Doc. 300.1.3

Date: 2025-10-03

Feedback Report from EEC Experts

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  European University Cyprus

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

- **Department: Computer Science and Engineering**

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

In Greek:
Επιστήμη Υπολογιστών (18 μήνες, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ(MSc))

In English:
Computer Science (18 months, 90 ECTS, Master(MSc))

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Thomas Heide Clausen	Department of Computer Science	Ecole Polytechnique
Professor Nik Bessis	Professor of Computer Science, Senior Advisor (Research), Multi-institutional Alliance for Research on Global Challenges Project Lead, Institutional Lead for UKRN & OR4, Director of Data Science Research Centre	Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
Professor Damal K. Arvind	Full Professor and Chair in Distributed Wireless Computation, School of Informatics	University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
Mr. Yiannis Zapitis	Member(Professional Body)	University
Mr. Paraskevas Kyriakou	Student	University

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) and the Higher Education Institution's response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.

1. **Study programme and study programme's design and development**

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

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
1. The EEC recommends that the programme considers ways of making the "research project" mandatory in the programme, since it is an asset to students for their future (be that towards a PhD or in industry). With the objective being that this should be done without compromising the ability of students to do "electives", one way of accomplishing this could be to consolidate current courses into one, to enable both keeping the electives, and making the research project into a mandatory Masters Thesis. For example, the department offers one course in "Operating Systems" and another in "Computer Architectures" whereas many MSc programmes in Computer Science consolidate those into a single "Compute Architectures and Operating Systems".	We thank the EEC for their careful consideration of the programme and for their productive comments. • We have changed the research project as mandatory and we have also renamed it to Master Thesis. We have also increased its ECTS to 30 (instead of 20). The revised structure of the program is available in Annex 1 (Tables 1 and 2) and the revised courses content appears in Annex 2. • At the same time, we have merged the two suggested courses: -CSC625 Operating Systems -CSC620 Computer Architectures and Hardware of the program now into a single course called: CSC628- "Compute Architectures and Operating Systems" Please see updated Course Syllabi in Annex 2 (page 1). • We have also merged two more courses to a single course: The courses: -CSC635 Databases and Information Management Systems -CSC650 Software Engineering have now been merged to a single course called: CSC632- Software Tools • Please see updated Course Syllabi in Annex 2 (page 5).	The EEC appreciates the efforts of the Department, in reviewing and revising its course offerings to be aligned with modern standards, consolidating topics, and — in particular — making the research project mandatory as a "Masters Thesis". With these changes (and those in point 2 on the next page) the EEC considers the MSc programme being **fully compliant in sub-area 1.2.**

2. The programme being a "conversion program", part of its appeal to prospective students may be to allow professionals from other domains to "introduce CS into their world". To this end, the EEC wonders if it would aid in the "marketability" of the programme — and thus address the surprisingly low student intake — to refocus some courses. - For example, many non-CS domains still require accessing, compiling, and consolidating data from different sources (IoT sensors, SQL databases, REST APIs, or Web-scraping) or providing data-as-a-service using the same technologies. Thus, rather than having the course in "Database and Information Management Systems" be a traditional "how to use and administer SQL databases" course, perhaps an orientation towards "How to retrieve, and provide, information across heterogenous data sources" would be an interesting evolution?	We thank the EEC for their productive recommendation. To this end we have renamed the course "Introduction to Programming and Object Orientation" to simply: "Introduction to Programming" the revised Syllabus is available in Annex 2 (page 13) and we kept the name of the rest of the courses the same, since they are using very common titles, such as algorithms, software engineering, web technologies, etc.	The EEC appreciates the efforts of the Department. With these changes (and those in point 1 on the previous page) the EEC considers the MSc programme to be **fully compliant in sub-area 1.2.**

3. Also, to improve enrolments in the programme — especially from abroad — the EEC would like to encourage that the department be accorded efforts and mention from the marketing department, commensurate with the efforts and attention that Medical and Life Sciences receive. To give an objective metric: the number of clicks on the EUC webpage to reach Medical and Life Sciences programs is 1 — whereas half a dozen is required to reach the MSc in Computer Science	The Department appreciates this feedback from the EEC. 1. From the main EUC website there is a link to programs of study categorized by School and Study Cycle. The page also has a Faceted Filter Search categorized into sections assisting the user to narrow down results based on selected criteria (https://euc.ac.cy/en/programs/). 2. Then from that page, one can either move to the School of Sciences and see all available programs, including the master in Computer Science or select a specific programme of their interest. Additional actions have been taken by the EUC Marketing Department to strengthen the visibility and drive enrolment in Computer-related programmes. For more information please see Section 4. Learning & Teaching, Point 9. of the Departmental Response.	The EEC appreciates the actions taken by the department on this matter. The EEC notes that this recommendation was not directly linked to an area of non-compliance or partial compliance.

