Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 8 March 2022

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: C. D. A. College**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):**

- **Department/ Sector: ICT**

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

  In Greek:

  Τεχνολογία Πληροφορικής και Επικοινωνίας

  In English:

  Information and Communication Technology

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had a preliminary remote meeting on 23.2.2022 to discuss the program evaluation process. On 1.3.2022, the EEC visited virtually C.D.A College, and met faculty members, staff and students remotely with an online video conferencing tool in order to evaluate the 2-year Diploma Program in Information and Communication Technology. The visit was arranged and facilitated by Natasa Kazakaiou, representing the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. Before the online visit, the EEC members were provided with relevant program documents and videos to review. The EEC was presented with detailed information about the college and the program. During the visit the EEC requested and received additional material, including statistics on students and graduates. During the site visit, the EEC met college leadership peers, professors, instructors and administrators. It also met current students from the program under assessment. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the program under evaluation is fully compliant with some standards, partially compliant with some standards, and non compliant with some standards. The present assessment report describes and justifies the above assessment and provides recommendations and suggestions for improving the program under evaluation.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Christina Lioma	Professor	University of Copenhagen
Eleni Mangina	Professor	University College Dublin
Michail Giannakos	Professor	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
George Savva	Student	Cyprus University of Technology
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
    - (a) *sub-areas*
    - (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
    - (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

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.

Strengths

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

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 EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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

Sub-areas

    1.1 Policy for quality assurance
    1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
    1.3 Public information
    1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
    - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
    - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
    - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
    - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
    - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
    - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
    - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
    - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
    - *benefits from external expertise*
    - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
    - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
    - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
    - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*
  - o *qualification awarded*
  - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *pass rates*
  - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

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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 Diploma program under evaluation is subject to quality assurance procedures by the College. These procedures have a formal status, operationalised by an Internal Quality Assurance Committee. This committee has clearly defined tasks and procedures. The Diploma program under evaluation is designed with overall objectives that have explicit learning outcomes. Students have the opportunity to be involved in the design of the program through their representation in the Internal Quality Assurance Committee. Overall, the program is subject to a formal institutional approval process.

The program design reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe. The program is designed so that it enables smooth student progression. The expected student workload is defined in ECTS, however the EEC finds that the curriculum material is too thin for the corresponding ECTS. This point is discussed further down in this section. The program does not exclude placement opportunities, and in fact all of the current students of the program that the EEC met were at the same time fully employed. However, due to local employment laws in Cyprus prohibiting the employment of non-EU students, the program does not currently include placement opportunities as an integral part of the two years.

Successful completion of the program results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated.

The content and the learning outcomes of the ICT Diploma are not in line with the current standards and expectations in the sector. The Programme needs to comply with appropriate quality assurance policies and create courses offered aligned to a level of a Diploma. The program structure and course distribution in semesters are clearly and properly identified with a coherent list of courses, although the course description is not at the required level of depth.

The academic staff teaching the courses have the appropriate qualification, consistently with the program. Their teaching load is consistent with the sector. The courses are taught mostly by staff that are employed on a yearly basis.

The program was developed to meet the expectations of the local employment conditions in Cyprus. Although the current students are in full time employment already, in the future the employability statistics should be comparable with other programmes' employment statistics in the Department or similar programmes in Cyprus.

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

The small class size of this program allows personal interactions between faculty and students, and efficient monitoring of student progress by faculty members. The positive results of this might be reflected in the relatively low dropout rate of students in this program, and the high employment rate of graduates.

The college representatives involved in the design and running of this program expressed their explicit willingness to revise the program according to recommendations by the EEC or other expert stakeholders. This in itself is appreciated.

There is a well balanced mixture of foundational and applied topics in this program.

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.

Currently there is no specific review process of the program, and a strategic plan of development is not clear or publicly available. The program will benefit from a thorough revision and a more focused strategic plan to build upon some strong courses in the curriculum but the synergy with industry, and the involvement of students is necessary.

The role of the courses needs to be more strategic in the context of the program in consideration of the current expectations of employers. For instance, a module dedicated to mobile app development without the provision of both Android and iOS related curriculum will not advance the knowledge of the student intake. Python is introduced, which is an important language that students need for several activities during their studies and for their employability after they graduate. Relevant statistics (e.g., number of applicants, student drop-out rate, examination pass rates, etc.) should be communicated in a systematic manner to all related faculty and staff in order to facilitate ongoing monitoring and improvement of the program. Enhance the quality assurance practices by engaging and receiving feedback from international or local industry experts in the related field, in order to assure that the program is enriched with hot topics in the field. This will also contribute to the attractiveness of the program.

