

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 11/04/2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Ηλεκτρολογικής και Ηλεκτρονικής Μηχανικής
(4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering (4
academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Engineering
with Honours)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*



UCLAN CYPRUS NOTE

We are grateful to the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their time and constructive feedback regarding the evaluation of the BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering programme at the School of Sciences at UCLan Cyprus. We genuinely appreciate their input and believe it will have a positive impact for the further development of our programme.

We also appreciate the EEC's positive words acknowledging the efforts and achievements of the academic team. The feedback encourages us to carry on with and intensify our efforts. At the same time, we strive for excellence at teaching and learning as well as research, so we welcome the recommendations for further improvement.

In this report, we provide our responses on how we will enhance our programme provision based on the EEC's suggestions in the identified areas.

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC has found that Programme of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has been well structured, which is partially due to the fact that the programme being evaluated is based on the one which has already been running at UCLan UK. In addition, this well structured programme has also been well delivered and maintained by the School of Sciences of UCLan. In particular, the programme has been regularly reviewed by the School. As a result, this programme has been offered to students at international standards for topics, quality of teaching, resources and infrastructures. The faculty members and the administrative staff have spent a great amount of efforts to build a supportive and friendly culture, which takes student feedback into account, and well support students for their studies. This has been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the school has provided various good practices to avoid too much disruptions to the students' learning.

Strengths

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

The School of Sciences has carried out various quality assurance activities to ensure that the programme being evaluated can be delivered at an international standard. For example, the exam papers produced by the faculty members need to be moderated by both internal and external colleagues before they are released to the students. In addition, the marking of the exam papers has so been carefully moderated at formal exam board meetings, and there are effective measures to ensure that potential mistakes in marking can be avoided and corrected.

There is a sufficiently efficient mechanism for feedback, where for each course, students provide their feedback via formal questionnaires and faculty members can adjust their teaching according to these feedback. The students have also been offered good opportunities for industry placements and internships. In addition, the faculty members have tried to bridge the gap between teaching and research, by feeding their research to their teaching.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Regarding the regularly carried course review, the School may want to introduce a more formal procedure, where a formal course review report can be generated periodically, potentially problems can be identified earlier, and it is useful to involve external examiners for such course review activities. The School has expressed the wishes to frequently update the content of the programme and build new modules, such as machine learning, in order to attract more applicants. Such activities for updating the programme can also be carefully reviewed and approved during those regular course review procedures.

The programme being evaluated offers students to have a gap year and participate in a one-year industrial placement, but no student has participated in this industrial placement. It is possible that the Covid pandemic might cause this situation, but the School needs to carry out a careful analysis for the offered industrial placement. If indeed there are many potential students who want to be involved, proactive activities to encourage and help student to participate in this industrial placement need to be carried out by the School, e.g., potential industrial partners should be identified and introduced to students.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

“Regarding the regularly carried course review, the School may want to introduce a more formal procedure, where a formal course review report can be generated periodically, potentially problems can be identified earlier, and it is useful to involve external examiners for such course review activities. The School has expressed the wishes to frequently update the content of the programme and build new modules, such as machine learning, in order to attract more applicants. Such activities for updating the programme can also been carefully reviewed and approved during those regular course review procedures.”

As indicated in the programme’s application for evaluation by the CYQAA (Section 9: Periodic Review, p. 25, and Section 9: Annual Monitoring, p.26), the UCLan Cyprus QA procedures include a detailed process on each programme/module’s annual review. During the last academic year, the annual monitoring process has been revised, enhanced and renamed Continuous Course Enhancement process (see Appendix I). The Continuous Course Enhancement process is informed by on-going review throughout the academic year. Feedback is gathered from students via the Module Feedback Questionnaires (MFQs), which are issued on completion of each module. Results of these questionnaires are scrutinised and immediate action is taken where necessary. An overall report of the Module Feedback Questionnaires and Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings is provided to the Student Experience and Enhancement Committee (SEEC), so that actions may be identified and implemented within reason. In addition, student representatives from each year of each programme (Student Representatives) are invited to discuss and provide feedback to the Head of School and programme teams by attending the Student Staff Liaison Meetings once each semester. Action plans arising from these meetings are monitored through the school and academic and quality assurance department.

