ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 11/03/2023

External Evaluation Report
(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Cyprus College

- **Town: Limassol**

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

- **Department/ Sector: IT Information Technology**

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

  In Greek:

  Τεχνικός Ηλεκτρονικών Υπολογιστών Και Δικτύων

  (2 έτη πλήρους φοίτησης ή 4 έτη μερικής

  φοίτησης) Δίπλωμα.

  In English:

  Computer and Network Technician (2 years full

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had preparatory meetings on 03.02.2023 and 03.03.2023 to discuss the programme evaluation process that is offered by Cyprus College. On 10.03.2023, the EEC visited Cyprus College's facilities in Limassol in Cyprus and met the administration of the programme, the teaching staff, and students in order to evaluate the Computer and Network Technician (2 academic years, 120 ECTS, Diploma) study programme. The visit was arranged by Natasa Kazakaiou, and during the visit, George Aletraris represented the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. Prior to the site visit, and in a timely manner, the EEC members were provided with relevant programme documents to review. A final meeting to aggregate the EEC members' contributions to this report and to agree on its final form was held on 11.03.2023.
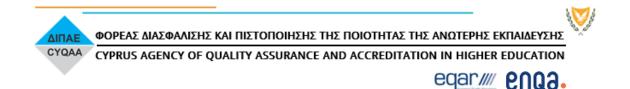
The EEC was presented with detailed information about the institution, the department, and the two-year degree programme. During the visit, the EEC requested and received additional material including statistics, and additional details with respect to the quality assurance procedures. During the site visit, the EEC met Cyprus College's leadership, peers and teachers, and administrators. The EEC also met current students of the programme and had a tour of the laboratories, the Makerspace, the classrooms, and the library of the institution.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the site visit, the EEC concludes that all required standards are fully compliant, with one exception of a standard that is partially met. The present assessment report describes how the standards are met, the small deviation one of the standards, and provides recommendations and suggestions for improving the programme under evaluation.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Michail Giannakos	Professor	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
Ciprian Daniel Neagu	Professor	University of Bradford, UK
Ferran Adelantado Freixer	Associate Professor	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain
Krinos Vasileiou	Student	Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
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.
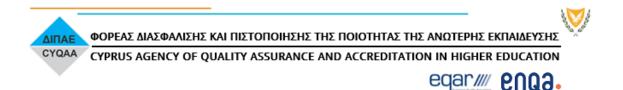
Strengths

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.***

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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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
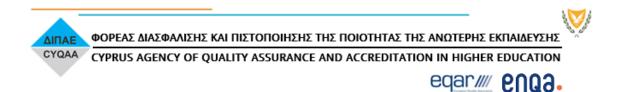

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

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*
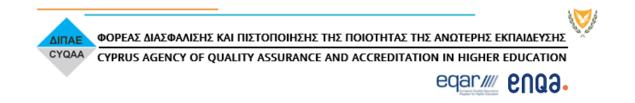
1.4 Information management

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.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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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 College has a new enhanced and comprehensive procedure for the internal evaluation of study programmes. The procedure follows the principles from CYQAA (Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education). In particular, there is an internal quality committee focusing on the continuous improvement of the quality of the programs and the faculty. The committee aims to apply the policy and procedures for ensuring quality at all levels and is responsible for preparing internal reports of the institution which include the systematic data collection from students, administration and faculty so that a clear picture of the institution is formed and also to improve the quality offered. Students' input is collected via a satisfaction survey which takes place every year in which students evaluate the program based on specific criteria. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. Quality assurance mechanisms are present and fairly well aligned with international standards.

Students mentioned that they are aware of both the formal (satisfaction survey) and the informal mechanisms (face to face communication or via emails), and they regularly make use of the informal communication channels to provide feedback to their teachers and the institute. The response rates to the satisfaction survey are relatively high (above 50%), EEC also saw the survey structure and an example course evaluation, both the survey and the course evaluation were in line with the international standards.
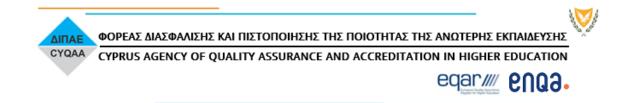
The study programme is weighing its workload, and the workload of the various courses, based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). According to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) the study programme is at level 5 and clearly meets the qualification certification requirements for its graduates. The programme content is relevant and clearly described, focused from the title through the module descriptions. The learning objectives as well as the assessment mechanisms for each course are clearly described and follow students' progress and competence development throughout the programme. Nevertheless, the college follows a flat assessment structure (i.e., the same assessment for every course) with the English language courses as the only exceptions. The assessment needs to be more agile, for instance, the college can differentiate between more practical focused and theory focused courses, this will allow the college to assess learning outcomes more effectively.