Due to the subject (ICT) and the constant renewal of the needs from the industry, it is important to keep the study program up to date and perform those updates in a reasonable period of time (e.g., from one school year to another and not 2 or 3 years). A large amount of courses is focusing on how to use mainstream digital technologies (e.g., Microsoft products). Such a competence is relevant for an ICT study program, nevertheless this needs to be reduced to a course or two max (since most of these skills are acquired in pre-college education anyway) and allow space for courses

Specifically:

- The course Introduction to Multimedia can go beyond the use of tools such as photoshop and dreamweaver. One can introduce modern multimedia standards and formats, working with HTM5/JS, 2Ds, animations, sampling and quantization and image processing. Flash is outdated.
- Management and Information Systems looks more like a Management of Information Systems course. The scope should be clarified.
- Introduction to Java Programming. The EEC suggests that Introduction to Object Oriented Programming is a better name, and it is fine to use Java. However, more than 4 ECTS should correspond to such an important course. Especially considering that 6 ECTS correspond to MS Office (i.e., Introduction To Computer Applications).
- Visual Programming is block-based programming (e.g., Scratch) not visual basic. So the name needs to be aligned with the content, since the name is misleading. Also, if the employees need skills in visual basic one can keep it, otherwise the EEC advises to update it to something that is more useful in today's IT (e.g., build on the top of previous courses and use JS, Python, Java), to introduce students to more advanced SW skills.
- Internet Technologies & Web Design: Flash is obsolete, HTML5 will work better. Also Introducing frameworks may help students.

Three weaknesses in the composition and operation of the Internal Quality Assurance committee are that: (1) the student member is selected by faculty members according to academic performance, instead of the student member being elected by the student body directly and independently of academic performance; (2) there is no permanent and compulsory representation from external stakeholders, such as industry or technical bodies in the area of the program; (3) information flows into the committee (in the form of meetings minutes, or questionnaire results, for instance), but this information is not wholly aggregated and made directly publicly available. In addition, the EEC has found no evidence of strong initiatives to clearly guard against any form of discrimination or intolerance. There are policies against discrimination and intolerance in place, but it is not clear how seriously they are taken, for the following reason: when the EEC requested statistics on student numbers, split by gender, the college representatives confirmed that they will provide statistics on male and female students. When the EEC pointed out that there should also be a third category with respect to gender, the college representatives found that amusing. They agreed to provide these statistics, but their reaction to non-binary gender identification was not in agreement with the policy of zero tolerance to any form of discrimination and intolerance. Policies should not exist only on paper, they should be implemented.

Regarding specifically the design and regular revision of this program, external stakeholders are not formally and necessarily involved. On the basis of the discussions that the EEC had with college representatives, it seems that external stakeholders can

be involved in the design and/or revision of the program in an ad hoc way. This practice should be amended. The involvement of relevant external stakeholders should be formal, proactive and regular.

It is not clear to what extent the program is periodically reviewed to take into account the student workload and needs. This is motivated by the observation that all five students of the program that the EEC met said that they were enrolled in this program on a full time basis while also being full time employed at the police force. Furthermore, they informed the EEC that all other students of this program in their year are also full time employed at the police force. This program is only offered full time and corresponds to 120 ECTS split over two years. One ECTS corresponds to 27-28 hours of workload for a student. This means that, in a year, students need to work on this program for 60 ECTS, which corresponds to approximately 1650 hours. The total amount of full time work hours in the EU per year is approximately 2000. This clearly shows that a person who is in full time employment cannot possibly dedicate the hours corresponding to the ECTS of this diploma, according to EU labour provisions. This has worked out so far for the current students mainly because of the following two reasons: (1) Even though this program is conventional, not a blended or distance learning program of study, lectures are offered to students in the form of videos that students can watch any time. This mode of teaching was observed by the EEC at a time when there were no restrictions prohibiting physical lectures due to COVID-19. (2) The curriculum of several courses was found to be too light compared to the ECTS of those courses. This practically means that students have a much lighter workload than what they should have, which impacts negatively their learning outcomes. Examples of courses with light curricula:

- The compulsory course "Business English" has a very light curriculum, considering that it is worth 4 ECTS, and also considering the English language qualifications that students must have in order to be admitted to this program.
- The compulsory course "Introduction to Computer Applications" has a very light curriculum, considering that it is worth 6 ECTS. This is a course on how to use MS Windows and MS office (Word, powerpoint, excel, publisher, …). These are very basic skills that are routinely taught by the end of a student's secondary education.