At the end of each module, the Module Leaders are asked to complete a module review form that is provided to the programme’s Course Leader. Items for consideration are as follows:

- Feedback from the programme’s academic staff
- Summary of student feedback (e.g. MFQs, SSLCs)
- Proposed actions and/or changes
- Content/Curriculum
- Assessment
- Delivery
- Resources
- Agreed actions

According to the content of the module review forms as well as feedback received through the MFQs, SSLCs and the programme’s external examiner report, the Course Leader produces a programme report that is submitted to the Head of School and the Academic and Quality Assurance Department at the end of the academic year. An Action Plan for the following academic year is devised and approved by the Head of School, upon reflection on the following points:

- Progress on the previous year’s action plan and response to recommendations
- Changes to the course/subject

- Commentary on programme statistics
- Student Voice and Feedback
- Course Team Feedback
- External Examiner Feedback
- Learning resources, physical/material resources
- Deployment of human resources to support student learning
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies visits / reports
- Commendations / Innovative practice
- Collaborative arrangements

Following the Course Leader reports, the Head of School Report is prepared, considering all Course Leader Reports, and a School Action Plan is devised accordingly. This is followed by the UCLan Cyprus Campus Report, which is completed by the Rector of the University. An Action Plan is devised upon reflection on the following points:

- Consideration of the progress on achieving the actions or outcomes from the previous year
- The statistics for the campus
- The student, course team and External Examiner feedback
- The learning resources
- The liaison with the UCLan host School and UCLan services
- Confirm any issues that should be referred to the University

Regarding the implementation of specific programme improvements (e.g. changes to the structure of the programme, changes on individual modules, etc.), there is a formal QA procedure in place to request and implement such changes. Depending on whether the requested changes are considered as minor or major changes, the necessary procedure is followed. For major changes requested by the programme team, student feedback is collected, followed by the review and approval of the programme's external examiner. Once the external examiner approves the changes, then all the necessary paperwork is submitted for approval to the UK QAA and CY QAA (for already validated programmes). In case the programme has professional body accreditation, then the necessary process is followed to ensure alignment with the professional body requirements. Every 5 years, the programmes of study are going through a period review process, which is informed by the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education and further considered and evaluated by the CyQAA through its re-accreditation procedure, which also provides the programme's team additional feedback from the assigned CyQAA External Evaluation Committee.

“The programme being evaluated offers students to have a gap year and participate in a one-year industrial placement, but no student has participated in this industrial placement. It is possible that the Covid pandemic might cause this situation, but the School needs to carry out a careful analysis for the offered industrial placement. If indeed there are many potential students who want to be involved, proactive activities to encourage and help student to participate in this industrial placement need to be carried out by the School, e.g., potential industrial partners should be identified and introduced to students.”



We agree with the EEC's recommendation. The industrial placement year is available to students between the year 3 and year 4 of their studies and indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic was a major contributor to students not selecting this option for the last 2 years. The academic team strongly believes that this is one of the main advantages of the programme and it will continue monitoring the students' interest to participate in the practical year as well as enhance its efforts in order to further promote the placement year to the students and motivate them to participate. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, further visits from industry partners to offer guest lectures to the students, organisation of more industry field trips, participation of the industry partners and/or any other industry related companies and organisations to the University Career Fair and employability week and establishment of additional industry collaborations.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The School of Sciences at UCLan provides a supportive and encouraging learning environment to students, where students are not only supported by faculty members but also by the well organized administrative team. In addition, the School has also provided an encouraging environment to the teaching faculty members. The structure of the program reflects well the student needs for both what concerns education and personal wellbeing, where the School has an effective student welfare mechanism for monitoring the sufficiency of student support. The School implements a flexible process of teaching and learning which ensures the quality of the provided programme. The carried-out teaching methods are appropriate. The School also integrates the applications and industry relevance into the programme teaching by providing more practical knowledge and experience to students.

Strengths

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

Within the School of Sciences of UCLan Cyprus, there is an overall understanding of the requirements for delivering of the programmes at international standards. The students on the programme have been well looked after, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, during the pandemic, the students were offered well organized blended teaching, where interactive online lectures were combined with small-group face-to-face lab activities. The students have also been offered to install those teaching software in their own computers and work from home, instead of travelling to the campus. These good practices have been well acknowledged and appreciated by the students on the programme. The teaching staff has been offered clear guidance, and there is a training programme available to junior staff for their teaching, where each faculty is expected to become a Fellow of Higher Education. The School provides a good support to students for finding industrial placement and internships.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The programme covers very well fundamental areas of electrical and electronic engineering as well as some more applied domains. However, a stronger connection with industry could offer the students useful insights on industry practices and industry needs making them better prepared for their job seeking at the end of the programme. Actions to introduce formal procedure to involve students into the research activities carried out by the department are also recommended.

