Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Nicosia**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty: School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Architecture**

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

In Greek:
Σχεδιασμός _Εσωτερικών _Χώρων _(4 έτη / 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Interior Design (4 years /240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts Degree)

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The visit, conducted remotely on the 24th of June, had a schedule of an intense sequence of meetings, starting with the introductory speeches of the leading personalities of the University, who gave a large overview of an institution which takes in high consideration the positioning within the international rankings and that it is strongly oriented towards two main directions: internationalization and distant learning. In both cases, the field of architectural studies is not the more involved.

Then, the ECC met the professors directly involved into the Bachelor of Interior Design, the Head of the Department of Architecture, the Dean of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, and other colleagues in leading positions within the University of Nicosia. The EEC apprehended that the BA of Interior Design is parallel with a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture, a Professional Diploma in Architecture (5 years), and that there is one MSc program in Architecture which is fully dedicated to Computational Design & Digital Fabrication.

The EEC appreciated that University recently built an Architecture Research Center that, from the received information, seems a remarkable asset for the development of architectural studies.

A specific and complete illustration of the BA programme came out from the presentation of Prof. Anna Efstathiou. As coordinator of the programme, she gave to EEC the main picture of the course, with a detailed description of the study plan and classes, and the contents of all the main design studios and theoretical courses.

The meeting with the faculty members gave more details and foreshortened views of the teaching methods, assignments, and results. All information attested that the pedagogical core of the programme clearly corresponds with the name and disciplinary definition.

The meeting with a small number of former and present students registered their high level of satisfaction for the teaching and, in generally, for the friendly reception and support. Some light remarks came about English, because it seems that not everyone uses it systematically, creating some problems to foreign students.

All meetings had the form of a free and open discussion; University members gave, cooperatively, a correct amount of information and were very available to the dialogue. The members of the EEC had the opportunity to place questions and to ask for further explanation on all aspects of the programme. These discussions were very useful to understand the profile of the BA Interior Design programme and its position inside the University.

The members of the EEC thank the Education Officer George Aletraris, for his constant support, and the Faculty, Staff, and Students of University of Nicosia for the friendly and open reception and cooperation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Alessandro Rocca	Chair	Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Nikolaas Vande Keere	Member	Hasselt University, Belgium
Ersi Ioannidou	Member	Kingston University London, UK
Rositsa Rouseva	Student Member	University of Cyprus

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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*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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 representatives of the institution make a clear and professional presentation of their study programme, including the various aspects related to it (facilities, objectives, outcomes, admission requirements, etc.). Together with the other presentations during the day, the EEC received sufficient information to assess the study programme, its design and development and the mentioned Sub-areas (see below).

The BA in Interior Design is fully integrated in the Department of Architecture, in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University. The choice to use the term 'design' rather than 'architecture' is motivated by the wish to give the BA a different identity in comparison with the Architecture degree.

The study programme of the BA is Design Studio centred, with the other courses (Technology and Construction, History and Theory, Management and Communication) set up as supportive. Various staff members emphasise the integration of these courses and the Design Studio. The study programme is structured around Major Requirements, Major Electives, Communications & Business Electives and additional, more general Electives.

The semestrial break down of the Design Studio shows a gradual increase of the complexity of design assignments and ensures a variety of projects in the field of Interior Design (namely retail, working environment, public interior, adaptive reuse, etc). Additionally, attention is given to furniture and garden design. The presentation on the programme gives further (brief) attention to research, competitions, collaborations, educational events, webinars, exhibitions, links with professional bodies and employability.

Strengths

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

The study programme of the BA in Interior Design, as presented to us, comes across as thorough and solid and seems to guarantee an education of expected standards for a BA course. Its structure and hierarchy reflect a professional approach and are comparable to other (European) BA programmes in Interior Architecture. The flexibility of the staff and the constant search for synergies between the different courses are in line with this and form an additional value.

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 is satisfied with the findings as presented and has no recommendations for improvement.

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

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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 various presentations of the institution prove to the EEC a dedicated commitment to student-centred learning, teaching and assessment. The presentation of the BA in Interior Design, which also included teaching methods, assessment, and student support, confirms the institution's intended student-centred approach. Access to recordings of some courses reveal a one-to-one approach to teaching in the design studios and the constant availability of the teachers for the students.

