

Alexander College response to the External Evaluation Report of 8th April 2019 on the Bachelor of Design with specialization in Graphics, Interior, Photography and Fashion

Introduction

Alexander College (AC) wishes to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their report and for the suggestions for improvement which it contains. We welcome all comments made both orally and in written by the panel. We would like to emphasise the importance of the main findings of the EEC, for example the adequacy and the urgency of such a program, the strong management and teaching team, the student satisfaction (p.22-23, Conclusions and final remarks).

Below AC sets out its response to the report, including clarification where necessary and details of all actions taken to implement the EEC's recommendations. We have responded to all sections in the report where the EEC made a written comment:

SECTIONS WITH WRITTEN COMMENTS	SCORE	RESPONSE
Page 3: Areas of Improvement and recommendations <p>“Our recommendation is for students to be able to specialise after Semester 1”.</p> <p>“they need to be given a clear re-cap on the introduction to their chosen area which they may have missed in the first semester due to changing specialist areas”.</p>	No score	<p>AC are in complete agreement with this point and has modified the programme handbook to include this recommendation. Students can decide on their specialisation prior to Semester 2.</p> <p>We are also in full agreement with this point. In case a student changes specialist area right after Semester 1, then he or she may take a re-cap on the introduction to the new area.</p>
1.2.3. p. 4 Perhaps more student involvement in the quality process is needed?	8	<p>a. Student surveys are carried out at the end of every taught module to feedback on quality. A sample of these is located in Annex 7 on page 334 of the Programme of Study (PoS) Application Document.</p> <p>b. The chairman of the AC Student Union (Mr Giorgos Antoniou 2018 – 19) and an elected postgraduate representative (Mr Giorgos Gavriel 2018 – 19) are members of the Quality Assurance Committee and as such participate directly in the QA process. Please see: https://alexander.ac.cy/about-us/internal-quality-assurance-background/</p>
1.5.2 p.4 recommendation is to continuously update and communicate with existing	8	As acknowledged by the EEC, “The understanding is that existing students know about the new degree but not the details” (p.6, 1.5.2). The committee also stated that “communication between staff and

students so that they do not feel they are missing out.		students is strong" (pg.7) and "...the existing students seem extremely satisfied at the college and are willing to fully engage in their programme of study as well as communicate with the teaching team." (p.23, para.1). These comments all tend to suggest that in general, good communication exists. Communication on the exact curricula will be further developed and strengthened after a final decision has been reached by the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.
1.8.5, p.5 Also 5.5 p.16: The following ensure the achievement of the program's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes... 1.8.5. The equipment	7	AC have noted, accepted and implemented the EEC's recommendations regarding the purchase of additional equipment listed on page 16. Invoices are attached for the equipment ordered and can be found in Annex 6 .
1.12, p.5 The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses according to European practice.	N/A	The program includes six general education elective courses in addition to the specialist electives. These are listed on page 39 of the Program of Study Application Document. An additional general education elective course can be included "Introduction to Sociology". See Annex 1 for the course description and the academic personnel short profile.
1.14, p.5 New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study. And 2.10 p.9 It is ensured that teaching and learning have been enlightened by research.	N/A	This will take place through existing courses such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Studies • Advanced Theory of Design • Independent Research in Design • Ethics, Values and Sustainability However, AC accepts this recommendation and in addition to these modules, adds the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lecturers have sourced new research papers to add to the reading list of each semester, particularly in the 3rd and 4th year of the program. More specifically additions can be viewed in Annex 7 which includes specific courses where new research articles have been added (highlighted). b) All teaching staff are also practicing designers whose personal and professional practice inevitably impact positively on their teaching. c) Faculty research will continue to enlighten discussions, seminars, workshops in the Design disciplines encouraging students, staff and other stakeholders to participate. The College Research Committee is already offering internal sponsorship to members of the faculty for conducting research, exhibitions, publications, participation at conferences etc. Members of staff have during the past and current year applied for and received sponsorship for research in various fields including Design. The Design staff is at your disposal for verifying this. Please see https://alexander.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/sponsorship-request-Form-F.pdf and https://alexander.ac.cy/research-centre-2/research-policy/ The thematic on Design of the Alexander Research Centre guarantees the discussion and embodiment of new research outcomes into the content of the program. The