The EEC also recommends that the School runs staff-student meetings more frequently. Such meetings can be very important to provide students a chance to feed their opinions back to the School during the middle of a term and any potential teaching issues can be corrected in a time manner. The School currently runs such meeting twice a year, which might not be frequent enough to identify those teaching issues happening timely. The School may also want to introduce a procedure which ensures that students can provide their suggestions to the whole programme, instead of just to individual courses. As a result, the curriculum of the programme can be effectively updated and tailored to students' needs.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

“The programme covers very well fundamental areas of electrical and electronic engineering as well as some more applied domains. However, a stronger connection with industry could offer the students useful insights on industry practices and industry needs making them better prepared for their job seeking at the end of the programme. Actions to introduce formal procedure to involve students into the research activities carried out by the department are also recommended.”

We welcome the suggestion of the EEC. The programme team considers it vital to build a strong network of partners and long-term industry collaborations with depth and breadth. Through the years, the programme managed to develop a large network of national and international collaborators, especially industry partners, which have been informally engaging with the School in terms of providing advice on curriculum development, industry knowledge/skill needs and student employability aspects. Moreover, our industry partners have been engaging in other educational activities, such as guest lectures, field trips, real case studies, real life student projects, student internships, student competitions, student awards and many more. It is also worth noting that the programme organises an annual employability week for its students, where industry partners are invited to talk to the students about their future profession as well as deliver specialised presentations on the latest trends in their industry sector and specific employability skills sought after employers. We welcome the EEC’s constructive recommendation to strengthen our efforts to enhance our existing network of industry partners and their engagement with the programme and we acknowledge the substantial benefit and value this can offer to our students. To this end, the programme team will pursue further industry collaborations as well as enhance the engagement of our industry partners with the programme.

Regarding engaging undergraduate students with research activities, beyond the several research related activities embedded into the programme curriculum (e.g. research related modules, final year project), in an effort to enhance its existing practices, the School has recently established the Undergraduate Research Internship scheme, in collaboration with the InSPIRE research centre. Through this scheme, students can apply for an internship to work on one of the national or international research projects the academics of the School or the InSPIRE centre are involved with. Moreover, students are encouraged to take advantage of the Erasmus+ traineeship scheme to participate in research projects of our academic partners. Additionally, throughout the year, students are offered opportunities to work as Research assistants on academics’ individual research projects.

“The EEC also recommends that the School runs staff-student meetings more frequently. Such meetings can be very important to provide students a chance to feed their opinions back to the School during the middle of a term and any potential teaching issues can be corrected in a time manner. The School currently runs such meeting twice a year, which might not be frequent enough to identify those teaching issues happening timely. The School may also want to introduce a procedure which ensures that students can provide their suggestions to the whole programme, instead of just to individual courses. As a result, the curriculum of the programme can be effectively updated and tailored to students’ needs.”

As indicated by the EEC, as part of the formal University quality assurance processes, the programme runs the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings twice a year (middle and end of the programme delivery). During these meetings, student representatives from each year of the programme (Course Representatives) are invited to discuss and provide feedback to the Head of School and programme team. Action plans arising from these meetings are monitored through the School and University ASQAC (Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee). The minutes, table of actions and responses to actions are made available to students on the

programme's Blackboard space. During these meeting, students provide feedback on the whole programme, including its operation, organisation, resources, structure, curriculum, assessment, delivery methods, feedback and student support. Beyond the SSLC meetings, additional frequent informal meetings take place between the module tutors, the programme coordinator and the students (or their representatives). In fact, the role of the Course Representative per academic year is mainly to act as the point of contact between his/her fellow students and the programme coordinator and academic staff, so that any issues arising are promptly addressed.

At UCLan Cyprus, we value the student's voice and we take into consideration their suggestions and concerns. In addition to the SSLC meetings, students have the opportunity to address any matter or complains to the Student Support Office following an informal or formal procedure. Finally, as a means of academic improvement, lecturers are asked to seek informal feedback in the early weeks of each semester. Specifically, students are asked to fill anonymous online surveys and suggest areas of improvement, e.g., "things they would like to see less of" as well as best practices, i.e., "things they would like to see more of".

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The panel has found that the teaching staff involved in the programme of study is adequate and highly motivated. Furthermore, the number of the teaching staff is adequate to cover the needs of the study programme. The university is striving to ensure a very nice workload division of 40% for teaching, 40% for research and 20% for administrative and leadership tasks. The time staff spends on various tasks is monitored, and an adjustable workload scheme is implemented in cases where this is needed. The School provides staff development funding from its budget, to encourage participation in conferences and training activities and it also distributes internal research funding. The university has adopted a promotion scheme that recognizes research excellence. There are documented lists of criteria, so that academic staff know the level of achievements expected for promotion to a certain level. Furthermore, there is in place a mentoring program that pairs junior staff with experienced senior staff members, to help guide the former. The university has a “Visiting senior fellows” programme and organizes training and development seminars for staff, focusing on research, grant attraction, teaching and pedagogy. Teaching is generally connected to research, and staff are asked to teach in topics that match their scientific background and interests. There are annual appraisal meetings between every staff member and their manager to evaluate their performance and set goals for the next year. Finally, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, such as a module feedback questionnaire where students can provide anonymous feedback about the taught modules and the teachers.