The program should be revised to take into account the student workload and needs. If the target student body is already in employment, the program could be offered on a part-time basis.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Non-compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

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 student-centered learning, teaching and assessment is focused on developing the ability of students for an independent learning of ICT concepts. The T&L process considers different modes of delivery although a variety of pedagogical methods is not provided to facilitate the achievement of planned learning outcomes. The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the students, who have provided positive feedback in terms of the guidance and support from their teacher.

Overall, practical and theoretical sessions are interconnected. The criteria for the method of assessment and for marking are published in advance. The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.

Strengths

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

Assessment is consistent, appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner. There is a mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship and based on the student feedback there is a good practice of communication between staff and students. Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.

There is overall good communication between students and teachers and good communication between the teachers. Lectures are recorded, thus everyone will have access if they miss the lesson or if they forget something.

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 program lacks strong ICT practical and theoretical knowledge and the training in ICT through internships should be emphasized. Formal advisory board for the curriculum review should be in place to provide feedback to update the curriculum to the international standards and inclusion of industry representatives should be mandatory.

Rigorous internal reporting in terms of the pipeline year on year of students graduating. This reporting should include the students progression to industry and academia after the graduation or the advancement of their current career. Teaching methods are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies but the tools and material used need to be updated.

The EEC recommends that the college should purchase more equipment regarding networking.

Overall, the process of teaching and learning does not fully support the students' social development, because the needs of the current students (being full time employed in the police force while also being full time enrolled in this program) are not explicitly taken into account in a structured way. It seems that students are left to their own devices to find the hours to do the work. The student needs should be part of the design of this program.

Teaching staff are willing to offer flexible forms of teaching delivery, for instance alternating theory with practical sessions weekly, or recording videos of lectures and making their telephone numbers available to students who wish to ask questions. However, the EEC found that staff was allowed to begin teaching without any compulsory prerequisites of prior pedagogical training. Seminars are available to the teaching staff, but they are not compulsory. Teaching staff also occasionally receives emails from the college administration with advice on how to improve their teaching. These are all good initiatives in the right direction, but they are not sufficient. A minimum form of basic pedagogical training should be compulsory to all new staff before they begin teaching. There is a need for this. The video lectures that the EEC watched were not engaging and showed no use of pedagogical tools.

Overall, assessment is appropriate, however all grades should be accompanied by written feedback that makes it clear why the specific grade was awarded and that supports the students in learning what their mistakes were and how they could be rectified. This should be standard practice for all courses and all forms of homework or examination.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development
3.2 Teaching staff number and status
3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

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- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

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 college ensures that all teaching staff meet the minimum requirements with respect to their educational level and that they are educated in areas very close to the topics they teach. The procedures regarding promotion take into account the quality of teaching and research activity of the staff. It is not clear to the EEC if they also take into account the development of teaching skills and mobility of the staff.

It is not clear how much, if any at all, of the teaching of this program is done by visiting staff. A significant amount of the teaching is done by staff who have yearly contracts with the college. The number of teaching staff is adequate to support the program. The teaching staff rank is appropriate to offer a quality program of study.

There are 7 teaching staff responsible for delivering the various courses of the study program (6. Academic / Teaching Personnel and their qualifications). All teaching staff have a relevant M.Sc. degree with some of them having a relevant PhD degree as well. According to the information provided to the committee, the number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study, however there is an unbalanced distribution of the courses among the 7 teaching staff (TABLE 3: TEACHING PERSONNEL, COURSES AND TEACHING PERIODS IN THE PROGRAM OF STUDY). With 2 teaching staff (Pavlos Panayi and Demetra Spanou) undertaking a relatively high teaching load, while others seem to be having other duties to cover their working time.

Most of the teaching staff have been in the college for several years and were recruited with appropriate routines.

Students evaluate the educational work and the instructors receive feedback via different routines (via surveys as well as daily interaction and communication).

Research activity is limited, but this is not a requirement for teaching staff in a 2 years diploma study program.

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

The teaching staff of the study program consists of experienced personnel who have been in the college for several years. Although no systematic ongoing training is in place, the teaching staff seem to be engaging with seminars and other activities to maintain and further develop their teaching competence.

Also from the conversation with the teachers, there seems to be genuine interest for the quality and further development of the curriculum, as well as their students.

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.

It is clear that evaluation mechanisms exist and that teachers take into account the feedback from the students. However, it is not clear what procedures are followed for quality improvement, in case the feedback indicates so or there is a room for improvement into the teaching practices.