The evaluation and monitoring of the programme take place through different indicators such as the graduation rate, pass rate and questionnaires from students. Although we see variations in the dropout rate from year to year, the dropout rate of the programme is along the lines with similar programmes from abroad (20-25%), nevertheless, the college should try to minimize the dropout rate. Although there are some female students, the gender ratio needs to be improved (only 3 fame students at the moment), the college needs to strengthen and diversify its recruitment.

The selection of students is transparent and is based on a predefined set of requirements (high school degree, and Greek language competence if the high school degree is not from a Greek language school). In addition, information regarding the study programme is publicly posted on the college's website.

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

A clear 2 years 120-ECTS programme of study with a focus on students' professional development and a rigid structure of the assessment scheme applied to all courses. The course syllabuses and course outline clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the workload (in ECTS), the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance. The programme includes cutting-edge topics in cyber security, 3d printing, IoT, and cloud information management. Soft skills and problem-solving attitude are included in the learning objectives. There is a QA process and both the teaching staff and students are aware of the procedures. There are appropriate routines for monitoring students' progress, with periodic reviews on the quality of the courses. The administration staff show clear understanding of roles and processes to support applicants while following clearly the legal and organization's standards and regulations.

A solid engagement with local schools (including scholarships) is developed and maintained. This is particularly useful to disseminate the vision of the programme to the local communities. Transfer credits are acknowledged - transfers happen and the process is found adequate. Research-active staff are acknowledged.

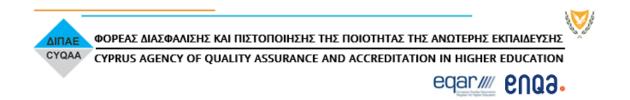## Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

As aforementioned, this is a strong study programme with appropriate QA mechanisms, learning objectives and courses. The EEC did not find any major shortcomings, nevertheless, we propose the following areas of improvement. Our proposals will further improve the robustness of the programme:

- All of the teaching staff employed for this study programme are P/T annual/semester-renewable contracts. This also makes it difficult to ensure proper follow-up of the QA processes and limits career development possibilities, research time, and agency from the teaching staff. Moreover, given the focus of some courses in consultation with the students, and the need to provide feedback to the various assignments, it is unclear how a programme with entirely hourly paid staff manages to deliver those tasks. Given the fact that this is a popular study programme with good enrolment numbers, the EEC recommends that greater effort should be paid to recruiting and supporting teaching staff. It is important to employ some F/T teaching staff but also give additional teaching hours to P/T teaching staff (that go beyond the actual classroom lecturing hours).

- Some of the courses and the course descriptions need to be updated. For example "Introduction to PCs and Applications DCT100" can be "Introduction to Computer Technology" given that some of the content refers to the post-PC era anyway (e.g., IoT). This will also align it with the greek title that is currently having a different meaning from the English one. The instructors names are TBA, and given that Georgios Pallaris is currently the campus director (his name is mentioned as the instructor of 8 courses). It is unclear who is currently teaching those courses (this connects also with the previous point). The teaching methodology section of most courses provides just the structure of delivery – and less information about how these classes will be delivered.

- Teaching staff training, contributions to course revisions, teaching time beyond lecturing (e.g., correcting assignments), particularly as they deliver research-informed teaching, and consultation hours, should be clearly acknowledged in their workload.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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- Some learning objectives could be updated for example to include cloud as a service and remote computer administration, expert in the loop for new technologies currently joining the market – e.g. cloud programming and data farm management or similar.
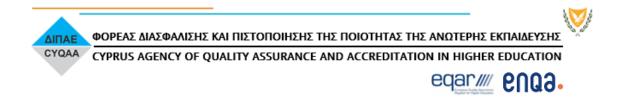
- The college maintains good cooperation with the relevant industries, although most of the students are already working, the college needs to strengthen the industry's participation (e.g., with an optional course for students who don't have the relevant industry experience), this will also help them designing/revising the study programme with industry's input in a regular manner.