Strengths

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

The UCLan Cyprus campus has the opportunity to play a pivotal role, as in the post-Brexit era the Cyprus campus is for a university such as the UCLan UK a point of access to EU research funding and students. This situation is expected to further strengthen the role and importance of the staff. The university is very well organized with clear distinction of roles and comprehensive rules, e.g. for promotions. Therefore, staff members were found to be very satisfied and engaged. The incorporation of e-learning elements was successfully implemented, pushed also by the COVID19 pandemic, and students attest to their teachers’ role in this smooth transition.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The university may want to take actions to further increase the scientific output and impact of its staff. Furthermore, closer scientific collaboration with UCLan UK could help towards this direction.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

“The university may want to take actions to further increase the scientific output and impact of its staff. Furthermore, closer scientific collaboration with UCLan UK could help towards this direction.”

We agree with the comment of the EEC. Research is at the core of the School’s strategy and thus, we consider it vital for all permanent members of academic staff to be productive in research. The School operates an academic workload model, which follows an interactive process of defining the

academics' yearly workload and considers each academic's individual plans. As a result, the workload model provides the necessary foundations and processes to be able to adjust the distribution of academics' time between teaching (e.g. delivery of lectures, assessment marking, student support, student feedback, etc.), research and administrative duties. In summary, the workload model is prepared by all academics before the commencement of the academic year, and it is reviewed and discussed with the Head of School. The standard target distribution of the academics' workload hours is 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% administration, but during the annual review, other adjustments can be made according to the academic's research output and engagement. The workload model considers several aspects of the responsibilities of the academics on the aforementioned three areas, including:

Teaching:

- Direct Regular Teaching Hours
- Direct Evening/Weekend Teaching Hours
- Direct Distance Learning Hours
- Preparation for Modules (conventional and distance learning delivery)
- Coursework assessment marking, verification and moderation
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate thesis supervision
- Annual curriculum update

Research:

- Research Activities
 - Quantity and Quality of Scientific Publications (includes factors such as journal quality, length of work, number of authors and first authorship, monographs, etc.).
 - Preparation of research bidding (includes factors such as type/size of proposal, first submission/re-submission, contribution to proposal writing, academic's role (principal investigator, local coordinator, work package leader, scientific contributor, etc.)).
 - PhD external supervision
- Scholarly Activities
 - External research activities (e.g. organisation/delivery/chairing of research seminars, research conferences, workshops and round tables)
 - Peer Esteem activities (e.g. editors of journals, reviewers for journals, participation in external research committees/boards)
- Research Income generated activities
 - External Research Funding (e.g. EU, RIF)
 - Contract Research
 - Research Exploitation
 - Research Consultancy

Administration:

- Course Leadership
- Module Leadership
- Personal Tutoring/Academic Advising
- Office Hours
- Preparation/Validation of new courses
- Preparation of paperwork for minor changes or re-validation of existing courses
- Panel membership

- Lead/Participation in University Committees
- Other administrative activities (team meetings, assessment board attendance, training sessions, e-mail enquiries by students, data input, report preparation, attendance and student at risk monitoring and input, writing references for students, etc.).

Once the workload model is prepared, academics who are above the allocated 40% research active, can request a teaching reduction and increase in research allocation hours. It is the responsibility of the academic and the Head of School to ensure during the annual review meeting that academics are allocated the needed time to conduct research and be productive in this area. This is a process we consider important for the sustainability and strengthening of our research environment, and as such, we are committed in continuing.

In addition to the workload model, the School/University offers many other ways to support academic research, including but not limited to:

- Local Mentoring Scheme
- Appointment of Visiting Professors
- Organisation of targeted research seminars and workshops (e.g. proposal writing, targeting high quality publications, extending research network of collaborators, etc.)
- Internal Funding
- Administrative and Research support (beyond the University, the School has an additional dedicated officer to support the academics)
- Professional Development funding
- Access to a wide range of research databases
- Access to UCLan UK Research Resources and support

Despite the young age of the programme as well as its academics, the programme's permanent members of academic staff are highly research active, with an excellent research output (in terms of quality publications and citations) and they have managed to secure external research funding for approximately 2+M for UCLan Cyprus share (total project funding amount of about 5.5M), with all the projects being in collaboration with international research partners. This is indicated throughout the tables below.