		<p>Alexander Research Centre brochure was provided to the EEC during their visit. (https://alexander.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/research-centre-set-up-by-page.pdf). You can also view the following link https://alexander.ac.cy/category/design-news/</p> <p>d) In accordance with IQA Regulations (p.19-21 of PoS Application Document), every year the course leader and module leaders review the program to ensure that curricula reflect best and most current practice. This is a formal process which culminates into a comprehensive process of internal evaluation every four years, based on the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. Thus new research outcomes are constantly enriching the teaching outcomes of the course.</p>
<p>2.9 p.9, also 5.1.2, 5.3 and 5.7 pp. 15-16:</p> <p>More books on artists, designers and photographers needed in library – evidence of practical & basic books but this could be enhanced with more detailed & current books.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation to subscribe to WGSN (Worth Global Style Network) wgsn.com • Recommendation to subscribe to more up to date professional magazines. 	7	<p>a) AC would re-emphasise their recent subscription to the EBSCO online library which is particularly strong in the field of Design.</p> <p>b) AC is currently expecting a quotation for subscription to the WGSN. The College Librarian has subscribed to the following journals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Issues • Journal of Design History • Nature • National Geographic <p>and continues investigating the addition of a range of additional periodicals which can be found in Annex 2.</p> <p>c) AC has purchased the additional new texts listed in Annex 3.</p>
<p>2.12, p.9 Students are trained in the research process.</p>	No Ev.	<p>Evidence of this was made available in the PoS Application Document and are summarised in pages 22 and 23 of the programme. Course DES422 deals specifically with training in the research process (pg.170). Some important course components include research methodology, projects, literature reviews, reports on projects; the final independent research project, seminars, external activities and visits to research and report etc</p> <p>Further to these, the Student Research Committee (https://alexander.ac.cy/student-research-committee-2018-19/) is an innovative institution or mechanism to attract interested into research students and introduces them further and in practise to actual research under the aegis of the Alexander Research Centre. Please you may also view the following links which further prove student training in research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/1866599513424959 • https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/1885509128200664 • https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/2109002409184667 • https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/2095767540508154

<p>3.13, p.11 “The teaching staff are provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies“</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Normally, during each academic year seminars take place in order to explore teaching methods and new technology. Also, faculty members participate in conferences and seminars on Education and teaching Methodology.</p> <p>For example, you may review the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bernard Russo Interactive presentation https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/1963530137065229 b. Synthesizing the abilities of Wisdom, Intelligence and Creativity in Practice (Seminar) https://www.facebook.com/AlexanderCollegeCyprus/posts/1490273297724251 <p>At the beginning of the academic year, the academic staff participates in a seminar organized by AC on the application of new technologies.</p> <p>A series of teaching strategies for adult education are employed dependent on the level (1st or 2nd cycle) of the programme, the depth (1st or 4th year) etc. For example, flipped learning is being selectively implemented where the traditional concept of classroom-based learning is inverted. Andragogy is also practised as a strategy where teaching is based on independent, self-directed, and/or cooperative learning among adult-students at certain stages.</p>
<p>3.2.2, p.11 Teaching staff have ...</p> <p>...Publications within the discipline</p> <p>“Some staff have a lot more publications than others but this may be dependent on years of experience”.</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>This is an accurate observation. Some staff have many publications (pg. 250/1, 262/3, 275) whilst others less so. Teaching staff are encouraged to conduct individual or collective research and several mechanisms exist to assist with this, such as through a variety of means including sponsorship, paid leave, reduction of teaching hours, starting research funding, assistance to secure external funding etc. You may review these here at: https://alexander.ac.cy/research-centre-2/research-policy/</p> <p>and</p> <p>https://alexander.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/sponsorship-request-Form-F.pdf https://alexander.ac.cy/alexander-colleges-and-research-centres-proposal-ranked-first-in-a-funding-competition-for-preventing-youth-gambling-addiction/</p>
<p>4.1, p.13 Recommendation for all students to be interviewed with a portfolio of work or to submit an online portfolio.</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>AC agrees with this recommendation and this requirement is added to the admission requirements on page 11 of the PoS Application Document see Annex 8.</p>
<p>4.2, p. 13 The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>AC already produces a diploma supplement for degrees issued. A sample can be found in Annex 4.</p>
<p>4.4 p.13 Students participation in exchange programs is compared</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Since 2014 Alexander College holds the Erasmus + Charter and has taken the necessary actions to comply with the Erasmus+ Guide which is published by the European Commission. The aim of the College is to promote student’s mobility (higher education and /</p>