Additional comment by the EEC to Area-1:

The department has indeed taken considerable effort in both responding to the EECs comments, as well as in developing a departmental "faculty handbook" capturing the QA considerations and processes, which are specific to the CS department — and made this information publicly available

As a consequence, the EEC considers the MSc programme **to be fully compliant in sub-areas 1.1 and 1.3.**

2. **Student - centred learning, teaching and assessment**

(*ESG 1.3*)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

1. The EEC recommends considering that midterm and exam papers be graded anonymously, and that key course exams have a second grader.	The Department acknowledges that the practice of anonymous grading, as well as that of a second grader do contribute to a more objective approach to grading. The Blackboard platform which is the official LMS of the university does provide for anonymizing assignments and tests. Some courses of the curriculum do have midterm and final examinations that are practical on the PC (programming or otherwise developing). It is therefore possible to have these courses use anonymous marking of submissions and names revealed when grades are posted. For the remaining course of the curriculum, where the midterm and finals exams are on paper; the approach that can be used is that of security sticker which will be attached to the front cover of each student's answer book and cover the details of the student. In this manner the marking will be done anonymously. When all papers have been marked and the grades are ready then the stickers can be removed and the student details revealed. For the time being, it has been decided to test-pilot this approaches during the F2025 semester and use a sample of courses taught from full-time members of faculty. In this manner we will be able to realize if the approaches will work. One possible issue relates to the funds for the stickers but this can be worked into the Departmental budget should the approach(es) prove viable. With regards to the second grader, at present, a second grader for key course exams is not possible due to the current teaching load of instructors and the absence of teaching assistants. The only time when a second blind review of an exam paper can be performed, is when any student feels that their exam answers were not marked correctly and they can request for an 'appeals procedure'. Full details of this procedure can be found in Annex 5 the University Charter (Annex 2, Section19 of the Charter).	The EEC appreciates the efforts and experimentation undertaken in generalising anonymous grading of midterms, and encourages the department to implement this across the board once the most efficient modalities have been determined. The EEC notes that second-grading is not being feasible given the current workload of the faculty members, and in the absence of teaching assistants. The EEC nonetheless continues to believe that second-grading would be beneficial and encourages the Department and the Institution to continue to explore its implementation. Notwithstanding, with the efforts taken towards anonymous grading of midterms is now underway, the EEC considers the MSc programme to be **fully compliant in sub-area 2.3.**

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2. The EEC strongly urges the department to ensure that the policy of returning, in a timely manner, grades (and comments) for assignments, midterms, and exams, be systematically enforced for all courses and instructors.	Department members agree that providing timely feedback to students is vital in the learning process. Starting from Fall 2025 the Department has established and will use a new policy that will enforce a maximum of 15 calendar days return on any graded coursework. The policy has been incorporated in the Departmental Handbook (and it is available in the departmental response document, 07.14.323.007_300.3.2) and will be communicated to all teaching staff.	The EEC commends Department in developing the the faculty handbook in a short space of time in documenting the departmental processes for course review and revision, and the expectations of teachers (especially in providing timely feedback). The EEC notes that this recommendation was not directly linked to an area of non-compliance or partial compliance.

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

| 1. Reduce high workload in teaching | We thank the EEC for this suggestion.

The teaching responsibilities of instructors are pre-determined by the rank of the instructor as dictated by the University policies and individual employment contracts of employees.

The University follows the 'Internal Regulation on Research Policy' (Annex 6) which describes the 'Teaching Hour Reduction' scheme that is a point accumulation system (based on research and other academic and related activities). With this system it is possible for instructors to 'collect' points which will allow them to obtain a maximum of two course (up to 6 hours) reduction for a full-time semester depending on departmental needs.

Based on this we should mention that the Department average is 9 hours of teaching per week as seen from the collected THRs through the last 3 years (please see Departmental response document – and graphs provided there, 07.14.323.007_300.3.2, and more specifically Section 4, Response Point 1). | The EEC is cognisant of the "Teaching Hour Reduction" scheme that allows instructors to average 9h/week of classroom time, in place of 12h/week.

Nonetheless, the EEC maintains that in comparison to European standards, this remains a high teaching load.

Further, the EEC noted that these 9h/week (or 12h/week) does not include setting up, delivering, labs, grading, etc.

Indeed, the EEC recommended that "The Faculty members would benefit from support for marking, and demonstrating in the laboratory in the form of graduate Teaching Assistants."

The EEC notes with satisfaction that in the departmental response document, the Department writes "the University intends to broaden the use of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) positions as a sustainable approach to support Ph.D. enrolment, improve the quality of teaching, and alleviate faculty workload".

With this in mind, the EEC considers the MSc programme is on track to be **fully compliant in sub-area 3.1.** |

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2. Produce effective staff development plans for promotion	We thank the EEC for this recommendation. The university has in place a mechanisms for motivating and supporting existing faculty members to get promoted in higher ranks. The "Performance Appraisal of Faculty and Special Teaching Personnel" Internal Regulation supports and facilitates the process of self-improvement of the EUC Faculty and Special Teaching Personnel by focusing on the appraisal and developmental nature of the process. It takes place every two years and is submitted online by all Faculty and Special Teaching Personnel through the University's HRIS system. Please see Annex 4. Please see the Faculty Promotion Procedure described in detail in Annex 5 EUC Charter (specifically Annex IV (p. 74) of the Charter. Also, please see Annex 3 explaining internal staff development and promotion of EUC.	The EEC acknowledges that this information is available in the University-wide policies — but also appreciates that this is further covered in the Departmental handbook that has been developed.

