

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Electrical and
Computer Engineering
- **Department/ Sector:** Faculty of Engineering
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Μηχανική Υπολογιστών

In English:

Computer Engineering (4 academic years, 241 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The evaluation took place remotely as a result of the COVID pandemic. We met over a two day period (23-24th May). During this time, the four panel members met with University and Faculty leadership teams, academic staff from across the School, with administrative staff as well as representatives from the library and with a broad cross-section of students. We posed a wide range of questions which were answered promptly and in full. Additional clarifications were made in the final wrap-up session and we were also provided with additional statistics where these were not included within the original documentation.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the support provided by the Cyprus Agency of quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University
Prof. Christina Lioma,	Head of the Information Retrieval Lab,	University of Copenhagen
Professor Simon Gay	Professor and Head of Computing Science, Computing Science (Programming Language Foundations), University of Glasgow	University of Glasgow
Mr Ioannis Zapitis,	Member (Professional Body)	Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK)
Mr. George Savva	Member (Student), Computers Engineering and Informatics,	Cyprus University of Technology
Prof. Chris Johnson	Pro Vice Chancellor, Engineering and Physical Sciences (Chair)	Queen's University, Belfast.

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.*

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*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *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*
- *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:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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.

Regarding the standards of quality assurance, the HEI has a policy for quality assurance for this programme of study. This policy is formal and was made available to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC). It is not clear if this policy is publicly available. Overall, this quality assurance policy is supported through appropriate structures, regulations and processes. Teaching staff (who are faculty members) have a primary role in quality assurance. Students are involved by providing feedback to the HEI about the programme, the course delivery, facilities, and so on. Administrative staff supports the quality assurance process. Structures are in place to ensure academic integrity and freedom, and to protect from academic fraud. Structures are in place to guard against intolerance or discrimination. The involvement of external stakeholders is not currently part of the formal quality assurance policy.

Regarding the standards of designing, approving, monitoring and revising the programme, the institutional strategy is in line with the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programme. It is not clear to the EEC to what extent students are involved in the design of the programme, or more generally in the design of a new programme. It is not clear to the EEC to what extent external stakeholders are formally part of the process of designing a new programme. Nevertheless, the HEI has tight links and close collaboration with relevant external stakeholders and benefits from external expertise in that respect. The programme reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe and is designed so that it enables smooth student progression. The content of the exams and assignments corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS. The programme includes placement opportunities and is subject to a formal institutional approval process. The programme results in a qualification for the students that is in accordance with CYQAA standards. The programme is regularly monitored by academic staff to ensure that it is up-to-date, however for a few courses the EEC found the bibliography to be out-of-date. The programme is regularly reviewed and revised by students. It is not clear to the EEC if and how external stakeholders are also included in this reviewing and revision.

Regarding the standards of public information, the following information is clear, accurate, up-to-date and readily accessible: selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching/learning/assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities available. Information about graduate employment is not always up-to-date or readily accessible.

Regarding the standards of information management, the following information is collected, monitored and analysed: key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression throughout the programme, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction, learning resources and student support. Information on the career path of graduates is not collected, monitored and analysed overall, despite efforts by the HEI.

Strengths

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

The HEI is motivated, active and engaged in this programme. The EEC notes their willingness to receive feedback on how to improve.

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 involvement of external stakeholders is not currently part of the formal quality assurance policy. The policy for quality assurance should be modified to support the involvement of external stakeholders in a structured way.

The process of designing this programme, or any new programme, should include students. It is not clear to the EEC if this is the case, formally and in a structured way. Similarly, it is not clear if and how external stakeholders are directly involved in the reviewing and revision of this programme, in a structured way, rather than in an ad hoc way.

The descriptions of the courses of this programme define student workload in terms of the number of hours planned for lectures and labs, but not in terms of the number of hours students should dedicate to preparation, self-study and so on. This should be amended, so that course descriptions define the overall expected student workload.

For a few courses, the bibliography was out-of-date. For example, the programming language course uses textbooks from 2003 and 1990, according to the application material the EEC received. During the visit, the HEI pointed out that the textbooks for this course have been updated, since the HEI submitted the application. The EEC recommends that the HEI makes sure all bibliography for all courses is updated, and that the internal procedures that make sure that the material taught is up-to-date are followed.

