends the Department to better match its overall mission with its strategic planning, in terms of medium and long term objectives.

In more detail, the ECC recommends the Department:

- To describe its plan of action for involving all the stakeholders in the implementation of its strategic plan.
- To describe its detailed plan of action for attracting international students.
- To describe its detailed plan of action for high-quality teaching staff recruitment.
- To detail more its strategy for sustaining the long-life learning of its teaching and administrative staff.
- To include more graphic design experts, or alternatively change the title of the program into what the teachers are experts in (for instance, "Visual Strategies" were mentioned during the remote visit discussion).

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	Partially Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Partially Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Partially 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.	3
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.	4
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	3
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	4
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	4
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4

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

Point 2.1.1: in the description of the QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND SYSTEM (p. 26 of the Department Application), the validation of new programs is described. Here the involvement of external reviewers is mentioned but not enough details are provided in this regard.

Point 2.1.3 Dyslexia, a common disability among design students, is not addressed

Point 2.1.4.2: the area of research is not explicitly addressed in the description of the Quality Assurance Process (see page 27). However, one of the indicators listed at page 40 is “Research productivity and publication of academic manuscripts in high rank journals. Authorships of books, chapters in books, case studies.”

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.	4
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective.	3
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.	3
2.2.8	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	3
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.	N/A
2.2.11	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	N/A

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	3
	2.2.12.2	Library	3
	2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	N/A
	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.		N/A
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.

Point 2.2.3: at page 27 we found the "Quality assurance and quality control of the learning process", that sounds too generic. In other words, it is not a description of an already existing process, but just an overall discussion on how such a process could work. As said, the Quality Assurance office has not been established yet.

Point 2.2.7: the evaluation is based on the declaration of intents. Indeed, the Student Information System is not operational yet.

Point 2.2.8: the role of the students' portfolio still needs to be addressed properly.

Point 2.2.10: not having students, a system for collecting students' data is not yet in place

Point 2.2.11: the Department doesn't have any graduates yet

Point 2.2.12.1: even if it is difficult to judge the quality of the building facilities during an on-line visit, the ECC members share the opinion that at AUCY such a quality is not completely satisfactory

Point 2.2.12.2: it is not fully clear how the retrieval of out-of-print books will happen. Moreover, there is not a dedicated library for arts and design, and it is unclear whether the library will be fully operating with an adequate number of books for the two design programs, by the time students will arrive.

Point 2.2.12.3: the ECC cannot express their informed opinion on that, since it was not possible to see them

Point 2.2.15: since the number of enrolled students is not known, we cannot evaluate this

Findings

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

Regarding the building facilities, it is difficult to express an informed opinion, since we could not pay a visit to the campus. Based on the images of the video, for sure the campus is a modern one. However, some improvements need to be made to incorporate a proper "design school" atmosphere, as well as some equipment and space for design teaching (eg. large tables and, later in the process, workshops).

Strengths

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

The University building is in an interesting location in proximity to industrial and natural areas. The Design Department could benefit from such an inspiring environment in order to rethink the design practice in the age of climatic regime, while also connecting globally through its IT infrastructure.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The only indicator taken into consideration for evaluating the quality of research produced by the members of the teaching staff is the number of their publications in one year. The ECC suggests defining other complementary indicators, also taking into consideration the non-bibliometric nature of the design discipline (e.g. exhibition/festival participation, project/prototype development).

Moreover, the ECC suggests making some improvements to the overall architectural quality of the AUCY campus. This could be done by inviting students to co-design the teaching environment, as well as providing further facilities, such as workshops for model and prototype making.

Finally, as dyslexia is a common disability among design students, the department would benefit from a strategy on how to meet this student group.

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.	3
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.	3
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	3
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.	4
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	N/A
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	3
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.	4
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.	3
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5

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

Point 3.1: the description of the Department structure is rather vague. The diagram provided in the application at page 7 is too sketchy. In it, it is not clear how the Department will interact with the Faculty and with the other AUCY offices.

Point 3.2: the participation of students to the Department council is described in a standard and general manner (see page 8 of the application). The involvement of administrative staff is not openly addressed anywhere.

Point 3.3: in the application, it is written that the Department will have just one administrative assistant. It is not said if in the future more will be recruited. However, in the budget section, the cost of 2 administrative assistants is declared.

Point 3.5: since this is not openly addressed in the application and it was not discussed during the visit, the ECC cannot express an opinion on it

Point 3.6: monthly Departmental meetings are foreseen. It is not clear whether minutes will be held and kept. With only one or two administrative personnel connected to the Department, there is a concern that this work load is falling unto the teaching staff.

Point 3.8: The manner in which the Department Council operates is described just in general terms (see page 8 of the application).

Findings

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

Click to enter text.

Strengths

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

Based on the discussion that took place during the virtual tour, all the members of the staff are very open minded and they welcome suggestions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The ECC suggests a precise evaluation of the administrative workload for managing the Department and the two related Programs. Moreover, it is important for the Department to assure a constant and transparent flow of communication between the administration, the members of the teaching staff and the students in order to achieve its strategic aims.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

Partially 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.	3
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	N/A
4.1.3	The content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	5
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	5

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

Point 4.1.1. As already said, the process for periodically reviewing the programmes of study is just a declaration of intents. Therefore, it is difficult for the ECC to express an informed opinion on it. Also, everything seems to be focused on short term objectives.