The EEC met a selection of students and graduates of the Interior Design programme. Most of them are very complimentary about the school and the staff, which they describe as easily approachable and helpful during their studies, including considering personal matters. The graduates from abroad (mostly from Middle East) have fond memories of the programme and the staff. Some are still in touch with their former teachers. (In one case the brother of the graduate is currently also studying at UNIC.) The graduates also emphasise that the knowledge and skills they acquired in this BA formed a basis for the continuation of their studies in institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

Strengths

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

The variety in knowledge and helpful attitude of the teaching team and the conscious search for synergies between the courses seem to allow for an individualised or customised study trajectory throughout the four years.

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 is satisfied with the findings as presented and has no recommendations for improvement.

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.

The BA in Interior Design programme employs 8 members of staff which shares with other programmes of study in the Department of Architecture.

The teaching staff qualifications are very good with undergraduate and post graduate studies in international institutions, such as Columbia University, The Bartlett School of Architecture - UCL, Munich University of Technology, coupled with professional practice in their fields.

The management and teaching teams demonstrate a strong commitment to student-centred teaching. Current students and alumni commented on the staff's strong and consistent support on both academic and personal matters. A testament to the positive learning environment created by the teaching staff is that graduates keep in touch with their former tutors and seek collaboration with them and the programme.

The members of staff also should be congratulated on the seamless switch to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Students noted that no teaching days were missed and that they managed to complete their studies successfully. The EEC agrees with the teaching team that studio-based programmes such as the BA Interior Design at the University of Nicosia are not conductive to online teaching, as it does not facilitate peer-to-peer learning and learning by doing that are at the core of studio, and any digital materials should be an additional "layer" to assist and enrich "face-to-face" teaching.

The EEC was concerned that there are only two members of permanent staff who teach on all Design courses (Interior Design I, II, III, VI) throughout the programme, as this does not allow for a multiplicity of

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perspectives to be offered to the students as they form their identity as designers. The teaching team reassured us that studio teaching is enriched by involving people with varied experiences and points of view such as colleagues from other courses, architects, members of local institutions and representatives of commercial companies and by initiating "live briefs" that link the students with the local community, enterprises, and organisations.

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

- The programme coordinator and teaching staff are committed in creating a curriculum that equips the students with knowledge and skills appropriate for a BA award.
- According to current students' and alumni's testimonies, the teaching team is approachable and creates a supportive learning environment.
- According to current students' and alumni's testimonies, the teaching team facilitates each student to develop her/his own interests and identity as designer.
- The teaching team links the curriculum with the world outside the studio by creating connections with local businesses, institutions, and community through "live briefs" (e.g., collaborations with The Museum of contemporary Art, Ayios Kassianos School, Makario Hospital-Paediatric Ward).
- All members of staff are characterised by a high level of professionalism.

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 believes that a variety of voices should be heard within the design studio as this will allow the students to gain a better understanding of the range of potential design outcomes and solutions to a brief. The EEC recommends the recruitment of new permanent and visiting lecturers – potentially young design practitioners.

In the long term, the EEC believes that the programme should strengthen the potential synergies between teaching and research and to this aim recommends that any new members of staff should have expertise in Interior Design / Interior Architecture with a track record of research in this field and be able to use their research within the discipline to inform their teaching.

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	Partially compliant

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

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The BA in Interior Design programme at the University of Nicosia admits new students on the basis of their previews academic record, portfolio submission and interview.

The university ensures that prospective candidates have a clear understanding of the programme and its contents before students commit to a particular programme of study. A key aspect of the admissions process is the interview, which works as a two-way exchange between the applicant and the member of staff, who represents the programme. The member of staff has a discussion with the applicant to assess her/his interest on the subject and creative potential; at the same time, the interviewer explains to the applicant the content and character of the course and dispels any misunderstandings regarding the discipline of Interior Design and its study at university level. Each applicant is requested to submit a portfolio of personal work. However, the University recognizes that not all applicants have the opportunity to prepare a professionally looking portfolio or come to the programme with the knowledge of free-hand and technical drawing.

The university assists the students to successfully complete their programme of studies by closely monitoring their attendance and academic progress and by appointing a dedicated academic advisor to each student on the registration to the programme. The academic advisor explains to the new student what

the expectations of the programme are, helps the new student to register to courses and choose electives and monitors her/his attendance and performance throughout the 4 years of study.

There is an expected drop-out rate of 10-15% during the first year of studies, which is an acceptable drop-out rate.

Pre-requisite courses ensure that students do not progress without having a clear understanding of all knowledge and skills required to complete assignments successfully. Students who face academic difficulties are scheduled for additional tutorials and meetings with their academic advisor.