External Research Funding

EU Funding

Project	Call	YEAR	Total AMOUNT	UCLan CY/ Share
VERITAS	Horizon Europe	2021	€1,983,752	€307,732
MENTOR-ME	Erasmus+	2020	€296,360	€49,895
SLICES-DS	H2020-INFRADEV-2019-3	2020	€2,914,175	€202,500

2BeConnected Placements Platform	EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND	2019	€180,000	€99,988
2BeConnected Industry Placements	EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND	2018	€46,669	€46,669
IREEDER	Erasmus+	2019	€768,627	€42,557
CSRC	H2020 WIDESREAD: Teaming Phase 1	2017	€400,708	€5,000
COMPASS	H2020-GARRI- 2015	2016	€1,499,945	€156,843
Responsible Industry	FP7-SCIENCE-IN- SOCIETY	2013	€1,496,962	€157,103
			€9,587,198	€1,068,287

National Funding

Project	Call	YEAR	Total AMOUNT	UCLan CY/ Share
RegTek	RPF RESTART - INNOVATE	2020	€500,000	€102,406
IDEALVis	RPF RESTART -EXCELLENCE	2019	€249,490	€194,575
ARE-PRED	RPF RESTART -EXCELLENCE	2019	€150,000	€137,000
RRI-MobDev	RPF RESTART BILATERAL/FRANCE	2017	€10,000	€5,000
Wisdom Apps	RPF RESTART - ENTERPRISES	2017	€200,000	€30,000
iSci	Cyprus Structural Funds	2016	€50,000	€50,000
Other	FULLBRIGHT, ONEK, NAAC, UCLan, PiTop	2013-2020	€81,952	€81,952
			€1,241,442	€600,933

Collaborative Funding (with academics from other UCLan Cyprus programmes)

Project	Call	YEAR	Total AMOUNT	UCLan CY/ Share
HEIGHT (Phase1)	EIT HEI Innovate	2021	€400,000	€51,000
INSPIRE	Erasmus+ KA2	2020	€164,267	€34,037
GReFORM	Erasmus+ Sport	2017	€420,000	€62,000
Collaboration with Business and Management academics				
SHERPA	H2020 – SWAFs-2017-1	2017	€2,800,000	€330,000
Collaboration with the Law academics				
			€3,784,267	€477,037

Publications (retrieved from Google Scholar/ResearchGate):

ACADEMIC	NUMBER OF TOTAL PEER REVIEW PUBLICATIONS	NUMBER OF TOTAL CITATIONS FOR RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS (Google scholar or ResearchGate)
Vered Aharonson	102	1794
Andreas Pamboris	20	1687
Andriani Piki	18	149
Demetres Christofides	22	180
Josephina Antoniou	67	359
Louis Nisiotis	25	69
Marios Raspopoulos	51	354
Milto Hadjikyriakou	26	109
Nearchos Paspallis	59	1261
Panayiotis Andreou	69	587
Stelios Ioannou	36	107

Nevertheless, and as reported by the EEC, we acknowledge that there is room for improvement and we are always positive in pursuing new ways to enhance our research environment and more importantly, provide further support to our academics to develop their research portfolio. To this end, the University has recently developed a Sabbatical Scheme that was approved by the Senate in June 2022, to further support research mobilities and additional dedicated research time. Moreover, beyond our local efforts and activities, UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK have partnered to offer a joint mentoring programme across both campuses (more experienced/mature (in research) members of academic staff are mapped with early career researchers to support them and mentor them towards producing better research results and/or preparing and submitting research proposals) as well as to



offer joint research opportunities through the newly established research centres in UCLan UK. These efforts are part of the new addition to the University's research strategy, which is the commitment of UCLan Cyprus to be an active member of the 'One UCLan' framework as applied to research ('One UCLan in Research'), where Research and Innovation collaborations are strongly encouraged amongst all the UCLan Campuses and establishments (Preston and elsewhere in the world). These collaborations should be across all the possible research domains like joint publications, collaborations in research projects and bids, joint PhD supervisions, membership to Centres/Institutes, participation to the Research Excellence Framework (REF2027), etc.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The committee has observed that there are appropriate plans and teaching advisors to monitor and support student progression. Although the number of students in the program is relatively small, it is supported adequately, and all necessary facilities are provided. The program is reviewed periodically and feedback from academic staff, students, external local industry experts and professional bodies is taken into consideration. In addition, connection between theory and practice is ensured through hands on laboratories, an optional one year industry program, and an internship program to further enhance industry related skills.

