Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 07/07/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Nicosia (Branch Athens, Greece)

- **Town: Athens, Greece**

- **School/Faculty: School of Sciences and Engineering**

- **Department: Computer Science**

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

In Greek:
Πληροφορική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc))
In English:
 Computer Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc))

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

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 2nd 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.*

0. Introduction

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and thorough work during the on-site evaluation of the BSc in Computer Science programme (Athens, GR campus) on May 29, 2025. We would also like to express our appreciation for the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted their evaluation.

During the visit, the EEC met the faculty supporting the programme, and had separate meetings with students and alumni of the programme from the Nicosia campus, as well as external stakeholders that are members of the Department of Computer Science Advisory Board.

We would like to also thank the EEC for their very positive evaluation where 13 out of 16 quality indicators received the top rating of "Compliant" (amongst the choices of compliant, partially compliant, non-compliant) and only 3 indicators received the rating of "Partially-Compliant".

More specifically, the EEC states, amongst other:

- "The graduates from the Degree are well regarded by industrial stakeholders who host them as interns and employ them after graduation."

- "The students reflect positively on receiving timely grading and feedback on their work."

- "The students reflect positively on availability of education staff for face-to-face meetings."

- "The students reflect positively on possibilities to do internships with industry."

- "The currently identified UNIC-Athens faculty members are active researchers in their fields. They conduct application-inspired research aiming to make societal impact. They contribute to Open Science, e.g., by publishing open datasets that can foster research development on societally important topics notably, in healthcare."

- "There are indicators of a very good faculty–student engagement within the Department."

- "There are indicators of a very good engagement between Alumni and the Department."

We do appreciate the committee's recommendations for improvement, which will enhance the quality of our program and we will be addressing those in the corresponding section of this response. Since the Nicosia campus's BSc in Computer Science is currently in the process of being re-accredited, the EEC's feedback will be considered for both the Nicosia and the Athens campus' programme, in accordance with the Greek

legislation for private universities, which state that a programme offered in Greece must mirror the programme at the home institution.

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The BSc in Computer Science has been offered since 2007 with a mature syllabus based on the IEEE/ACM guidelines."

- "Processes are in place for the design, approval and monitoring of the delivery of courses."

- "The Department has a well-developed delivery mechanisms including the Moodle Learning Management System."

- "The Department has mechanisms in place for seeking advice on a need-to basis from external stakeholders from industry on trends and priorities for new courses."

- "A mechanism is in place to act promptly on students' anonymous feedback to improve all aspects of course delivery."

- "The graduates from the Degree are well regarded by industrial stakeholders who host them as interns and employ them after graduation."

- "The students on the Degree feel well prepared for the employment in the IT industry."

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1.1 "The material taught in the compulsory courses in the BSc in Computer Science degree need urgent revision and update to reflect the rapid changes in the field"	We completed a curriculum refresh. Course syllabi were checked and updated, as necessary, by: - making adjustments for new technological developments, and - verifying that learning outcomes reflect EQF-6 descriptors of mastery, innovation, and the ability to solve complex, unpredictable problems. The updated course outlines are attached with this response.	Choose level of compliance:
1.2 "The department should undertake a root-and-branch review of the requirements for mathematics, statistics and logic in the courses taught in later years of the degree programme and create a syllabus for a foundational course on "Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic for Computation"	MATH-101 Discrete Mathematics, the first mathematics course that students take, has been replaced by MATH-111 Mathematics and Logic for Computing. The new course will be scheduled in Semester 1 of studies. The new course outline has been included along with the other outlines.	Choose level of compliance:

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1.3 "The currently available course descriptions need major revision. - The EEC strongly recommends to calibrate the amount of ECTS that a course grants, with the covered content, format, mode of study, and objectives/ outcomes and more broadly the student work-hours expected — and to revise the course descriptions accordingly. - The EEC recommends keeping in mind that the students are expected to, upon graduation with their BSc, be at EQF-6, that is, are "Demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems" of the different subfields of Computer Science. In revising the course descriptions, the EEC recommends working backwards from the advanced courses and (i) ensuring that these courses have that among learning objectives, and (ii) build up previous courses to provide prerequisites."	In addition to the curriculum refresh actions described in 1.1, we also include in the attached course outlines the expected student workload in accordance with the ECTS framework so that students acknowledge the requirements of each course. The updated course outlines are attached with this response.	
1.4 "The syllabus for algorithms and data structures and principles of programming languages should be taught in an integrated manner to expose students, by the end of the first year, to sound methods in computation, and linked to principles of programming languages in order to appreciate different paradigms – imperative, functional, object-oriented, logic, and their influence on the choice of algorithms and data structures."	COMP-211 Data Structures has been replaced by COMP-221 Advanced Programming and Paradigms which will expose the students to different paradigms and will teach them advanced programming concepts. This course will be scheduled in Semester 3 of studies. COMP-370 Algorithms has been replaced by COMP-270 Data Structures and Algorithms. The revised syllabus covers algorithms and data structures. This course will be scheduled in Semester 4 of studies. The new course outlines are attached.	Choose level of compliance:
1.5 "The EEC recommends that the full policy of quality assurance is made publicly available, not only upon request,	The Quality Assurance policy is in Chapter 5 of the Internal Regulations of the University and is available to all students through the UNIC Portal. Furthermore, the	Choose level of compliance:

but stated openly on the university's website."	link to the policy has been included on our website and is found here: https://www.unic.ac.cy/unic-at-a-glance/quality-assurance/	
1.6 "Machine learning is currently taught as an elective course which is surprising given its growing importance and pervasive influence in the information economy. Principles of machine learning should be taught as a compulsory module by the second year of the degree programme."	COMP-244 Machine Learning and Data Mining I, has changed from elective to compulsory status and will be scheduled in Semester 4 of studies. The amendment is published in the "Major Requirements" section on the Programme Pathway.	Choose level of compliance:

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

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The students reflect positively on receiving timely grading and feedback on their work."

- "The students reflect positively on availability of education staff for face-to-face meetings."

- "The students reflect positively on possibilities to do internships with industry."

We would like to thank the EEC for considering this evaluation topic as fully compliant and note that we have taken into consideration and addressed the additional comments highlighted by the EEC that enable the programme to strengthen its offerings and allow the students to further excel in their studies.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
2.1 "The EEC recommends to improve quality assurance with more regular and formal cycles of course evaluation and improvement, and providing teaching staff with timely pedagogical training for all aspects of course design and execution."	On a yearly basis, the Curriculum Committee for the Computer Science programme, will evaluate every course in collaboration with faculty members and the Department Advisory Board. This review will gauge how well the courses reflect current industry trends and emerging best practices in Computer Science education. The committee's report will then be submitted to the Department Council for approval. Faculty training is coordinated by the Faculty Training and Development Unit of the university (https://www.unic.ac.cy/ftdunit/). The unit organizes every semester the "Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice", a 36-hour professional development seminar which leads to a Certificate in the areas of contemporary teaching methods, new technologies in learning and online education. Additionally, the unit offers other seminars and webinars throughout the year. For example, in the AY 2024-25 a series: "Including Students with Diverse	Choose level of compliance:

	Needs in Higher Education" included 5 webinars: - Teaching students with hearing and vision impairment in Higher Ed. - Teaching students with emotional and behavioral disorders in Higher Ed. - Teaching students with learning and attention difficulties in Higher Ed. - Teaching students with autism spectrum disorder in Higher Ed. - Disability Support Services at UNIC. Also, additional Software and Pedagogical Trainings organized in AY 2024-25 included: - Distance Learning Essentials, Moodle and Webex Training - Effective use of AI: The Accelerate Platform on PowerFlow and My Files - Camtasia by TechSmith (Video Editing Software) - Interactive and Collaborative Tools in Online Courses.	
2.2 "The EEC suggests introducing structurally elements of challenge-based learning (e.g., data challenges, hackathons, case studies e.g. from science or application domains that are focal areas of the department.)." 2.3 The EEC suggests introducing structurally elements of collaborative and peer learning, e.g., code reviews and pair programming, peer evaluation of ML pitfalls from conceptualisation to modelling to evaluation, reproducing results, discussing privacy and ethical issues, etc.	Hackathons, code-retreats, and programming challenges are organized for student participation. Some activities are also embedded in courses like COMP-117 Software Development Essentials and COMP-119 Collaborative Software Development. Collaborative learning is practiced through group projects and peer evaluation activities taken in a number of courses, including COMP-201 Systems Analysis and Design and COMP-401 Software Engineering. Case studies are used in courses such as COMP-242 Data Privacy and Ethics and other. Challenge-based learning approaches are followed in courses such as COMP-263 Human-Computer Interaction, COMP-201 Systems Analysis and Design, COMP-401 Software Engineering	Choose level of compliance:

	and other. Flipped-learning is partially followed in some courses such as COMP-263 Human-Computer Interaction and other. Action taken: In course outlines, the "Learning activities and teaching methods" and the "Assessment Methods" sections, have been updated to include these descriptions.	
2.4 "The EEC recommends establishing a PhD-Teaching Assistant (TA) program that can facilitate closer supervision and mentorship of student groups and individual students."	The University already provides such as program. The description of the PhD-TA program is detailed in Chapter 12.25 of the university regulations. In brief, doctoral students who have completed the University's pedagogical training sessions for TA can apply for a teaching assistantship that covers, among others, student mentorship, coursework grading, and lab assistance and tutorial preparation. TAs are closely supervised by the doctoral student's advisor. TAs are important in both preparing the doctoral student for future academic duties but also for reducing faculty workload.	