- As already mentioned, courses' assessment follow a flat assessment. The EEC recommends that the college could be more detailed and align/appropriate the assessment with the different courses (e.g., exams and coursework may have different weights).

- The plagiarism section (page 19) should include academic misconduct.

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	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	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.*
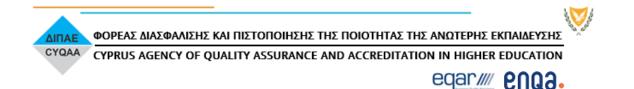
2.2 Practical training

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.*
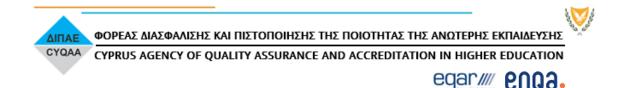
2.3 Student assessment

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.

Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment are all explicitly approached and confirmed to consider the needs, abilities, and interests of students in the current educational process following national and institutional standards and practices.

The processes describes support students' development and includes different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods. and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes. Student-centered learning and teaching is encouraged with projectwork and individual assignments, but at the same time there are courses that require group work. The methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, and in accordance with the international standards.

There is also an appropriate framework for dealing with students' complaints. Moreover, the college implements T&A that takes into consideration the diversity of students and their needs, although the college can add some optional courses to strengthen certain aspects (e.g., industry involvement) and adapt assessment on course's needs, this will enable students' flexible learning paths. Students with special needs are taken care of actively and positively by specialised staff.

Extra-curricular activities of students are acknowledged, supported financially and in kind.

Student-oriented L&T are mentioned in the SWOT analysis. Career Centre is part of the campus services. Same active role is the Alumni Association – that provides a rounded view for current students (and staff). They are already mentioned as Weaknesses in the SWOT analysis.

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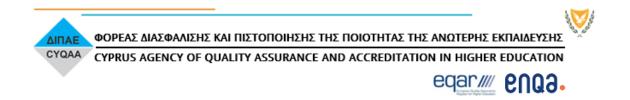*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

Research-informed delivery of L&T is possible given the research-active profile of most academic staff. However this may be a not sustainable feature of the programme of studies if any staff quits with short notice. Updates of modules contents and deliveries are also a critical point depending on P/T staff availability.

There is a clear programme of delivery. The programme and disciplines are capturing and encouraging student-centred delivery and progress mostly at module level; There is one student rep who reports to a formal structure of programme leader and administration

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.

There are no explicit details nor practical approaches, examples, infrastructure or roles to provide evidence of student-centred L&T, but these features are evident from the interviews: academic and administrative staff participate in student communications, interactions and support of academic and extracurricular activities, there is a student rep, and also student feedback in questionnaires and in person is acknowledged by module coordinators and programme leader..

The internship/placement is not provided but is considered just job opportunity. A suggestion to improve the student experience is to open an industry experience internship and a project-based optional course.
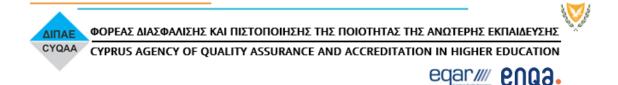
The documentation is very much focused on the structure of formal delivery – more details are needed to encourage and capture real-life initiatives and evidence. Gender balance is an issue acknowledged to be in need of further focus and enhancement. Drop-outs are also acknowledged and currently being researched for any pattern or reason.

Assessment weights in most but two courses are rigid - more flexibility to be adapted to course content and Learning Outcomes would be beneficial.

Industry Advisory Board (with student, alumni and industry contacts participation) input in programme structure and course design is acknowledged as of future strong interest.

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	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	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.*

- *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)?*
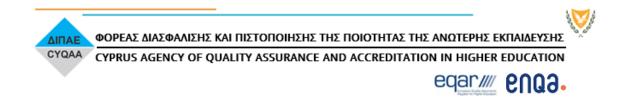
Findings

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.