The committee also found the admission process robust and reliable. It is very positive that admission is based on the student's ability to benefit through motivation and commitment. Students applying for the BEng must have a grade C or above in GCSE English or 5.5 IELTS (or equivalent). Also, specific criteria exist for the applicants' achievements in maths and other relevant areas (e.g. science of technology). Admission requirements can range to suit different educational backgrounds and access qualifications for home, EU and international applicants.

Regarding student progress there are clear policies and methods. The classification systems according to grading are completely in line with the international standards. It is very important that students' progression is supported and monitored by Academic advisors in an annually basis, through the Module Leader and Programme Leader Reports. The assessment methods include Final Exams, Coursework (reports, assignments, in-class tests, hardware and software projects) and Presentations.

The offered degree is a Bachelor in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, which is in line with the international standards.

Strengths

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

Students completing the program receive recognition through the accreditation process by national and international bodies, including the Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK), which is the engineering regulatory body in Cyprus. The committee has observed a high level of satisfaction among students, regarding the program and the support they receive. Furthermore, the degree program has a good structure, and is regularly reviewed to ensure industry relevance. Finally, teaching processes and practices in place, are in line with the expected world-standards in this sector.

Broad range of admission requirements to adapt to different educational backgrounds.

There is good guidance by both the University and the accreditation authorities to ensure that the students are accredited on a case-by-case level. There are multiple mechanisms to ensure good progression of the students.

Several software packages as Matlab, etc are offered free to the students.

Students are supported on academic, financial, career, internship/exchange, legal & IPR, psychological, and other issues.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The department may consider developing an action plan leading to an increasing number of students, something that would be beneficial in many ways. The one year industry program offered had no participation so far, and the department may investigate whether the design of the offered industry program and its promotion are adequate.

The number of students is too low, and this compromises the long-term sustainability of this program. The evaluation committee recommends the development of an action plan to help increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next years. Also, there are few female students and there seems to be no structured and long-term plan for turning this around.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

“The department may consider developing an action plan leading to an increasing number of students, something that would be beneficial in many ways.... The number of students is too low, and this compromises the long-term sustainability of this program. The evaluation committee recommends the development of an action plan to help increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next years.”

The student recruitment for BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering is approximate 10 students per year (ranging from 8 to 12 students per cohort depending on the year). Although these numbers may seem low compared to other established universities, for UCLan Cyprus and the School of Sciences this is considered average, as the highest student recruitment programme in the School accepts 30-35 students. The primary reason for the “low” student recruitment numbers is the young age of the University, which was established in 2012. Strategically, the University focused on local recruitment during the first years of its operation, allowing time for the University to establish itself in the local market before further expanding its recruitment efforts to the international market. It should be noted that although there were no significant efforts made to recruit from the international market during these years, the BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering student demographics consisted of approximately 71% students from Cyprus, 4% from EU countries (e.g. Poland, Netherlands) and 25% from other non-EU countries (e.g. Ukraine, Egypt, Nigeria, Jordan, China, UK, Congo).

Now that the University is reaching its 10th year of operation and it has achieved its goal to be established in Cyprus as a Higher Education Institution offering high quality of learning and student experience, more intense efforts are planned so as to expand recruitment efforts at the international level (as part of the implementation of its internationalisation strategy). As a first step, a new UCLan Cyprus Head of Recruitment was recently appointed with a lot of experience in the international market and a new UCLan UK International Recruitment team was appointed to specifically focus on international recruitment for UCLan Cyprus. Additionally, given the recent Brexit implications, all indicators suggest that during the post Brexit era, international students will face higher tuition fees and living expenses in the UK, thus making UCLan Cyprus an ideal choice to also receive a UK degree, given the UCLan Cyprus offering of a double awarded degree (UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK), at a significantly lower cost.

“The one year industry program offered had no participation so far, and the department may investigate whether the design of the offered industry program and its promotion are adequate”

Please see our response in Section 1, page 5.

“there are few female students and there seems to be no structured and long-term plan for turning this around....”