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The currently identified UNIC-Athens faculty members are active researchers in their fields. They conduct application-inspired research aiming to make societal impact. They contribute to Open Science, e.g., by publishing open datasets that can foster research development on societally important topics notably, in healthcare."

- "There are indicators of a very good faculty–student engagement within the Department."

- "There are indicators of a very good engagement between Alumni and the Department."

- "Faculty members are well-informed about quality assurance aspects including individual course improvement, and on how to deal with potential misconduct of students."

- "Faculty members are well-informed about the student safety aspects."

- "The Department provides mentorship for new hires, and informs them about expectation for promotion to higher ranks."

- "New hires may apply for, and can obtain, an UNIC Seed-grant."

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
3.1 "The EEC estimates that the current hiring plan introduces a risk in not having sufficient well-qualified staff in place to deliver the programmes at the quality that is expected, and to contribute to evolving the programme as the state-of-the art advances."	The Computer Science Department has already completed the hiring process for 4 faculty members, as specified by the Greek legislation for private universities. Moreover, for the entire first year the loads of the new hirings are considerably low and they completely satisfy the requirements of the department for the first year without requiring adjunct faculty. In addition, another 6 faculty hirings have been approved by the University Senate and with these, the offerings of the programme are satisfied. Nonetheless, if additional needs are identified by the Department, a request will be issued to the Senate. In addition, and in accordance with the CYQAA guidelines and the Greek legislation adjunct faculty will be sought to cover specialized elective courses with industry ties.	Choose level of compliance:
3.2 "The EEC recommends establishing a PhD-Teaching	Discussed in 2.4.	Choose level of compliance:

Assistant (TA) program to boost the development of robust and vibrant ecosystem at UNIC Athens facilitating reduced load, and higher quality research and education, synergy between research and education and industrial collaboration."		
3.3 "The EEC also recommends establishing a programme for Visiting Professors for the same reasons, as well as to foster further help with establishing a more competitive DS course offering and strengthening the curriculum, research strategy and education vision of the department."	We appreciate the suggestion of the EEC for Visiting Professors and we would like to note that the Department already has Visiting Faculty. Professor Yannis Manolopoulos, who is also a Professor Emeritus at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, is currently a Visiting Professor in our Department since October 2024. In addition, Dr. Ivan C. Christov, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University, USA, has also served as a Visiting Faculty for 6 months in 2022 and 2023. Therefore, the Department fully supports the idea of inviting distinguished scholars to broaden collaborations among faculty, extend the research strategy of the Department and strengthen the curriculum. For this reason, we plan on continuing this practice of Visiting Professors, especially in the Athens campus. For thoroughness, we attach chapter 6.2 of the University regulations that outlines in section 6.2.8 the regulations of the Visiting Professor programme.	Choose level of compliance:
3.4 "The EEC suggests providing pedagogical training beyond the current requirement helping existing staff and especially for to-be-hired staff to develop rich portfolio of teaching methods including flipped classrooms, challenged-based learning, and research-inspired education."	Discussed in 2.1	Choose level of compliance:

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

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The requirements for admission to the BSc courses are stated clearly in the publicly available website."

- "The Student Admission support is in place in UNIC-Athens mirroring the well-refined processes established in UNIC-Nicosia."

- "The university has name recognition in Greece with news stories in the media heralding the new UNIC-Athens campus."

- "The well-tested processes for admission have been refined over many years and are being translated to Athens."

- "Given the cultural affinity between the two countries the changes during transfer is minimal."

We would like to thank the EEC for considering this evaluation topic as fully compliant without including any additional comments for improvement.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "Students will have access to a state-of-the-art campus in UNIC-Athens."

- "Recreational facilities have been arranged with the local sports complex with support from the mayor and municipal authorities."

- "Links with the Greek Migration Office have been established for overseas students with visa issues."

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
5.1 On-campus counselling and psychological support provided by KESY at the UNIC Nicosia campus. This support should be translated to UNIC Athens as well.	We completely acknowledge the critical role of mental health in academic success and reiterate from A18 of the program application form, that "UNIC Athens offers personal and psychological counselling through the Department of Student Affairs. Here, students can schedule individual or group sessions aimed at stress management, social adaptation, and personal growth. A full-time school psychologist within the Department of Academic Advising focuses on issues directly affecting academic performance, offering specialised support for students who exhibit learning difficulties or chronic underperformance. These services are evaluated regularly using student feedback and usage data, ensuring that provision remains relevant and responsive to changing needs."	Choose level of compliance:
5.2 As the physical infrastructure is being completed, it is unclear whether the buildings are friendly for students who are physically challenged and visually impaired.	The University is dedicated to the principle of inclusion, ensuring that students with physical, sensory, or learning difficulties can access all resources and fully participate in academic and student life.	Choose level of compliance:

	Some examples from the content provided on the UNIC Athens website: "The University implements awareness campaigns and training to promote inclusion among teaching staff, administrative employees, and students. The University premises include: - Corridors accessible by wheelchair, as well as lifts and ramps in all main facilities. - Designated parking spaces and accessibility routes for people with mobility difficulties. - Special equipment and assistive technology in the library and computer laboratories to support students with visual or hearing impairments. - Disability Support Office, offering personalised assistance, developing facilitation plans, and ensuring timely access to necessary resources."	
5.3 New robots and computers should be part of the teaching resources.	The equipment made available at the Nicosia campus that is embraced to enhance the learning experience will also be made available at the Athens campus.	Choose level of compliance:
5.4 It is unclear whether access to libraries and laboratories will be given out-of-hours and weekend access to students, which will be especially important for part-time students.	We reiterate that student facilities such as the library will be open on weekends. The schedule for the first year will be similar to the Nicosia campus where the library is open Mo-Fri 08.00-20.00 and Sat 09.00-17.00. In addition, through the library website all resources in electronic form can be accessed on a 24/7 basis. Access to the main building is open daily from 08.00-22.00 and on weekends 08.00-20.00. Athens students will also authenticate via OpenAthens to the same 110+ digital collections listed	Choose level of compliance:

	under "Library > Electronic Resources".	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The project of creating a new university branch, and with that extensions of departments and programs, clearly is exciting — and the faculty and admin personnel that the EEC met during the site visit were all enthusiastic about being part of the project, despite the complications, overhead, and disturbances that it will impose on their professional (and, in view of the transitioning / moving personnel for training new colleagues in Athens) and personal lives."

- "The faculty members from the Department at UNIC were committed to accompany and help their future colleagues at the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens to succeed — and the future faculty members at UNIC-Athens that we met were likewise optimistic."

- "In short, the EEC observed, and appreciated, a shared ambition and enthusiasm for this project."

- "The EEC recognises the quality of the educational programmes proposed to be offered at the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, as evidenced by both the student satisfaction, and by the documented employability of graduates from the programmes as presently delivered at UNIC."

- "Overall, the EEC finds that the Department, the faculty members strive to attain high quality in their offerings, are experienced instructors and professors, and are enthusiastic about both the programmes, and being part of the UNIC-Athens adventure."

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
"… the EEC has some hesitations and reservations. Firstly, regarding the people who will commence and be part of this adventure at UNIC-Athens — their quality, enthusiasm, and excellence, are not in question, but we are concerned that their numbers would be inadequate and venture in Athens might be under-resourced." "Although 4–5 faculty members may appear sufficient to deliver the courses required immediately for the first year of the two BSc programmes, it is suboptimal for creating an academic and scientific environment for initiating a	As discussed in 3.1, the Department has already completed the hiring process for 4 faculty members, as specified by the Greek legislation for private universities. Moreover, for the entire first year the loads of the new hirings are considerably low and they completely satisfy the requirements of the department for the first year without requiring adjunct faculty. In addition, another 6 faculty hirings have been approved by the University Senate and with these, the offerings of the programme are satisfied. Nonetheless, if additional needs are identified by the department, a request will be issued to the senate.	

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"research university branch", and for providing a "boutique" and "deluxe" environment for the initial cohorts of students. It also does not allow to absorb incidents (for example, if a faculty member becoming incapacitated in some way) without impact on program quality."	In addition, and in accordance with the CYQAA guidelines and the Greek legislation adjunct faculty will be sought to cover specialized elective courses with industry ties.	
"…, the EEC has found that both of the Bachelors programme of the department are in need of refreshing, to ensure the coherency of each course, the currency of the programmes, and alignment with European standards. Specifically, the EEC finds that the learning objectives in the advanced-level course descriptions do not capture the level of knowledge and skills expected for a programme at EQF Level-6 — and that the course succession leading to, by providing prerequisites for, these advanced-level course is not explicit in the course descriptions. The EEC also find that, according to the course descriptions and the information gathered during the site-visit, a misalignment between the course contents, the student work, and the number of ECTS credits that they contribute. The intuition of the EEC is that part of the solution to these misalignments may be to add additional lab exercises, assignments, and homework (in addition to, not in substitution of, the current contact-hours of the courses) — overseen by the faculty members, but (so as to not increase their workload) monitored/graded by lab assistants / TAs."	As detailed in Section 1, we have corrected every identified misalignment and incorporated all EEC recommendations. The attached outlines for every core and elective course specify learning outcomes, content, weekly schedule, assessment methods, and the expected student workload.	

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Professor Dimitrios Drikakis	Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering	
Professor Athena Stassopoulou	Head of Computer Science Department	
Dr Vasso Stylianou	BSc in Computer Science Program Coordinator	

Date: 07/07/2025