



Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

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

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Language(s)
- **Programme's status:** Choose status
- **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.

A site visit occurred on the 28th March 2024 at the UCLan Cyprus Campus. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) comprised Professors O'Hare, Curran, Verbert, Boedker together with the student representative Marilena Lemonari from the University of Cyprus. The visit lasted from 9.00am to 5.30pm.

During this time the EEC meet with the Rector, Head of the Department of Arts, Media and Communications, the Director of Academic Quality and Compliance, Course Leaders, Quality Leads, Teaching staff associated with the proposed programme, Heads of administrative and Support functions and a representative group of current students.

The EEC met with the latter in camera.

The UCLan Cyprus staff facilitated a tour of the University facilities including the library, dedicated laboratories and teaching spaces.

At the end of the day the EEC thanked the UCLan Cyprus staff together for hosting the visit and debriefed senior staff with preliminary thoughts and findings.

The EEC team were also highly appreciative of the professionalism exhibited by the CYQAA staff member Emily Mouskou who accompanied the EEC team ably facilitating the team throughout the day providing any procedural clarifications necessary and enabling seamless logistic arrangements.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Gregory O'Hare	Professor of Artificial Intelligence & Head of School of Computer Science and Statistics.	Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin
Kevin Curran	Professor Of Cybersecurity	University of Ulster
Katrien Verbert	Professor at the Augment Research Group of the HCI Division of the Computer Science Department	KU Leuven
Mads Boedker	Professor in Film/Media Studies and in Human Computer Interaction.	Copenhagen Business School
Mrs Marilena Lemonari	PhD Student	University of Cyprus

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.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study

The policy for quality assurance is appropriate and includes a course approval process for new courses, periodic reviews and an annual monitoring of courses. The course approval process involves consultation with university stakeholders, external stakeholders and students. Market research is also included within this process. Periodic review is conducted every 5-6 years and involves external examiners. Annual review of courses gathers feedback from students and includes appropriate structures to address this feedback. Meetings between students and staff are organised typically twice per year, in order to develop action plans. These action plans are also monitored by the quality assurance committee. The quality assurance committee includes experts on quality assurance that have already been appointed.

A policy is in place for dealing with academic misconduct. Turnitin is used to detect plagiarism and collusion for all electronic submissions. An appropriate procedure is also in place to deal with suspected cases of academic fraud. The use of AI is prohibited without specific authorisation and this includes the use of translation software.

A policy is also in place to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, both for students and staff. Student equality is monitored by the student experience and engagement committee as well. The EEC notes the gender imbalance within staff at 62% male and 38% female.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The programme of study is designed with clear overall objectives that have explicit intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes have also been aligned with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) that is used by the university. The programme intends to involve students in research and includes collaboration with industry partners together with guest lectures from professionals/practitioners.

The programme of study defines the expected student workload in ECTS and is subject to a formal institutional approval process. The approval process includes review and discussion of employability, sustainability, internationalisation and enterprise development goals. Student progression mechanisms and assessment for new courses is also approved by the panel. Placement opportunities are provided: the University has an excellent track record of facilitating such placements.

It is intended that the programme will be assessed every 5-6 years through periodic reviews that involve external examiners. These examiners will provide an external perspective/context on student performance, the assessment process and course developments. Mechanisms exist to ensure students are appropriately engaged in both the evaluation process as well as the monitoring of action plans. External stakeholders are also consulted in the approval process of new courses. Overall, the design, approval and monitoring processes are appropriate and well-structured.

1.3 Public information

Public information available for other programmes offered by the university includes a clear list of entry requirements, intended learning outcomes, career options, teaching, and learning and assessment procedures and provides sufficient evidence of clear and accurate accessible information about the programme. Pass rates do not seem to be included in

the public information. Consequently the EEC assumes that similar practices and standards would be associated with this course/programme.

1.4 Information management

Evidence from other programmes suggests an adequate collection, monitoring and analysis of relevant information, including career paths and monitoring of success and drop-out rates, as well as admission numbers. Students are involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of retention and progression, and participate in the school board and quality assurance committees. Admission, retention, attainment and student survey data is also reviewed by external experts in the periodic review.

