

# Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo

- **Town:** Paphos

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

## **In Greek:**

Βιομηχανική Μηχανική ((4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 244 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BS))

## **In English:**

Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering (4 academic years, 244 ECTS, Bachelor(BS))

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme'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 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 300.1.1/1 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. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in \*.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

## 1. Study programme and study programme’s design and development

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

The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of four sub-areas.

**The university underlines the findings of the EEC:** *“AUBM enjoys from the organizational procedures and knowledge gained by AUB through decades of successful operations. Processes are robust and transparent. As importantly, there exist the necessary feedback mechanisms to ensure the ongoing monitoring, review, and improvement of the relevant processes.*

**EEC highlighted the strength that:** *“What stands out is the university’s willingness to undergo scrutiny through external stakeholders (e.g., during promotions). Moreover, the university benefits from the fact that it is accredited by the NY education department. This enables AUB to keep abreast of the latest developments in organizational innovations and processes as well as be committed to a process of continuous improvement. The processes of assessment, unit review, faculty evaluation and policies/procedures surveys are carefully aligned with the strategic plan of the programme that reflects the university’s strategic mission. (This is secured through the Strategic VITA).”*

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>There has not been any problem spotted.</p> <p>The EEC would only encourage colleagues to 1) check whether they can be more flexible in terms of admissions criteria (by giving more entry options besides SATs), and 2) ensure compatibility with the local regulations in terms of professional recognitions conferred with the award of the BSc degree.</p>	<p>Thank you for the excellent and candid feedback.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The admissions team of AUB Mediterraneo is exploring alternatives to SAT that are common in Cyprus and Europe such as the British-based AS exam. In principle, either the SAT scores would be required or the International AS-level qualifications. The acceptance decision will then be made on the AS-level grades and the high school grades.</li> <li>2) We have benchmarked against local engineering programs in Cyprus when designing our IE program. As such, we are confident that we meet the study requirements that allow graduates to become professional engineers in Cyprus. Once the program is up and running, we will get in-touch with the Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK), the umbrella organization for Cypriot engineers, to get our program listed and address any missing requirement to meet this objective.</li> </ol>	

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

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of the three sub-areas.

**The university underlines the findings of the EEC:** *“The EEC is happy with the way in which teaching and teaching-related activities such as assessment are conducted. We could ensure that teaching is highly student-centered and that the processes and activities surrounding the delivery of the educational mission are consistent with international practices.”*

**EEC highlighted the strength as:**

- What stands out in terms of innovative practices is the particularly balanced curriculum between engineering and management courses that is complemented with the more holistic academic experience secured via the application of the US liberal arts model of study.
- The students are also supported by individual tutors/mentors that are both academics as well as MSc students that help with day-to-day educational activities. This apparently helps improve student experience and strengthen the ties amongst students.
- The students enjoy a varied mix of teaching activities – gaining a fine blend of academic and practical insights.

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>After extensive discussions with staff, students, and the study of the relevant material the EEC was in the pleasant position to confirm that the educational model is sound.</p> <p>Colleagues in charge of the Paphos campus are encouraged to ensure that students feel members of the AUB community, via common events and/or exchanges with the Beirut campus (this was deemed important due to the fact that during the first years the student population in the Paphos campus is expected to be rather low).</p>	<p>Thank you very much for validating the soundness our educational model.</p> <p>You make an excellent point about ties with the mother campus in Lebanon. The constituents of AUB Mediterraneo are keen on having strong ties at all levels with the mother institution. Collaboration will include students exchange, faculty exchange, joint research projects, and joint events. We also plan to encourage AUB Mediterraneo students to participate remotely in career development and research events that will take place in AUB Lebanon.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of three sub-areas.

**The university underlines the findings of the EEC:** *“The evaluation has identified several strengths and areas for improvement. The strengths of the program are primarily centered around the quality of the faculty members. The faculty is composed of highly qualified individuals, with almost all members holding PhDs in fields related to their teaching domain from reputable universities mainly in the US. The faculty also has a strong research background, as evidenced by their publication record, which fully aligns with the program's domain. Furthermore, the program places a strong emphasis on research, and faculty members are encouraged to engage in active research while fulfilling their teaching duties.*

*Another strength of the program is the faculty evaluation process, which is comprehensive and includes provisions for academic development, annual evaluation, promotion and tenure, post-tenure review, and incentives for exceptional teaching. This evaluation process ensures that the faculty members are continually improving their skills and contributing to the overall success of the program.*