During the visit to Cyprus College the EEC met the teaching staff of the Computer and Network Technician Programme, which is composed of part-time staff renewed on a semester basis. The number, the profile and the competences of the faculty staff are adequate for the content and the learning objectives of the programme and provide the students with an excellent learning experience. Lecturers show motivation for teaching and professionalism in meeting the required quality standards.

Consultation is considered in the methodology with approximately 0.66 hours of consultation per instruction hour (i.e., 28 hours of consultation per 49 hours of class instruction). In Cyprus College full-time teaching staff schedule office hours for consultation purposes. As for part-time staff, consultation hours are arranged on-demand between student and lecturer.

The recruitment process is clear and fair, with examples of good practices to guarantee adequate learning skills, such as the evaluation of a demo class. Mr. Pallaris presented a brand new 35 hours Faculty Development Programme (FDP) which is to be implemented by the end of the current academic year. This FDP is aimed at honing the teaching skills of the faculty members. However, the plan has not been communicated to the teaching staff yet.

The feedback to the students is both formative and summative, and it is provided through the Blackboard Learn+ platform or, in some cases, on paper. Students have the right to request the review of the exams by an independent evaluator, and there is a mechanism in place to resolve discrepancies between independent evaluations. As a

member of the Galileo Global Education group, the College has access to a wide range of teaching tools (i.e., Blackboard Collaborate, Blackboard Learn+, Moodle, Microsoft 365, etc.) that support the needs of the faculty staff.

The formal and informal communication between the teaching staff and the students is clear and works. Also, the feedback from students is collected through an anonymous survey at the end of the semester. This feedback is analysed in the framework of the Programme Evaluation Review (PER) and is communicated to the lecturers in a face-to-face meeting, along with the improvement actions to be taken. Some members of the faculty staff are also involved in the Programme Evaluation Review with the role of industrial panel experts.

Teaching staff are responsible for the update of the learning resources. In this context, there is a procedure in place to request the required hardware and/or software either through the IT Assistant or through Mr. Pallaris.

The College has set up a challenging plan to encourage research among teaching staff and the subsequent engagement of students.

There exists good communication and coordination between the faculty staff and the administrative department to deal with specific support to students with special educational needs.
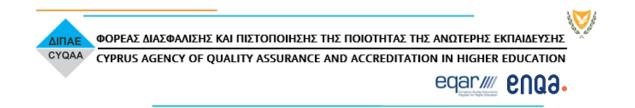
Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Based on the provided documentation and on the visit observations, the EEC summarizes the main strengths of the programme regarding the Teaching Staff Area as follows:
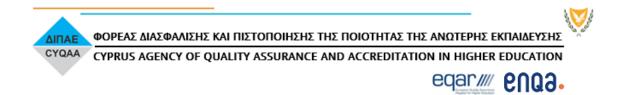
1. The teaching staff is one of the most valuable assets of the programme. Their industry expertise and teaching experience, along with their motivation and commitment with the programme, allow the students to have an excellent learning experience. During the discussions held in the on-site visit, it was evident that their professionalism and competence are able to overcome some institutional weaknesses, such as the limited time to update learning resources or to offer consultation, to guarantee high quality standards. The staff profiles have been shown effective to bridge the gap between the programme and industry, and so to improve the employability of the students.
2. The programme coordinator (Mr. Pallaris) is very competent and in full control of the programme, it is clear that he has contributed a lot on improving the quality of the offerings and the infrastructure (e.g., Makerspace, excellent recruitments from the local industry). Given his new role as a campus director, the college needs to make sure that a competent programme coordinator will take over and continue this momentum.
3. The procedures recently implemented to collect and analyse feedback from students (PER) are well designed. The permanent communication and coordination of the lecturers and the rest of the institutional departments is fluent and presents no gaps.
4. The access to Blackboard Collaborate, Blackboard Learn+, Moodle, Microsoft 365, etc., covers the needs of the teaching staff to perform essential teaching tasks, such as communicating with students, delivering assignments, and uploading relevant teaching materials.