Strengths

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

- The policy for quality assurance is well elaborated and includes appropriate procedures and structures. A key strength is the involvement of students in both policy development and monitoring.
- A second key strength is the involvement of industry in the approval process of new courses. Collaborations with industry are also included in master projects and will be key to enable students to conduct empirical research studies in realistic settings.
- Public information of related programmes is well-elaborated and includes detailed learning outcomes, career options, teaching, learning and assessment procedures and selection criteria.
- The involvement of both external examiners and students in the assessment of admission, retention, attainment and student satisfaction is also a strength.
- The University's approach to ensure sufficient engagement of students in the annual review of courses is commendable.

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 policy on the use of Generative AI is appropriate, but may need a more thorough reflection in relation to assessment. Some students also seemed unaware when the use of AI is/may be authorised. The EEC recommends a more elaborate articulation on the use of Generative AI, reflection upon how this use may/will impact assessment and adjusted assessment methods if/where necessary. The EEC recommend that such monitoring be undertaken on an on-going basis to reflect the fast moving nature of Generative AI.
- Pass rates do not seem to be included in the public information of other postgraduate programmes. The EEC recommend including information on pass rates in public information.

- The use of design thinking approaches is insufficiently articulated in the current description of the programme. The EEC *require* a better articulation of these design thinking approaches and their relation to the learning outcomes. This will be referenced in Section 2.

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	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially 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 prospective programme in UX at UCLan Cyprus ought to be focused on a specialized curriculum in user experience design. The programme is proposed at an inter-disciplinary school that covers both Arts, Media and Communications. Students would be exposed to a curriculum that is both practice-oriented and theoretical/conceptual in nature.

The programme emphasises on site teaching and learning and aims to encourage students to be active learners, in the sense that teaching is proposed to be both studio/lab-based as well as lecture-based. There are opportunities for students to engage with real-world challenges in a professional placement during the Master's Project.

Assessments vary across different modules and include *inter alia*: examination of written reports, reflective logs, academic posters, and the development of an individual student portfolio, written formal examinations and practicals. The M.Sc Dissertation assessment includes formal and informal viva related and the presentation of constructed artefacts (e.g. prototypes). The diversity of assessment instruments is appropriate.

The ratio of teachers-to-students on the proposed programme is high. From conversations with both faculty and students it is understood that there are good opportunities for relevant student feedback on both classroom performance and project work. Feedback on written assessments on other programmes was reported by students to be both informative and timely (within a 15 day window).

Formally, there are procedures set up for student involvement in relevant governing bodies pertaining to educational activities and quality assurance. From conversations with students (on other related programs at the School), the impression derived is that students feel that they have access to relevant fora regarding their education.

Project work is both *student-led* and *problem-based* in the sense that students, in collaboration with their supervisor, can identify relevant problems to solve, as well as *teacher-led* in the sense that themes or areas for projects (including the master's project) can be proposed by faculty.

Teaching and learning activities strike an appropriate balance between individual and group-based work.

The University offers good access to learning resources (e.g. library access via UCLan) for students (see further comment in Section 5).

Teaching staff are qualified both pedagogically and academically, but the EEC are of the opinion that some mismatch exists between the academic profiles of teaching staff and the subjects taught (see section 3 below).

The M.Sc User Experience Design programme is timely and would have first mover advantage within the Republic of Cyprus and a latent market need exists for UX designers within the Cyprus' business and innovation context. Market research undertaken by UCLan Cyprus would suggest significant emerging employment opportunities for graduates of this programme. The EEC concur with this view and believe this course would prove valuable as an educational offering within Cyprus.

Strengths

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

- The university offers good access to traditional learning resources (e.g. library) for students.

- There is a high teacher-to-student ratio, making it possible to deliver a creative, intensive and somewhat intimate and engaged learning environment. However, as the course evolves student numbers are intended to increase as per the business model thereby eroding this ratio.
- There are good opportunities for students to work on-site, utilizing school equipment.
- The EEC commends the use of labs and studio-based teaching within the curricula (with some reservations, see below)
- The EEC note the opportunity afforded to students to undertake practice-oriented lectures/activities from outside of the university.
- The EEC notes that students are involved in committee work regarding their education (e.g. represented in dept. board) and are thus in continuous dialogue with the school.