The low recruitment of female students in engineering degrees is indeed an international issue, which is highlighted in several international reports. The programme team and the School are well aware of this challenge and are currently pursuing different activities to improve this. One measure we have been utilising and will continue to do so, is to promote current academic staff members as role models. The programme’s resident faculty team has a good gender balance (6 women, 6 men), allowing for further opportunities to recruit women to the programme. We will also continue to run relevant actions that aim at promoting gender balance in the programme, such as the involvement of female academics as active members of women associations in Technology/Engineering-related professions, and the organisation of engineering events targeting female and male students in secondary schools in Cyprus. Demonstrating the commitment of the School, in September 2022, the School will be hosting the ACM womENCourage international Conference. This is the first time the conference will be hosted in Cyprus and the theme for this year’s conference will be STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education. Open to all genders, ACM womENCourage aims to connect women from diverse technical disciplines and encourage them to pursue their education and profession in the STEM fields. Moreover, in an effort to enhance its efforts, the programme team is planning to collaborate with the Association of Electrical Engineers in Cyprus for the delivery of informative speeches in local schools about Electrical Engineering and the opportunities that this involves for both males and females. Overall, the programme team will pursue further events to rectify the misconception that electrical and electronics engineering can only be a hardware hands-on profession that cannot be attractive to females.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The evaluation committee supports that the facilities, learning resources and student support services, as presented by the director of the program and showed in the virtual tour, are of high level. This was confirmed from both students and staff members during the face-to-face evaluation. This is very critical, since it allowed the smooth and efficient teaching, especially during the pandemic. There are 2 Engineering Labs, 4 Computing Labs, 1 Cisco Networking Lab for networking experiments and the very useful InSPIRE Research Centre. Also, there are desktop computers equipped with all the necessary software and simulators (e.g. MATLAB, Simulink etc.)

In the meeting with the students, they confirmed that there are several welfare policies and mechanisms, which ensure that all students receive support, adapted to their individual needs. Students commended on the excellent working relationship with the staff. Also, it is very important that the students may work on their university projects or any other externally funded projects.

Finally, it should be noted that there are support services and processes for students with special needs, by engaging the counseling center to satisfy specific requests.

Strengths

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

Students with physical disabilities are taken special care from the university and the department.

Online teaching is fully supported through specific platforms (e.g. zoom, e-Learning).

State-of-art methods and computer-assisted analysis are used for students' learning activities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

A 5-years plan for refreshment of the teaching Labs' facilities is needed, due to the dramatic change of the technology in the last years. The new facilities should include modern methods of lab education as virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, etc. Also, this plan should consider a significant increase in the number of the students. The current number of students is too low, and this compromises the long-term sustainability of this program. The evaluation committee recommends the development of an action plan to help increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next years.

The department should ensure that the offered free of charge software packages should be available to all students for their courses, homework, etc.

The department should find a way to provide free access to the students to IEEE Xplore. This is the most important database for electrical and electronics engineering.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

“...A 5-years plan for refreshment of the teaching Labs’ facilities is needed, due to the dramatic change of the technology in the last years. The new facilities should include modern methods of lab education as virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, etc. Also, this plan should consider a significant increase in the number of the students.”

Given that the programme was established in 2015 and the majority of the existing laboratory equipment was purchased between 2015 and 2019, the existing lab equipment reflects the latest technologies in the industry. Since its establishment, the programme had a specific development budget allocated for every year, for the purchase of new resources for its laboratories. Aligned with the suggestion of the EEC, the effort of the programme team was focused in purchasing state-of-the-art equipment, which could facilitate modern methods of delivery like online/blended learning. One example of this approach involves the purchase of LVSIM-EMS, which is a simulation software that replicates the FESTO Electromechanical Training System, enabling students to perform actual experiments using virtual equipment for their Electrical Power-related modules. Also, the programme team has purchased various software licenses for research-specific simulators like PSIM for renewable and power electronics and Wireless Insite for Telecommunication Modules. Every year a significant amount of the budget is spent on purchasing modern hardware like networking equipment supporting the most recent standards and specialised equipment like Spectrum Analysers and Vector Network analysers. The School remains committed to this plan for the next 5 years to continue refresh/update the laboratory equipment and software. Given an increase in the number of students, the School already has in its plans the purchase of additional equipment to support more students within the maximum capacity of the labs. Of course, given that the resource budget planning is an annual School process, additional requirements that arise can be included in each year’s budget.

“...The evaluation committee recommends the development of an action plan to help increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next years...”

Please see our response in Section 4, page 18.

“The department should ensure that the offered free of charge software packages should be available to all students for their courses, homework, etc.”

The department already offers several software packages to students for free. These include:

- Microsoft Office 365 Pro Plus
- Full MATLAB license with all its toolboxes
- Full Simulink license with all its toolboxes
- Powerworld Simulator
- MBed Development Tools
- LVSIM-EMS can be accessed remotely from home
- Keil uVision 5
- Quartus Prime (includes Nios II EDS)
- ModelSim-Intel FPGA Edition
- Adobe Suites

Through Citrix Workspace, various other software-packages are made available to students like:



- SPSS Statistics
- Microsoft Project
- Microsoft Visio
- NVivo
- Simapro

“The department should find a way to provide free access to the students to IEEE Xplore. This is the most important database for electrical and electronics engineering.”

