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Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance
and Accreditation in Higher Education,
Chair of the Council, Prof Mary Koutselini
Nicosia, Cyprus

18 July 2017

Dear Professor Koutselini,

Subject: BSc (Hons) Web Design and Development - External Evaluation Report, following 15th of June 2017 evaluation visit

The UCLan Cyprus team is very grateful for the supporting report by the visiting team, arising from the external evaluation event for our BSc (Hons) Web Design and Development. We also welcome the recommendations provided by the team, seeking to refine and strengthen the programme and its market appeal. This document presents our response and comments to the committee's recommendations, following the structure of the External Evaluation Report.

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Committee recommendations and response to the recommendations:

1. *"UCLan-Cyprus Team has access and the flexibility to use established content provided by UCLan-UK and therefore the UCLan-Cyprus Team should take advantage to built up, personalize and develop their own content based on the own expertise and research interests."*

Response:

The team agrees with the committee's recommendation and would like to note that this is a general practice that is followed for all of our programmes. Although the majority of the module content and teaching material is provided by the corresponding team (module leaders) in UCLan UK, the final content/material delivered to UCLan Cyprus students is always tailored and personalized based on UCLan Cyprus module leader's expertise and research interests. At the same time, whenever necessary and applicable, teaching material is tailored to the learning needs of UCLan Cyprus students and the local market.

2. *"There are several good practices noted above. Given that the programme Team wishes to enhance the already good practice in employability initiatives, it may be appropriate to pair them with the development of guidelines and policies for the increased demand of internships and placements (i.e. logs, risk assessments, etc.)."*

Response:

Guidelines and policies for student internships and placements have already been developed. Please see Appendix A for all the relevant documents.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

Committee recommendations and response to the recommendations:

1. *"The 4-year programme under evaluation is based on clear and well-balanced learning outcomes that are described in a sufficient detail. The programme Team has demonstrated enough evidences of aligning the learning outcomes with the modules included in the diet. The EEC has identified an area for improvement. In particular, the EEC recommends the programme Team to emphasize subject specific provision learning outcomes in the modules. This will be particularly important if the programme Team wishes for the graduates to become members of the Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus (E TEK). In general, the programme title reflects the learning outcomes which are of appropriate standards."*

Response:

The team would like to note that it is not its intention for the programme graduates to become members of the Scientific Chamber of Cyprus (E TEK), as the programme does not prepare graduates to become engineers and the programme does not fall under any of the science and engineering fields recognized by E TEK.

2. *To further the clarity of the structure, a table illustrating the course distribution per semester could be presented in the order of semester 1 diet, semester 2 diet and year-long diet separately.*

Response:

As recommended, a module distribution per semester has been developed and it is presented in the table below.

A/A	Module Type	Module Name	Module Code	Num. of ECTS
YEAR 1				
Year long Modules				
1.	Compulsory	Internet Fundamentals	TE1900	10
2.	Compulsory	Introduction to Audiovisual Technologies	TE1903	10
3.	Compulsory	Introduction to Maths & Statistics	MA1601	10
4.	Compulsory	Academic Writing	EF1498	10
Semester 1 Modules				

1.	Compulsory	English Language 1	EF1705	10
Semester 2 Modules				
1.	Compulsory	English Language 2	EF1706	10
YEAR 2				
Year long Modules				
1.	Compulsory	Web Design & UX	TE1800	20
2.	Compulsory	Contextual Studies	TE1000	10
3.	Compulsory	Computer Graphics	TE1803	10
4.	Optional	Multimedia Production	TE1775	10
5.	Optional	Video Production	TE1772	10
6.	Optional	Audio Production	TE1771	10
7.	Optional	Web Development	TE1888	10
Semester 1 Modules: None				
Semester 2 Modules: None				
YEAR 3				
Year long Modules: None				
Semester 1 Modules				
1.	Compulsory	Application Design & Delivery	TE2800	30
Semester 2 Modules				
1.	Compulsory	Graphic Communication	TE2803	10
2.	Optional	Data Driven Applications	TE2888	10
3.	Optional	Professional Practice	TE2000	10
4.	Optional	Video Post-Production	TE2775	10
5.	Optional	Code Design	TE2801	10
Year 4				
Year long Modules				
1.	Compulsory	Portfolio Projects	TE3001	20
2.	Compulsory	User Experience Design	TE3800	10
3.	Compulsory	Enterprise Development & Production	TE2803	20
4.	Optional	Research Project	TE3000	10
5.	Optional	Work as Practice	PV3981	10
Semester 1 Modules: None				
Semester 2 Modules: None				

3. *"To enhance the programme content, it is required to make a distinction of the learning outcomes between English Language 1 and English Language 2 modules."*

Response:

The English Language 1 and English Language 2 modules are common between several programmes within the University and such a change will have an impact to those programmes as well. Given that the majority of the programmes have already been validated by both, Cyprus and the UK quality assurance agencies, adopting such a change will require external examiner approval, as changing the learning outcomes of a module constitutes a major change. The team would like to note that the module content of the two modules is distinct.