Information about graduate employment is not always up-to-date or readily accessible. The HEI is keen on collecting and monitoring this information, but is currently facing difficulties in doing so. The EEC recommends that the HEI intensifies its efforts to collect and monitor this information efficiently. A mixture of traditional methods (emailing or calling graduates) and more recent methods (using LinkedIn or similar social networking platforms) is encouraged.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Partially 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 staff stressed the relatively short history of the University and the Department, however, they have already established a strong track record of educational achievement within their discipline; based on internal and external feedback which has been formalized since the creation of the Quality Assessment agency.

The Department's student-centred focus has been supported by the central Teaching and Learning unit that has "trained the trainers" and has provided material for students on "soft"/transferable skills.

We note the relatively low number of students from outside Cyprus on the BSc programme and some of the potential issues in finding placements/employment, as well as the competition from private Universities in this area.

We also welcome the strong collaboration with other Departments, especially Computing Science in the early years of this programme.

We also welcome the student voice being represented at every level from Senate through the University Council to include the Department Council.

Strengths

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

Students have access to well-equipped labs and appropriate provision has been made both during the pandemic and also during this slight period of uncertainty as everyone waits for the new Faculty of Engineering building to be completed.

The paid industrial placements insure a strong connection with industry - we note that the initial vetting process means that there has not been a need for an academic co-supervisor during this time. However, as numbers grow and the number of external companies increase then this may need to be reviewed.

The process used to review and monitor student marks is a strength - triggering intervention when any individual fails a threshold of courses. In discussion with staff, it seemed that there can be a slight delay in triggering such actions because all marks have to be collated centrally - it may be possible in the future to get a real-time dashboard of student marks so that such interventions can be triggered very early in Semesters 1 and 2 which seem to be where concerns are focussed (see below).

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.

Several of the students we spoke to have mentioned the challenges that they and their class mates faced in the first two semesters. Staff referred to this as a period of "finding their feet". Some particular difficulties stemmed from those students who had been on military service immediately before starting their studies. Although the impact of this transition may be reduced with the possibility of one year of military service rather than two and the ability to do some study with the military, we would strongly urge that the Department consider extra help to ensure that students do not fall behind from the start of their career. It would be very regrettable if students suffered as a direct effect of serving their country in this way.

We welcome the manner in which staff were involved in planning for the new buildings. However, it will be important to ensure that the student voice is heard once they move in - often a number of teething issues can emerge that were not anticipated during the early stages of design and development.

We note that there is no formal process of exam moderation - a point also raised under the MSc/MEng courses. The Department Chair is responsible for noting when a particular course may have a very different distribution of marks than others - this creates the concern that a student's overall GPA might be influenced as much by their choice of low or high scoring modules as to their academic ability.

We also note that there is no formal process for review of exam papers while they are being written, except in the case of adjunct or visiting faculty members. This could take the form of review by other colleagues, or review by an external examiner, or both.

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

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

There are currently 19 permanent full-time faculty members in the department. Some expansion is expected - several positions were being advertised at the time of the visit - with an anticipated increase to at least 25 staff. This is a relatively small department from which to offer a complete degree programme with a good range of optional courses. Typically each academic teaches 3 courses per year. The teaching capacity is supplemented by the use of adjunct and visiting faculty members. It is also possible for students to take optional courses offered by the Department of Computer Science, thus increasing their range of choice.

Strengths

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

Increasing the academic staff to 25 will result in a staff-student ratio of 16, which is good.

All of the permanent academic staff have PhDs, and this is seen as an absolute requirement. In most cases, staff have PhDs from highly reputable international universities. This policy helps to maintain the research base in the department, ensuring that course content and student project topics remain up to date with the current state of the art.

Best practices and ideas for teaching innovation are shared informally among staff in the department, and the university has a centre for teaching which runs activities and seminars on teaching methods.

There is a training programme for new academic 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 plan to increase the academic staff to 25 or more is welcomed, as that will make it much easier to maintain a good range of optional courses. Our assessment of teaching staff number and status as partially compliant indicates the importance we attach to completing the planned increase in staff numbers. It would be worth considering a more systematic approach to sharing ideas and best practices for teaching among the academic staff, for example by organising an annual teaching away-day for the department.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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.

As a public University, the standards at entry are clear and widely publicised. There are some overseas students but the percentage is very small and staff assume that the majority of these students must also have Cypriot residency. During our meetings, staff stressed the importance of interdisciplinary programmes and of continuing education but we did not press them on the implications of these wider routes to entry on qualifications prior to admission.