The college also tries to improve the teaching skills of the teaching staff through activities such as optional seminars and emails with advice, for instance. These efforts are appreciated. As pointed out in the previous section, such efforts should be structured in a more formal way and be made compulsory to new or inexperienced teachers, in order to ensure that no staff begins teaching without a minimum of pedagogical training.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following su-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
> **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2 Student progression**
> **4.3 Student recognition**
> **4.4 Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

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.

Appropriate admission requirements are in place and clearly communicated. The minimum admission requirement is 60% in the general school leaving exams in the Cypriot state educational system, or equivalent for international admissions and minimum 5.5 IELTS for English Language. There are no allowances though for RPL entry. Academic advisors and tutors are available to support and monitor student progression. The grading and degree classification systems are comparable to other national and international Higher Education Institutions. The panel has observed that student progression from year to year in the degree program is appropriately monitored and supported by exams and other means of assessment so that students can move forward in their studies. There are very few female students. The gender gap is a general and important issue to be addressed. A strategy should be designed and implemented to address this. The Department monitors that student performance and wellbeing, and supportive services are in place. The current students are all in full-time employment. Academic advisors and tutors are available to support and monitor student progression.

There are pre-defined regulations regarding the selection and intake of students. The number of students is determined, however, the study program does not recruit as many students as it could.

The study program is a key element in ensuring the progress of the students. The study program clearly defines the number and workload of the various courses, and how they are distributed in the 4 semesters. There are no prerequisites and most of the courses of the study program are defined as mandatory, except one where students can select one of the available optional courses.

The diploma is accompanied by the diploma annex which follows the European and International Regulations.

Strengths

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

There is a low student to teacher ratio, which contributes to a positive atmosphere of trust, focused teaching and room for dialogue and support for students. Students completing the program, advance in their current full time employment role. According to students' feedback during this evaluation process, the panel has observed a high level of satisfaction among students, regarding the program and the support they receive.

The procedures are clearly described, allowing for transparency and planning of course management and resource allocation.

Students provided very positive feedback for the study program, in particular to the support they receive from the teaching staff.

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 panel recommends the development of an action plan to help increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next few years. Some initiatives could be devised to help attract more female applicants. Examples of such initiatives include: 1) using the current/alumni female students and female graduates as "ambassadors" and inviting them to go back to their high school to talk to and inspire high school students, especially females; 2) setting up a gender-balanced focus group of high school and diploma students in order to gain insights into what aspects of computer science and engineering would attract female students and how these should be communicated to them; 3) having a gender-balanced website and external presence of the university in broader activities (Erasmus+), to the extent that this is possible.

To attract larger numbers of students, it may be helpful to review the modules taught with content highly relevant with current ICT market needs, and to actively promote and advertise the positive values and high potential of this program to prospective students and relevant stakeholders.

The EEC recommends establishing a procedure of recognition of prior learning and work experience (e.g., from another institute or working experience) and increasing and diversifying students' intake.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*

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4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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5. **Learning resources and student support** *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

    5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
    5.2 Physical resources
    5.3 Human support resources
    5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

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.

Overall, students receive low-quality theoretical training on all key areas of ICT and it is not shown the advancement of ICT skills and the progression from Secondary level education to the Diploma level. Adequate and modern learning resources and learning management system are available to the students, including the following: facilities, library, infrastructure, student welfare, academic mentoring. Some facilities are fit for purpose to achieve the course learning outcomes with a student-centered approach. There has been infrastructure in place for flexible mode of learning and teaching, although it is advised when the restrictions are lifted to return to 100% face to face mode of delivery.

The capacity of the classrooms and computer labs is quite satisfactory, especially given the small number of students. The technical support provided to students was also adequate to support the study program and students' needs. Although sometimes students' were not fully aware of some services that can be offered (e.g., emails provided).

The educational platform used both for posting teaching materials, recorded lectures (in cases where classes were conducted online due to the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic), and for assigning and delivering assignments, is "Moodle". Moodle is an established solution that offers a complete set of services and successfully covers several educational institutes around the world.

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

The Department uses computer laboratories, designated areas for group and individual work and a library and the teaching and learning resources are accessible even during the time of the pandemic. The Department periodically assesses (every 7 years) the adequacy and suitability of these resources and informs the responsible services of the University for their actions, although the panel feels that this is long overdue. Students appear very satisfied with the programme, the teaching staff, and their interactions with the teaching staff. All regulations supporting student progress and satisfaction monitoring are in place. It is to be commented the involvement of the Department with Erasmus+ mobility and it is advised to encourage student and staff mobility during the course.

The relationship between teachers and students is very good, since as mentioned above, due to the relatively small number of students, teachers place special emphasis on the personal needs of each student, and this results in students having the best performance.