Point 4.1.2: both programs are new, therefore there has not been the need yet to review them

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.	4
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.	N/A
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	N/A
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	N/A
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.	N/A
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>Point 4.2.3: according to the declaration of intents by the Department, this indicator should be compliant.</p> <p>Point 4.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.2.6 and 4.2.8: it is not possible to express an opinion on these indicators, since there are no students to interview.</p>		

Findings

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

As said, for the ECC it is difficult to express an informed opinion of several of these indicators since all the review processes are not operational yet and there are no students to interview.

Strengths

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

Click to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

As discussed during the virtual visit, the ECC strongly suggests engaging students in evaluating and improving all the teaching activities.

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

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

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

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

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

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
5. Teaching Staff		1 - 5
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	3
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.	N/A
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.	N/A
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	N/A
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.	3
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

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

Point 5.1: since most of the members of the teaching staff have a background in architecture, there are some concerns related to the Graphic Design course

Point 5.6: in the Programs description, often the subsequent editions of a course (e.g. Interior Design I, II, III, IV) are taught by the same lecturer. However, in the first year the members of the teaching staff will teach just to freshmen students. This means that the Department has enough time to address this issue with an appropriate recruiting strategy.

Point 5.7: this evaluation is based on the declaration of intents made by the Department not to exceed 35 students per class.

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

During the on-line visit it was said that the Department can count on 21 academics: 15 full-time and 6 part-times. There are no visiting professors.

Findings

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

There are no visiting professors, even if they plan to have many in the near future. In this regard, some agreements for the exchange of both students and professors have already been signed with UMASS (USA) and CASS School of Business (Paris).

Strengths

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

The cv and expertise of the members of the teaching staff guarantees the overall quality of the teaching activity.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

As discussed during the on-line visit, the number of the members of the teaching staff needs to be increased. In the application document, the Department declared the intention of hiring 8 more full-time permanent staff but this was not addressed explicitly during the visit.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
5. Teaching Staff	Partially 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.	4
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.	3
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.	N/A
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.	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.	4
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Point 6.5: Since the members of the teaching staff have just been hired, we can only evaluate the quality of their past publication activity. The open-access policy for publication is not mentioned in the application.

Point 6.8: AUCY declared the intention to apply for research grants, but they still don't have a detailed strategy on this point.

Findings

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

AUCY is obviously a teaching university. Therefore, it is not surprising for the ECC that their main focus - as it clearly emerges both from the application and the on-site visit - is on teaching rather than on research. That being said, still they put a strong emphasis on the need for their academics to get involved in research activity and to disseminate their research results: at least one publication each year is required from any member of the teaching staff. Moreover, in principle, the amount of time that needs to be dedicated to each activity is as follows: 40% teaching activity, 40% research activity and 20% administration. During the visit, the Dean of the Faculty also mentioned that he encourages installations and solo exhibitions by its teaching staff. However, this is not mentioned anywhere in the application.

Strengths

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

AUCY put a strong emphasis on the need for their academics to get involved in research activity and to disseminate their research results. Also, they encourage co-researching with academics from other Departments and other Universities, at a national and international level.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The ECC noted an expertise of the faculty members in research through design. Therefore, it recommends leveraging it in better detailing the Department's research strategy and the expected outcomes. Also, the ECC suggests defining an open-publication policy.

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.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	4
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	4
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>Click to enter text.</p>		

Findings

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

The Department can count on international and private fundings. It is the opinion of the ECC that the invested financial resources are sufficient to sustain its start-up phase.

Strengths

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

Click to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click to enter text.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

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

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 is not operational yet and the first income of students is expected in September 2021. Therefore, several details that in an already operating Department would be self evident or easy to describe, remains out of focus. For instance, the final furniture of the lectures rooms, especially of those intended for team working. As a result, some indicators have been assessed just on the basis of a declaration of intents and others were not possible to be assessed.

Regarding in particular the Quality Assurance processes, the ECC recommends the Department to pay full attention in passing from theory to practice: several details of such processes still need to be defined and implemented. From one hand, this means that there is still room for improvement (in this regard, see the fruitful discussion on the best manner for collecting students' feedback). On the other hand, a lot of work still needs to be done.

In general, the ECC appreciated that both the teaching and the administrative staff have significant past experience. Also in terms of research, several accomplished Faculty members guarantee a high level of output and cutting edge research. All this enables the Department to establish a prominent educational and research network. Moreover, based on the discussion that took place during the visit, all the members of the AUCY staff are open minded and they welcome suggestions.

During the visit, some discrepancy emerged between the vision of the Faculty Dean and the storytelling delivered by the faculty members. Therefore the ECC invites a stronger synergy between the mission of the Department and the mission of the Faculty. In this regard, the Faculty should consolidate a shared vision from which the Department and the whole University will profit in terms of international visibility and, as a consequence, numbers of students' application.

All that being said, and even if some details still need to be adjusted, the Department seems ready to accommodate its first cohort of students.

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Lucia Rampino	
Karmen Franinovic	
Sofie Beier	
Rositsa Rouseva	
FullName	
FullName	

Date: 11/02/2021