Full IEEE access is already provided for free to students through OpenAthens. In fact, students have free access to many other engineering journals/publishers through the University’s library services. Some examples are:

- IEEEExplore
- Springer Link
- Elsevier
- ACM Digital Library
- EBSCOhost
- ProQuest
- DOAJ
- Oxford University Press
- Emerald
- Wiley
- Nexis



6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC REPORT

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC evaluated the BEng program of Electrical and Electronic Engineering offered by the School of Sciences at UCLan Cyprus. The EEC members have been provided with the detailed accreditation report and also a remote site visit which offered the EEC to have direct discussions with the staff and the students in the School. Based on these provided information, the EEC concludes that the program being evaluated have high standards and meet the quality expectations. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented situation, and the EEC is particularly impressed by the efforts of the School to provide proper and fast efforts to adjust the teaching and support students. In particular, blended teaching was carried out, where online lectures were combined with offline activities. Students enrolled in the programme confirmed that they appreciate the interactive online lectures and the extra help from the School. Overall, the EEC is convinced that the program has been delivered at an international standard, and the School offers an excellent learning environment for students.

There are a few areas of improvements which have been identified by the EEC, as listed in the following.

1. Investigate the need to include the industrial placement year, and carry out proactive activities to get more students to be involved in this placement.
2. More effective communication mechanisms between the students and the School should be introduced.
3. The School needs to take actions to further increase the scientific output and impact of its staff.
4. The school also needs to build a more concrete plan for improving admission and increasing the number of the enrolled students.
5. A long-term plan for the improvement of facility will be also useful, particularly for the case, where the number of students is increasing significantly in the future.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We would like to once more thank the EEC members for all the constructive feedback provided during the evaluation visit and included within this report. The BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering team is committed to continue all the best practices identified by the EEC and capitalise on the recommendations for improvement to strengthen the programme and its market appeal. All the EEC's recommendations have been addressed in the previous sections.

The School and the programme team remain committed to their vision and mission, especially in sustaining and enhancing their research environment and output.

Regarding the specific areas of improvement summarised in the concluding remarks of this EEC report and in summary of the comments provided in the main body of this report, the programme team of the BEng (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering is responding as follows:

1. We agree with the recommendation, and we will enhance this process in order to further promote the practical year, including the establishment of more partnerships with the Industry to offer more and attractive options to the students. We strongly believe that this is a key advantage of the programme and we are committed to put all the needed effort to make it attractive to students.

2. As pointed out in our response in Section 2, the School currently runs the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings formally twice a year; however, informal meetings take place more frequently between the module tutors, the programme coordinator, and the students (or their representatives). These together with the Course Representative scheme ensure a quick and effective bidirectional communication between staff and students. Of course the School and the programme team remain committed in maintaining and improving these communication mechanisms.
3. This is a very-well received comment from the EEC. According to their workload model, all members of staff should be spending at least 40% of their time in carrying out research and Innovation activities. Summarising our response from Section 3, we consider that despite the young age of the programme, academics are highly research active, with an excellent research output (in terms of quality publications and citations) and they have managed to secure external research funding for approximately 2+M for UCLan Cyprus share (total project funding amount of about 5.5M), with all the projects being in collaboration with international research partners (see Section 3 for more details). Nevertheless, acknowledging that there is always room for improvement, the School is continuously implementing actions to ensure enhancement of its research output by enabling its staff to undertake high quality research activities.
4. As pointed out in our response in Section 4, the initial UCLan Cyprus strategic development plan was to first be established locally and then launch an international recruitment campaign to attract international students. Now that the University is reaching its 10th year of operation and it has achieved its goal to be established in Cyprus as a Higher Education Institution offering high quality of learning and student experience, more intense efforts are planned so as to expand recruitment efforts at the international level (as part of the implementation of its internationalisation strategy).
5. The programme team agrees with the EEC that the refreshment/updating of Engineering teaching resources should be an on-going process as the discipline and technology evolve rapidly. A budget is allocated every year to purchase new state-of-the-art resources (hardware and software), which could facilitate modern methods of delivery like online/blended learning. Examples of these are included in our response in Section 5). Given an increase in the number of students, the School will proceed with the purchase of additional equipment to ensure availability of equipment for all students.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Assoc. Prof. Nearchos Paspallis	Deputy Head of School of Sciences Member of School of Sciences Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	
Assoc. Prof. Marios Raspopoulos	Course Leader of BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering programme	
Dr Cosmina Theodoulou	Chair, University Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	

Date: 11th April 2022