The EEC recognises the following services:

- Students have access to linux server
- Students can get email address from the college
- Studentslaptops can get fixed for no cost

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.

Student welfare mechanisms for monitoring the sufficiency of student support are in place. Nevertheless, it is recommended to introduce an EDI Committee that will strengthen this area, especially with a history of diverse student population and the needs

of mature students that are working full time. Library services are available but it is recommended to review the database sources the department has access to, in terms of the most impactful sources for the ICT sector.

Modules' titles and contents are not consistent with the expectations of the diploma degree offering and it is advised to organize a committee to review the curriculum, module names and depth of content. The panel felt that the review of resources at the labs is not adequately planned and does not ensure the provision of the H/W available if the circumstances change and the number of students increase over the years.

The panel recommends in the future to consider a formal T&L Committee to monitor the T&L processes, curriculum review and resources at all stages taking into account the student and staff feedback with inclusion of an official industry advisory Board and External examiner.

It is recommended to have in place procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, for teaching personnel, to enable personnel to efficiently support the educational process. Based on the review of the online live provision of the lecture that the panel observed, the audio quality should be improved.

The Department needs to establish a process to promote requests for the continuous upgrading and maintenance of laboratories and equipment, and for the unimpeded access of students to the workshops. The students are provided with a departmental email account, but communications are not re-enforced through this email, which should be imposed as the official channel of email communication with the students.

The School should consider a rigorous process of data collection in terms of reviewing the pipeline and year on year alumni of the students. There is an under-representation of female students and actions should be taken in order to change the picture of the course, where the students and the staff can identify themselves within the ICT sector.

The EEC recommends that audio quality should be improved regarding recorded videos. There was too much background noise in some of the recorded lectures.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Partially compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

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- o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o *support for writing research papers*
  - o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

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D. Conclusions and final remarks

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 reviewed and examined the materials provided by C.D.A. College pertaining to its Diploma Program in Information and Communication Technology. The one-day remote (virtual) visit was held on 1.3.2022.

The EEC was presented with detailed information about the program. During the site visit, the EEC met college leadership peers, professors, teachers, administrators and students..

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that some standards are fully met, others are partially met, and others are not met.

The EEC identified the following key strengths:

- The college has the capacity to look after students on the program during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The program enjoys a good staff-student ratio, which means that each student can get satisfactory support.
- Staff expertise is consistent with the program of study.
- There is a well balanced mixture of foundational and applied topics in this program.
- The employability of the students who completed the program is encouraging.
- The program has a very good administrative and managerial structure and support.
- The small size of the college allows for effective informal solutions to operations issues.
- Students of the program are highly satisfied with the quality of learning and teaching resources.

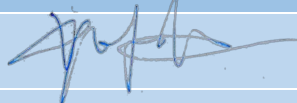The EEC also identified a number of key areas for improvement and therefore, the following recommendations are made:
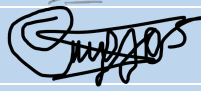
- The policy of quality assurance is overall assessed as partially compliant to the CYQAA defined standards because it does not support in a structured and consistent way the involvement of external stakeholders and because of the questionable implementation of zero discrimination and intolerance policies with respect to gender.

- The design, approval, on-gogin monitoring and review of the programme is assessed as non compliant because: the programme is designed without the structured involvement of external stakeholders, without explicit evidence of having benefited from external expertise; placement opportunities for students are not an intergral part of the program, even though they are appropriate for this diploma; the program curriculum is not up-to-date with the latest knowhow in the area of discipline; the program is not periodically reviewed to take into account student needs with respect to their full time employment while being enrolled in the program fulltime; and external stakeholders are not consistently and structurally involved in the reviewing and revision of the program.

- The process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching is assessed as partially compliant because: the social development of students is not supported by the process of teaching and learning (fulltime students are also fulltime employed); the pedagogical methods used are not diversified with respect to modes of delivery; and the curricula are not uptodate with the latest developments in the area.

- The practical training is assessed as partially compliant because no external stakeholders are structurally and consistently involved in its delivery.

- The teaching and learning resources are assessed as partially compliant because not all of them are adequate for changing circumstances and not all resources are fit for purpose.

- Student support is assessed as partially compliant because student mobility within and across higher education systems is not strongly practically encouraged within the program under evaluation.

- Finally, the EEC recommends that the number and gender balance of admitted students is subject to a targeted strategy aiming to improve it.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Christina Lioma	
Eleni Mangina	*Eleni Mangina*
Michail Giannakos	
George Savva	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 8 March 2022