*The program also has provisions for the recruitment of new teaching staff after the program has reached a "steady state." The recruitment process is well-defined, and the selection is initiated by the department chair, then goes through the Dean, the Faculty Advisory Committee, and the Provost (Rector) or the Board of Deans, depending on the rank of the new position.*

*The teaching load for the faculty is another strength of the program. It is deemed appropriate, with no faculty member teaching more than four courses, while most teach one course. This teaching load allows faculty members to give their best to students and ensures that the students receive quality education.”*

EEC commented that “However, the program does have areas for improvement. Firstly, the program lacks diversity among the faculty. Almost all of the faculty members are from AUB Lebanon, and there are currently no teaching staff involved from higher education institutions from Cyprus or some other European country. This lack of diversity in the faculty may result in a limited perspective, which could limit the overall quality of the program. Nonetheless, the program has already begun taking actions to attract and hire such faculty members, which is an indication that it recognizes the need for a diverse faculty to enrich the student experience.”

#### **Institution’s Response:**

At the start-up phase, and to ensure the same quality is offered at AUB Mediterraneo as that of AUB, tapping into the existing professors at AUB is appropriate. Future academic job advertisement will be posted on international websites and will target Europe (e.g. Chronicle of higher education, INFORMS, and IISE). This is along with the plan to hire local and European part-timers, visiting professors, and adjunct faculty which increases the level of diversity in the department and its excellence.

Once AUB Mediterraneo is granted the official license to operate in Cyprus, recruiting locals and Europeans will be much easier, especially that the license will give assurance to the potential recruits that the university will definitely commence operations in the fall of 2023-24 and they can seriously consider an offer from it.

#### **EEC listed the university strengths below:**

Almost all full-time teaching faculty have PhD's in fields related to their teaching domain from well-established universities mainly in the US.

- The research experience of the faculty as it is demonstrated from their publication record fully complies and supports the domain of the program.
- Emphasis is given for the faculty to engage in active research along with their teaching duties.
- There are provisions for the recruitment of new teaching staff after the program has reached a "steady state" where international candidates will be considered. The procedure for the recruitment is well defined and is initiated by the department chair and goes through the Dean, the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Provost (Rector) or the Board of Deans depending on the rank of the new position.
- There is a strong focus on the academic development and continuous feedback of the faculty which includes annual evaluation, promotion and tenure as well as post-tenure review. There are also provisions for travel grants for one conference per year and incentives such as Teaching Excellence Award for recognizing exceptional teaching faculty.
- The teaching load for the faculty is deemed appropriate with no faculty member teaching more than four courses while most teach one course.

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>-Currently in this initial phase of the newly formed department there are no teaching staff involved from higher education institutions from Cyprus or some other European country. However, there are already actions to attract and hire such faculty.</p> <p>- Almost all faculty will come from the AUB Lebanon with no previous positions in other universities. This decreases the degree of diversification for the program.</p>	<p>An initial course offering plan has been delineated to cover the needs of the first two years of operations. That plan revealed the need for instructors that can teach general engineering and management topics, especially at the graduate level. This need will be met by 1) attempting to locally recruit part-time instructors, possibly from engineering and management professionals that hold a graduate engineering degree and have substantial experience of work in industry/academia, and 2) attempting to attract visiting professors from Cyprus and Europe. In addition, we will solicit adjunct professors from local and European universities. We have started discussions on this with our research collaborators in Europe.</p> <p>Once AUB Mediterraneo is granted the official license to operate in Cyprus, recruiting locals and Europeans will be much easier, especially that the license will give assurance to the potential recruits that the university will definitely commence operations in the fall of 2023-24 and they can seriously consider an offer from</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all four sub-areas.

**The university underlines the findings of the EEC:** *“Student admission criteria are clear and transparent. There are defined rules for recognising previous qualifications from other institutions for transfer students. The students receive a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering that is in line with European and international standards.*

*The institution defines educational objectives and learning outcomes that are clearly supported by the curriculum.”*

**EEC listed the university strengths below:**

- In the summer of the third year the students undertake an internship that is approved by the department. This offers them a valuable experience that makes this degree stand out.