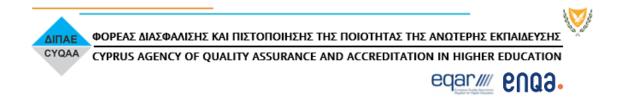## *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

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

1. Although the participation of part-time teaching staff provides the programme with permanent contact with industry and the flexibility to adapt to its needs, the programme has no full-time teaching staff at the moment of the visit. This full/part-time teaching staff structure presents risks against eventual situations such as medical leaves, does not provide the staff with time to deal with all teaching duties (i.e., time for consultation, or time to update teaching resources) and hinders the engagement of the staff with the programme. Given the current number of students, it would be convenient to increase the number of full-time teaching staff and to extend the time for non-instruction hours of the part-time staff (e.g., consultation hours, feedback to students' projectwork). 2. Lab resources are adequate to support the teaching activities of the programme. However, the teaching staff should be further involved in the prioritization of the labs' improvement budget allocation. For instance, the installation of more RAM memory in computers where virtual machines are to be used should be prioritized.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially 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*

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.
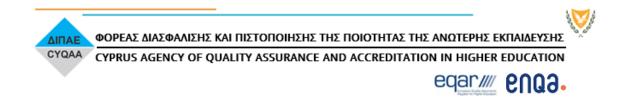
Applicants to the diploma programme are required to have high school certificate and knowledge of Greek language. There are clearly defined regulations about these criteria and the committee has observed to be implemented consistently and transparently. The administrative staff decline requests from students without a high school certificate but also to applicants who are not speakers of the Greek language. In the case of international students, there are very little applicants due to the programme being offered in the Greek language. In such cases they require them to have a Greek language certificate.

The administrative personnel collects and monitors data about how well students perform and they arrange meetings with the programme director and the individual students to examine the reasons for it. They collect data about enrolments and have performance statistics for each course, but also collect statistics about the reasons people apply for this programme.

There are policies on transfer students where they examine the previous academic record of a student and they transfer their credits accordingly. Recognition procedures comply with the standards and the certification given to the students clearly represents the qualification gained from the programme.

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

The institution complies adequately with all the standards and everything is regulated in a clear and transparent way. There is a strong commitment to academic standards, as evidenced by the presence good mechanisms for monitoring student progression and performance. Supportive services, including IT support, library access, and well-equipped labs, are available to facilitate student learning.

The diploma is accompanied with an appendix that follows the European conventions and regulations. The procedures are very well described based on the PER process, allowing transparency and predictability.

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.

There is a very low number of female students, actions and planning has to be taken place in order to attract more females. The international students are also almost non-existent. There are some cases where they accept international students but only if they have attended local high school. The institution should make more effort in attracting more foreign students instead of only focusing on locals.

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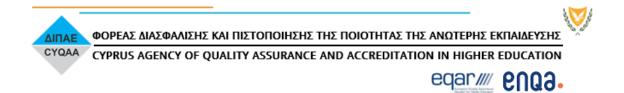CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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.).*

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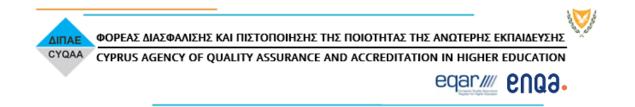
5.4 Student support

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.

Students have been observed to be very happy with the outcome of teaching and learning. The teaching staff is very responsive and willing to engage students in a very friendly but productive environment. The institution uses the Blackboard platform where teachers upload all the material for each class and students can have access to it with their credentials. The platform enables students to also interact with the Teaching Staff and approach them for potential out of class questions or clarifications on the teaching material.

The institution has taken a great initiative to create a makerspace where students can interact and experiment with equipment such as 3D printers, laser engravers, Raspberry Pi's and Arduinos. Even though most of the equipment is not used in the context of in-class learning material - with the exception of the Raspberry Pi's that are used in operating system classes - it is a great opportunity that attracts creativity and productivity in the learning environment of the institution.

The premises and facilities are more than adequate to support the programme, including the library, the labs and also the classrooms. Furthermore, there is provision for students with special needs, who have the freedom to move around the institution's premises using the elevator and the ramps.

The theoretical course material is supported by practical supplements with physical and virtual equipment including routers, switches, lab computers, virtual machines, wires, RJ-45 crimp tools etc. The equipment is fairly adequate and can support the programme's courses but there is some room for improvement.

There are more than enough computers to support the programme and changing circumstances, but some equipment such as Raspberry Pi's is in shortage and this tends to make course objectives turn into group work for students instead of individual hands-on experience with the items.