4. *"The program under evaluation could be benefit from enhancing subject specific content in term of its technical aspects. Specifically, maths and statistics related provision could be contextualized using related case scenarios, an issue that was highlighted by the students themselves. In a similar vein, modules related to AV and Web Development content could be grouped and delivered in a less vocational way."*

Response:

Mathematics and Statistics

The team agrees with the recommendation. Although it is a common University practice for general modules (e.g. for English I and II and Academic Writing) to contextualize their content to the students' discipline, this was not done for Mathematics and Statistics. Following the recommendation of the committee, the content of Mathematics and Statistics module is updated and contextualized to the students' discipline. This was accomplished through discipline specific examples and exercises.

AV and Web Development

The majority of the modules, including the AV and Web Development modules, are delivered in a mainly practical way, rather than theoretical way. As a result, the same topics may appear on related modules, but their coverage differs from module to module. For example, some modules offer introductory subject related theory and practice needed for students to be able to build the foundation knowledge necessary for higher level modules as well as to assist students identifying their future interests and select their elective modules for their next year of studies. Thus, such modules cannot be grouped together.

The team has reviewed the content of all modules related to AV and Web Development and there was no overlap of teaching material to justify grouping any of the modules together.

5. *"To enhance the consistent presentation of the module specs content, unification of the assessment sub-heading (such as Number of Assessments, Duration etc.) and currency of bibliography are required."*

Response:

The team has reviewed all the module specification content and ensured the unification of the assessment sub-headings.

With regards to the bibliography, given the nature of the programme, the team believes that it is important for the bibliography and learning material to be updated regularly.

To this end, the bibliography for each module is reviewed by the end of each academic year and whenever necessary, it is updated to reflect the latest industry trends and research findings. Accordingly, in collaboration with the University Library Services, appropriate

student reading lists are created on each module's Blackboard space before the start of the new academic year.

6. *"It may well be appropriate to enhance and highlight the technical aspects of the content of the program of the studies, as well as to increase the subject specific provision (i.e security issues)."*

Response:

As it was discussed during the validation event, the proposed programme is an inter-university programme between UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK and it is offered in parallel at both campuses. As a result, our students receive a double award (Cyprus and UK awards, both awards receiving individual validations). Although the BSc (Hons) Web Design and Development is a new programme for UCLan Cyprus, it has been validated, approved and running in UCLan UK since 2004 and it went through re-evaluation/validation in 2015.

The committee's recommendation to increase subject specific provision is well respected, but at the same time, as this is an inter-university programme, we cannot unilaterally introduce changes as this contravenes Quality Assurance Principles.

More specifically, implementing this recommendation will constitute a major change to the programme (i.e. adding new modules), requiring a complete revalidation of the UK award and UK External Examiner approval. Moreover, such a change will have an impact on the UK students and international students who are studying the current programme structure and arrangements.

The University systematically reviews programmes following feedback from students, faculty, external examiners and other stakeholders e.g. Professional Bodies and thus, we continuously refine the structure, learning methodologies and assessment techniques in line with QA policies and best practise.

As a response to the committee's recommendation the team suggests to monitor students' interest and industry trends and propose the inclusion of any new subject specific modules (e.g. internet security, internet marketing, etc.) during the next Periodic Course Evaluation (PCR) of the programme.

7. *"The EEC realized that some students were not fully aware of the benefits that they could have by attending induction activities and academic advisory sessions. Hence, it may be useful for the programme Team to emphasize the value of these facilities."*

Response:

The team agrees with the recommendation and enhanced its existing communication mechanism to ensure that students are aware of the benefits of induction week activities and academic advisor scheme.