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>A recommendation would be to consider alternative entry requirements to the SAT1 such as AS exams or other exams that would attract students from local public Greek schools. This would increase the pool of applicants and offer a stronger and more diverse cohort of students.</p>	<p>The admissions team of AUB Mediterraneo is exploring alternatives to SAT that are common in Cyprus and Europe such as the British-based AS exam. In principle, either the SAT scores would be required or the International AS-level qualifications. The acceptance decision will then be made on the AS-level grades and the high school grades.</p> <p>In addition, with the hope of establishing more acceptance for SAT in the future, the admissions and marketing team have identified third-party companies that can help students prepare for SAT.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>A bit more clarity for details of student progression rules would be helpful.</p>	<p>We understand that our student progression and promotion rules may be difficult to follow especially for new undergraduate students. To alleviate this, easy-to-follow flowcharts will be developed and posted on the department’s website that will illustrate the study plan, the main study milestones, the student advancement rules, and the graduation requirements. Moreover, weekly advising hours will be provided for students to guide them through the program requirements.</p>	



## 5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

The university is appreciative for the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and is very pleased with the “**Compliant**” rating of all four sub-areas.

**The university underlines the findings of the EEC:** *“The evaluation of the program of study has identified several strengths and areas for improvement related to learning resources and student support. The program benefits from a large volume of electronic resources for the library, which are already available due to the existing technological infrastructure of AUB Lebanon. Additionally, appropriate building facilities have been allocated for the new program, with completion expected by August 2023. Backup facilities have also been arranged in case of any building delays. The department has classrooms and computer laboratories to satisfy the needs for teaching, and there are provisions made with the municipality of Paphos for extra lots given for expansion.*

*The program offers well-designed student support and counselling, with a university psychologist as well as a career office for assisting students. The administrative staff for the program will come from AUB Lebanon and have experience in dealing with the special circumstances that concern international students. Furthermore, the program offers student exchange programs with AUB Lebanon as well as European universities through ERASMUS.*

*There is an area for improvement regarding the library building itself, which is considered to be small, and the need to provide enough reading and studying spaces for students. Overall, the program has several strengths in terms of learning resources and student support, but some improvements are needed to ensure the adequate provision of study spaces for students.”*

### EEC also noted the strengths below:

- There is a large volume of electronic resources for the library and technological infrastructure already in place for the AUB Lebanon which will also be available for the new program.
- The department has appropriate building facilities allocated. They are currently being completed with a deadline of August 2023.
- Backup facilities in place in case of any building delays.
- There are classrooms and computer laboratories to satisfy the needs for teaching.
- There are provisions made with the municipality of Paphos for extra lots given for expansion.
- Well-designed student support and counselling with a university psychologist as well as a career office for assisting students.
- The administrative staff will come from AUB Lebanon with experience in dealing with the special circumstances that concern international students.
- Student exchange programs with the AUB Lebanon as well as European Universities (i.e. ERASMUS)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Although the electronic resources of the library are excellent, the library building itself is very small and provisions should be made to have enough reading and studying spaces for students.	In addition to the online library, the current facility of AUBM includes a small physical library but the facility has a large multipurpose room that can easily be used as a library extension and quiet studying space. In the new facility that AUBM intends to move to in academic year 2024-25, there exists a dedicated large-enough physical library for students. Kindly find attached the file called “07.14.690.004_Annx4- Library.pdf” that presents the schematic design.	Choose an item.

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**6. Additional for doctoral programmes**

*(ALL ESG)*

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA	NA	Choose an item.

**7. Eligibility (Joint programme)**  
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA`	NA	Choose an item.

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC can confirm that the BSc Industrial Engineering is compliant on all fronts. The programme complies with the EFQ framework and aligns with standard international practice of HEIs in the US and the EU. This undergraduate degree draws from the strengths of a particularly successful degree in the mother-campus and has made the right adjustments to make a good fit with the institutional context of Cyprus. Student projections are reasonable, and the financial planning is robust. Last but not least, the BSc programme is well-aligned with the university's mission to service the local community and we trust that it can deliver value to the society as well as the economy.

**Institution's Response:** The American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their time and effort in this thoughtful review. The university welcomes the EEC's suggested areas for improvements in its Evaluation Report that aim for the assurance of continuous improvement.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
		Choose an item.

### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>	
<b>Wassim El Hajj</b>	Rector		
<b>Bacel Maddah</b>	Department Head		
<b>Boushra Rahal</b>	Quality Assurance and Institutional Improvement		
<b>Rania Hussein</b>	Strategy and Risk		

**Date:** February 27, 2023