The focus on developing “well rounded and ethical individuals” is appropriate - some mention was made about the Teaching Centre with regard to “soft skills” courses at postgraduate level, it was less clear how ethics were integrated into the curriculum at Undergraduate level within a course on Electrical and Computer Engineering. These issues are, of course, central to the aim of promoting future courses in AI/ML and robotics/autonomous systems.

Strengths

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

The recognition procedures are very well documented, with strong student representation and participation across all levels of the reporting structure. The Graduate Studies Committee, the Undergraduate Studies Committee, the Committees on Strategic Planning and the QA Committee all reporting into the Departmental Council where students have a strong voice.

Students completing the program receive recognition through the accreditation process by national and international bodies, including the Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK), which is the engineering regulatory body in Cyprus.

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 was unclear if there were any students on the more detailed policy committees below the Council - of course, it is important not to overload students with too many of these responsibilities but it would be equally important to ensure that the Council is not simply approving detailed suggestions made by groups for which there is minimal or no student representation.

Previous sections have described how some staff felt that there were delays before people could get an overview of a student's progress "while all the marks are entered into the system". There are good processes and procedures in place for formative feedback but perhaps the central systems might be augmented by Department infrastructure to provide an early warning if someone is struggling across a number of different courses.

Although the criteria for progression were clear to us, there is a continuing concern that students arriving in the University were not fully prepared for the demands that would be placed on them. It "takes a while for a student to find their feet" especially when they are coming from military service. One proposal might be to assign a group of first years to a second or third year mentor who can explain to them early on what is expected for progression. The students were also concerned that so many of their colleagues had difficulty in the early stages. Conversely, staff mentioned a number of students who seemed to proactively find ways to prolong their studies by retaking courses for better marks even though they could presumably proceed to graduation; while it is important to provide opportunities for resits where they are needed such needless retaking of subjects may not be in their best interests, the best interests of staff or of future generations of students who might otherwise be admitted to places on the degree.



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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Partially compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Partially 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.).*

- *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.

Video tours of the teaching labs were made available to us. The labs are modern, up to date and well equipped. The department has sufficient budget for updating and replacing lab equipment on a regular cycle. Computer labs are open to the students 24/7, but access to the specialised electronic equipment labs has to be supervised. Students who want to do extra work in the equipment labs can usually be accommodated during other scheduled classes. During the pandemic, older pieces of equipment (e.g. the previous generation of oscilloscopes) were made available to students for use at home.

We also had a video tour of the new university library. This is an impressive facility and we understand that use of the library by students has increased 500%. Students have 24/7 access to some study areas, while other services and the main collections operate with shorter hours but still into the evening.

The department is waiting for the completion of the new Engineering building, which will enable further improvements in the teaching and study environment.

The department is happy with the level of administrative and systems support staff and feels that the budget from the university for support staff is sufficient. They note that it can be difficult to retain good support staff, because there is no process for promotion within the same job and therefore staff have to move to other positions within the university in order to advance their careers. This is a common situation in many university environments.

Strengths

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

The committee 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 is strong commitment from the university and faculty to providing a well resourced teaching environment. Moreover there is plenty of equipment (laptops) to cover all the students' needs and not only that but also the lab equipment is the latest on the market.

The committee has observed a high level of satisfaction among students, regarding the program and the support they receive.

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 considerable flexibility in the structure of the degree, allowing students to repeat courses if necessary and prolong their period of study up to 12 semesters. This follows from university structures and policies and is outside the control of the department. We understand that only small numbers of students extend their period of study in this way. Nevertheless, this policy risks diluting the rigour of the degree by allowing students to study less intensively over a longer period.

The evaluation committee recommends periodic review of the program by taking into consideration feedback from academic staff, students, external local industry experts and professional bodies.

We share the hope of the department that the new Engineering building will be available in the near future.

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

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

- *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
- *support for writing research papers*
- *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		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer



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.

Overall we are broadly happy with the BSc programme. There are significant strengths and the caveats we have noted remain a focus for improvement. We thank all the staff and students who helped in this exercise and wish you well for the future.

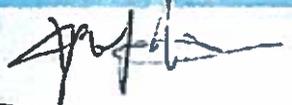
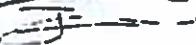
E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Christina Lioma	
Simon Gay	
Chris Johnson	
Ioannis Zapitis	
George Savva	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 12th June 2022



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Christina Lioma	
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Click to enter Name	

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