Moreover, the lab computers have been observed to have limited capabilities in regard to supporting the needs of some courses. There are classes that require students to run virtual machines on these computers and even though students and institution personnel have addressed the issue, no action has been taken for at least 6 years.

The administrative staff makes sure that with each enrollment, students are given all the directions and information regarding their way around the institution and the services available to them. Students are given credentials for the Blackboard system, access to Microsoft Office 365 and an online library where they can find scientific material and books. In the case of students with special needs, the institution makes sure that they get the appropriate support according to their condition and teaching personnel are informed to give them the extra need. There is a clinical psychologist who can provide support to any student that needs it and there are procedures where low performing students are monitored so that they examine each case and respond accordingly.

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

The makerspace is an excellent initiation that gives a more creative environment and learning opportunities for students.

The students are generally very satisfied and happy with the outcome of the programme.

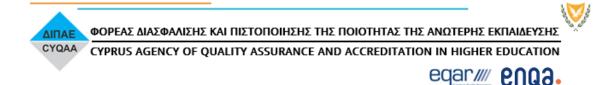### Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The institution has to make more substantial and meaningful financial decisions on providing the essential equipment that supports certain courses and listen to the opinions of students. Even though the laser and 3d printers in the makerspace give a great opportunity for the students, there should be an equal effort on upgrading lab computers so that students can utilize the course material without technical obstacles and limitations (e.g., improving RAMs so VMs operate in a smooth manner).

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	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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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*

- 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.

N/A

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

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 Cyprus College pertaining to its Computer and Network Technician (2 academic years, 120 ECTS, Diploma) study programme. The EEC had a site visit meeting on 10.03.2023 to gather additional information for the programme. The EEC was presented with detailed information about the program, met with university leadership, teachers, administrators, and students, and visited the various laboratories, classrooms, library, makerspace and some common social spaces. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the on-site visit, the EEC concludes that this is an excellent study programme with clear focus, good QA mechanisms, and competent personnel and leadership. All of the standards are met, with one exception of a standard that is partially met.

The EEC identified the following key strengths:

1. The programme content is relevant and clearly described, focused from the title through the module descriptions. The learning objectives as well as the assessment mechanisms for each course are clearly described and follow students' progress and competence development throughout the programme.

2. The study programme is weighing its workload, and the workload of the various courses, based on the ECTS, according to EQF, and clearly meets the qualification certification requirements for its graduates.

3. The College has a new enhanced and comprehensive procedure for the internal evaluation of study programmes (PER procedure), that is in line with the principles from CYQAA and the international standards.

4. Good employability of the students and good reputation and enrolment in Cyprus.

5. The faculty members are competent and capable of integrating theory and practice into their teaching, with most of them having Master's degrees and some of them having Ph.D. degrees.

6. The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The course syllabuses and course outline clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches, and the method of assessing student performance (as also mentioned on point #1).
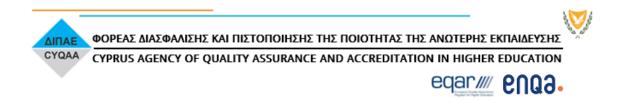
5. There is a very good learner-teacher relationship and based on the student feedback there is a good practice of communication between staff and students.

6. The intended learning goals are assessed through the use of different mechanisms (e.g., assignments, exams and project deliverables).

The EEC also highlights some areas for improvement:

- Strengthening the permanent teaching staff, to allow better continuation and development of the courses, at the same time the college can maintain a percentage of part-time teaching staff.
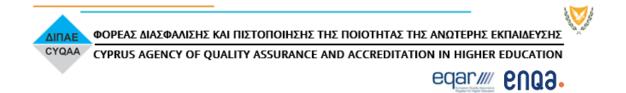
- Give extra workload time to teaching staff for beyond classroom activities (e.g., feedback, consultation, pedagogical training).

- Implement an agile assessment approach, with a focus on the individual needs of each course.

- Strengthen and diversify the recruitment of the programme, currently, the number of applicants is relatively low and there are only males in the programme.

- Minor improvements on some courses (names, content) and updates on some essential equipment (e.g., RAMs in the labs).

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Michail Giannakos	
Ciprian Daniel Neagu	
Ferran Adelantado Freixer	
Krinos Vasileiou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 11/03/2023