Students are invited to induction activities at the beginning of each academic year, using email, hard copy letters to residences as well as social media. During these activities they are informed about the use of IT and Library resources, the roles of various departments with which they may need to communicate and interact, and they are also invited to attend talks with their course leaders who deal with course related information as well as module registration. Academic advisors are assigned to each student at the beginning of the course and they are then contacted by their advisor to arrange their first meeting. Subsequent meetings are held during the year and the advisor will remain the same throughout the duration of studies.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

There were no committee recommendations

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

Committee recommendations and response to the recommendations:

1. *" Infrastructure and Support: there is a state-of-the-art lecture amphitheatre, several high-quality classrooms and IT labs. Having said this, discussions with students representatives highlighted the need for a higher specification IT lab specifically for Graphics and AV content production and delivery. This need has been already highlighted at the students experience committee and to the credit of the programme Team this request seem to be addressed shortly."*

Response:

As the committee notes, this problem has already been addressed, as new computer machines and monitors have been ordered for the Web Design and Development laboratory.

2. *" There seems that the programme under evaluation will benefit from the investment of the additional fulltime staff to enhance student support and quality of teaching and research activities that maybe compromised by the extensive use of part-time contracts. It is to be noted that there is a substantial allocated budget which is spread across various priorities to support the School plans. "*

Response:

Currently, the programme does not include any part-time teaching staff for the delivery of modules, as only year 1 modules were delivered. As indicated in our Business Plan for the programme we are increasing the number of fulltime staff teaching on the programme every year.

Quality of teaching is one of the important aspects of the programme and one that we place a lot of emphasis on. To this end, all of our fulltime staff teaching on the programme are research active and hold a PhD. It is also within the University's ethos that whenever we hire part-time staff they should also hold a PhD or have a substantial industry experience which can be beneficial for our students. It is worth noting that we also provide part-time staff the same opportunities and trainings as fulltime staff, for enhancing their teaching skills. For example, all part-time staff can attend and complete Teaching Toolkit to become fellows of the UK Higher Education Academy.

Additionally, we have inter-campus mobility of faculty so that we can support on block delivery basis (for a semester) enhanced learning experience. UCLan UK faculty with wealth of experience and network across UK and Europe are lined up to support teaching, learning and other initiatives. Moreover, we support the engagement of experts from local and international industry who co-deliver state of the art workshops throughout the programme.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Not applicable

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Not applicable

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The committee's recommendations were the following:

1. *Produce a distinction between English Language 1 and 2 learning outcomes.*
2. *Contextualize (Maths and Statistics), organize (AV and Web Development content) and increase subject specific (i.e. security) module provision as well as provide electives for exempt students to select from, where applicable.*
3. *Develop a set of guidelines and policies for the increased demand of internships and placements (i.e. logs, risk assessments, etc.).*
4. *Built up, personalize and develop own content based on staff expertise and research interests.*
5. *Increase the number of full time academic staff holding a relevant PhD, so as to reduce the number of part-time and adjunct teaching contracts.*
6. *Develop explicit criteria for students admitted without the required apolyterion grade or equivalent.*

Response:

All recommendations were addressed earlier in this document with the exception of recommendation 6 "*Develop explicit criteria for students admitted without the required apolyterion grade or equivalent*".

Although it is not common practice to accept students with non-standard qualifications, they are allowed to apply to the programme and they are evaluated on an individual basis.

Once a prospect student with non-standard qualifications applies to the programme, the admissions team will inform the course leader of the programme as well as the Head of School and an interview will be arranged with the applicant. The main purpose of the interview is to investigate whether the applicant's existing qualifications and/or work/life experience can provide him/her with the ability to cope with and benefit from the programme. Programme entry interviews are individualized according to the specific qualifications of an applicant.

Once the interview is conducted, the course leader along with the Head of School provide to the admissions team information on the outcome of the interview and their assessment on whether the prospect will be able to join the programme. There may be cases where the recommendation will be for a conditional acceptance to the programme (e.g. for the prospect to complete some additional classes before entering the programme).

QUALITY STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

There were no additional comments or recommendations.

We would like to take this opportunity again to thank the external evaluation committee members for their valuable and constructive comments and suggestions towards enhancing the BSc (Hons) Web Design & Development programme at UCLan Cyprus. We feel that we are fully equipped to grow the course and enhance the positioning of our School, UCLan Cyprus and Cyprus as international education hub.

We remain at your disposal for any further questions and clarifications, in relation to our responses.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Irene Polycarpou,
Head of School of Sciences,**

**Dr Christos Karpasitis,
Course Leader of BSc (Hons)
Web Design and Development**

**Professor Panikkos Poutziouris
Acting Rector, UCLan Cyprus**

Cc: Mr Floros Voniatis
Chair, UCLan Cyprus Council