<p>favourably to similar programs across Europe.</p> <p>Erasmus exists within the college but yet to see how this will work on the new programme.</p>		<p>or internship) and staff mobility (academics and administrative) thus all can experience and enjoy the benefits of Through its Erasmus+ policy the College intends to establish a network of cooperation with international higher education institutions with a special focus on research, exchange of good practice and alternative forms of teaching and non-formal education. Over the last year the College has developed strong bilateral partnerships (https://alexander.ac.cy/erasmus-2/erasmus/#partners) with 15 European institutions as listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belgium: UC Leuven Limburg University 2. Czech Republic: University of Hradec Kralove 3. Estonia: Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences 4. France: University de Rouen Normandie 5. Lithuania: Vilnius University 6. Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences 7. Latvia: Baltic International Academy 8. Poland: Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities 9. Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa we Włocławku State University 10. Portugal: ISAL Instituto Superior de Administracao e Linguas Madeira 11. Romania: University of Bucharest 12. Slovakia: University of Economics in Bratislava 13. Catholic University in Ruzomberok 14. Spain: University of Castilla – La Mancha 15. University CEU Cardenal Herrera <p>The College has already identified higher educational institutions which will form the first collaborators through bilateral agreements for the Design programme, after this is accredited. Some of them are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London College of Fashion • Central Saint Martins • University CEU Cardenal Herrera (an inter-institutional agreement is already in place) • University of Derby <p>See Annex 5 for a list of Inter-institutional Exchange Agreements which are already in place.</p>
<p>5.1.2/ 5.3 / 5.7, p.16 Adequate and modern learning resources....in the library / infrastructure and teaching materials</p>	<p>6/6/6</p>	<p>See 2.9 above.</p>
<p>5.5 Recommendation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase some Wacom tablets/cintiqs and pens; particularly for the graphics students but can be used by all students 	<p>6</p>	<p>AC has or is purchasing additional equipment. See Annex 6 for invoices as per below:</p> <p>The college has already 2 Wacom tablets. We have also purchased another 10 items, see Annex 6.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film scanners (photography) • Black and white lab (photography) • Laser cutting machine (all programmes) • Modelling equipment (interiors and other programmes) • Another printer – size A1/A2 (to cover breakdowns & deadlines) 		<p>The college has purchased film scanners see Annex 6.</p> <p>The college has all necessary equipment for black and white lab and a room has been designated for this purpose, see images Annex 6.</p> <p>The college has purchased a laser cutting machine see Annex 6.</p> <p>The college has several modelling equipment, more will be purchased before the beginning of the new academic year.</p> <p>The college has received a quotation to purchase another plotter next to the existing one, see Annex 6.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Relocating teaching staff offices</p> <p>Enhanced resources and books</p> <p>More equipment for Photography</p>	6	<p>This point was not raised by the staff with the EEC at any point during the visit. Whilst possibly desirable, within the constraints of the current building this is not possible. However, at a future point in our development it will be given due consideration.</p> <p>See 2.9 above.</p> <p>See 5.5 above.</p>

ANNEX 1: General education elective course “Introduction to Sociology”. (See 1.12)

ANNEX 2: List of new periodicals on order (See 2.9)

ANNEX 3: List of new textbooks on order (See 2.9)

ANNEX 4: Sample of Diploma supplement (See 4.2)

ANNEX 5: List of Inter-institutional Exchange Agreements (See 4.4)

ANNEX 6: List of invoices for new materials and/or equipment (See 5.5)

ANNEX 7: Research Paper Reading List (See 1.14 and 2.10)

ANNEX 8: Student Admission Requirements (See 4.1)