Strengths

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

The University of Nicosia:

- ensures that prospective students have a clear understanding of the programme;
- supports the students throughout the 4 years of study by providing each student with a dedicated advisor that monitors their academic progress and overall experience of the course;
- In addition to the above, as mentioned before, the teaching team creates a positive and supportive learning environment that ensures that students fulfil their potential.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Student admission processes and criteria; student progression regulation and processes; student recognition regulations and procedures; and student certification regulations and processes are in line with European and international standards for equivalent courses.

The committee has no recommendation for this area.

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.).*

- *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.

In general, classrooms, laboratories and social spaces seem adequate. Of course the virtuality of the EEC visit largely reduces the relevance of this evaluation.

The meeting with the students was useful to understand their high level of satisfaction for the teaching and, in generally, for the friendly reception and support.

Foreign students remembered with gratitude the supporting attitude of teaching and not teaching staffs, and this is a relevant aspect for a programme which enroll students still quite young and coming from various continent.

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

The EEC appreciated that the University recently built an Architecture Research Center that, from the received information, seems a remarkable asset for the development of architectural studies and a promise of further development of the Interior Design programme and, in general, for the architectural studies and research in the campus of University of Nicosia.

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.

From the meeting with the students, some light remarks came out about English, because it seems that not everyone uses it systematically, creating some problems to international students.

Internationalization could include some specific structures which can act as cultural mediators, managing and valorizing problems and opportunities of the cultural exchanges. In example, preliminary basic courses of Cyprus everyday life and culture.

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*

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The BA in Interior Design is a well-organised and coherent programme of studies. The list of courses, the balance of various disciplines, and the character of outputs confirm the specific engagement in the field of Interior Design. The Major Requirements Course correctly balances studio work, learning by doing activities, and theoretical courses, which give the necessary basic skills in representation techniques, histories, technologies, and other subjects. The list of the Elective courses, thanks to the synergy with the other programs, is generous, and offers other fields of study and creative experiences.

The EEC expresses concern regarding the limited number of staff who teach on all Design courses throughout the programme, as this does not allow for a multiplicity of perspectives to be offered to the students as they form their identity as designers. The EEC recommends the recruitment of new members of permanent and visiting staff and the presence of visiting critics from other countries, taking advantage of the digital platforms available. Student work seems of acceptable quality, but a well-organized program, as this one, could produce outputs more interesting and braver. The EEC believes that new membership of staff will have a positive impact on the students' outputs.

The EEC suggests that a more developed link with the research activities will make the design studios, and the entire programme, livelier and more creative, better connected with the local and global issues of architectural culture. To this aim, any future recruitment of staff should require expertise in Interior Architecture / Interior Design with a track record of publications in this field and the ability to use research to inform teaching. In the long-term, this will strengthen the academic credentials of the programme.

As the overall impression of the quality of the BA in Interior Design, its integration in the Architectural department, the versatility and commitment of the staff and the diversity of the students is positive, the EEC advises the institution to reflect on further development in the future. A lengthy discussion amongst the members of the EEC brought up some considerations or suggestions which we wish to formulate as open questions:
- How to increase the number of students (currently 10 to 12 students per year) to develop a 'critical mass' in the Interior Design part of the Architectural department?
- How to assure the quality of student admissions from countries not following the European body of educational regulations?
- How to develop a sustainable programme of academic research on Interior Design that can also serve as a resource for education? What would be the focal points of this research unit?

- Is the development of a MA in Interior Design realistic and of added value here and in the context of Cyprus?

The EEC recognises that the answers to these questions depend on the broader strategy of the University for the future of the Department and aspects of the socio-economic and geographical context of the programme of which the EEC does not have a clear overview.

The EEC also wishes to raise attention to the complex position of the Architectural department as a whole vis-à-vis the University's larger ambition regarding the increase of distant learning. The practice-based nature of the discipline of Interior Design and Architecture (and other design related disciplines) implies a degree of live interaction, the social setting of an atelier in which students can rely on teachers and peers in various ways, the possibility to develop and discuss real three-dimensional models and to experience and experiment with materials and textures, live sketching classes, etc. We believe that online teaching can form a strong component in the programme but cannot completely replace studio-based education.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Alessandro Rocca	
Nikolaas Vande Keere	
Ersi Ioannidou	
Rositsa Rouseva	

Date: the 25th of June, 2021