Additional comment by the EEC to Area-3:

The EEC had found the department to be only partially compliant or non-compliant in area 5 — specifically due to the lack of CS staff at Professorial level to ensure leadership on strategic planning an development in both teaching and research. The EEC recommended a concerted effort at recruitment of one or more full professors, as well as development of a strategic vision for bringing the department forward.

The HEI has — institutionally — opened two position at "any rank" within the department, which is a golden opportunity for the department to add one or two faculty members at Professorial level. The EEC applauds the institution for this effort — and strongly encourages the department to seize this opportunity.

With this in mind, the EEC considers the MSc programme is **on track to be fully compliant in sub-areas 3.2 and 3.3**.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
1. The Masters course gives an option for either doing an individual project or 2 electives courses. The EEC finds that the individual project should be mandatory, since a "masters thesis" is almost an expectation by both future employers, and for continuation into a PhD (for evidence: the doctoral programme at the Department expects prior research projects for admission).	We have now changed the research project as mandatory course and we have also renamed it to "Master Thesis". Please see our full response in Section 1, item 1 above.	The EEC appreciates this change, which aligns the programme closer to international expectations and standards. The EEC notes that this recommendation was not directly linked to an area of non-compliance or partial compliance and that all of Area 4 was — and remains — compliant.

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

| 1. The EEC recommends acquisition of GPU clusters for compute-intensive projects and courses, especially in view of the increased application of Machine Learning. | We align with the EEC recommendation.

The Department has research and academic affiliations with the Cyprus Institute which is host to "Cy-Tera", an innovative, hybrid machine, which is the first supercomputer in Cyprus, and the largest open-access supercomputer in the Middle East, and provides a High-Performance Computing (HPC) Facility.

We would like to note also that all EUC faculty and students have access to the HPC facilities of the Cyprus Institute (Cyclone) for up to 20,000 core hours and 5,000 GPU hours in its 'preparatory access' mode at no cost. It is possible to apply for this mode all-year round (see this link https://hpcf.cyi.ac.cy/apply.html).
In addition, it is possible to apply for the 'production mode' at the Cyprus Institute HPC facilities twice a year. The upper limit of this mode is 500,000 core hours and access is given on the Cyclone system.

With respect to internal resources, obviously an in-house solution is the preferable option but the scale of the investment is considerable and difficult to be implemented in a single step.

At present, we must note that members of the faculty have participated in a research project (GRATOS) in which a GPU server (HP Z6G4T X4114 with Nvidia Quadro P400) was purchased. Additionally, the CERIDES Excellence in Innovation and Technology, Center of Excellence has acquired, through its research projects 2 server machines with GPU capabilities. These machines offer some possibilities. However, with the new courses of the curriculum as well as possible usage for senior projects or research projects, needs are expected to increase. For this reason, the Department (during the Departmental Council meeting held on 03/09/2025) has decided that the Departmental budget will be used and gradually increase the capacity of the existing servers to match the needs of both the students and the faculty of the Department. The plan is to buy some additional equipment during 2025-26 and then more additional equipment during 2026-27 and in the following years adjust according to needs. | The EEC thanks the department for these additional details on computing resources available to students and faculty. The EEC encourages the Department to continue to track and anticipate needs as they evolve.

The EEC notes that this recommendation was not directly linked to an area of non-compliance or partial compliance and that all of Area 5 was — and remains — compliant. |

6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

7. **Eligibility (Joint programmes)**

   (ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC must provide final conclusions and remarks, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

<u>EEC's final conclusions and remarks</u>

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

EEC has no recommendations to make here.	N/A	The EEC sincerely appreciate that the Department has received its recommendations in the spirit of "collegial feedback" that they were intended.
		The EEC is impressed by the responsiveness, quality and the quantity of work undertaken by the Department since the site-visit. Improvements include the development of a detailed strategic plan, the development of a departmental faculty handbook, thorough revisions of the different programmes, negotiations wit the School and the Institution, evidence again that the faculty members of the Department striving for high quality.
		The EEC also recognises that the Institution is making efforts to accord the department the ability to continue to implement its recommendations, *e.g.*, through opening faculty lines, and developing a Teaching Assistant programme.
		To conclude, the EEC considers that the Department and the M.Sc. in Computer Science is on a very positive trajectory, and — collegially — wishes the faculty members in the Department the best of success with the ,

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Thomas Heide Clausen	
Damal K. Arvind	D K Arvind
Nik Bessis	
Yiannis Zapitis	
Paraskevas Kyriacou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 2025-10-03