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 programme offers little in terms of elective modules;
- No direct opportunities exist for students to pursue a specialized/differentiated profile within the programme.
- The laboratories inspected on the site visit are unevenly equipped. While there is an impressive audio-visual production studio and good access to standard computers and relevant software for students, there is relatively little to support non-screen based prototypes and other emerging styles of interaction. The EEC would have expected that students would be routinely exposed to both emergent and less-common digital technologies (e.g. wearables, sensor-based systems(Arduino , Raspberry Pi), haptic, VR/AR/MR interactive technologies, robots, public screens, gesture-based interfaces) during their studies, and that these technologies would be made available in dedicated laboratories for students for experimentation and prototyping. While some equipment was observed the EEC is of the opinion that this needs to be consolidated.
- The laboratories inspected on the site visit did not, as yet, contain the expected materials for UX design students. While prototyping in software is useful and necessary, initial UX design processes commence in a more open-ended fashion that typically include the need for visualization tools (ranging from pen/paper/sticky notes to foam board, micro-projectors, portable screens, to e.g. 3D printers, Arduino computers and relevant peripherals, etc.)
- There are no apparent lab managers or lab personnel/teaching assistants to provide laboratory assistance. It is recommended that a UX lab be stocked, re-supplied and updated by a lab manager or similar person in an ongoing conversation with teaching staff.
- There are programme modules that only *tangentially* touch on state-of-the-art and emergent topics in UX design and adjacent fields. These include the courses; Research Methods (RM), Industry Project (IP) and IT Projects and Programmes (ITPP). For RM, it is somewhat striking that the course is taught across a very broad set of disciplines. It was also suggested by faculty that the dominant focus on the course is quantitative methods/analyses, and that qualitative/interpretive/or design-based work is not treated on the course in any detail. In a UX context, this amounts to a singular focus on “formal methods”. The EEC recommend that the UX Design students are exposed to a broader set of methodological reflections, including inter alia: anthropological methods and analysis, participatory and cooperative design methods, design facilitation,

design science approaches, pragmatism, and abductive reasoning (e.g. design as inquiry, iterations in design reasoning, etc.).

- The EEC are concerned that the ITPP is a generic module on software development/project management. While project management skills are indeed relevant (e.g. understanding the concept of agile development and iterations in design work), the focus here seems to be on software development methods. For example, a question remains as to whether formal frameworks such as PRINCE2 belong on a course such as this or if these kinds of certifiable skills and formal qualifications are better pursued externally. While a robust defence of this inclusion was provided by staff the EEC remain unconvinced. The EEC require that this module be replaced with a module more closely aligned with UX Design. The EEC believe this would provide more curricula space for exploration of UX design/evaluation in non desk-top media forms including VR/MR/AR.
- The EEC are concerned that the coexistence of both an IP project and a dissertation is simply replicating learner outcomes. To this ends they would recommend the replacement of the IP Project with an alternate module to provide digital skills.
- The EEC would encourage the inclusion of topics such as innovation strategy or entrepreneurial value theory and similar topics.

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	Non-compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

- *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.

Overall the teaching staff seem highly motivated and have a pride and loyalty to the University. Morale seems reasonably high. Staff have appropriate educational qualifications with almost all holding the PhD degree together with undergraduate and M.Sc attainments. For many of the staff these qualifications were obtained from international Universities of high-standing typically from the UK examples include, University of London, Royal Holloway, University of Warwick and University of Surrey. This is complimented by staff with qualifications obtained within Cyprus for example the University of Cyprus. Overall this creates a blend of learning and research experience that is appropriate and beneficial to students and the curricula.

The numbers of staff associated with the programme (90 ECTS 1 year M.Sc) is modest but there is a clear mapping between staff and the delivery of the 6.5 contact hours per week. Again the number of contact hours is modest but within the permissible envelope for a 90 ECTS qualification.

In terms of staff associated with the proposed offering this consists of:

- 1 Associate Professor delivering 2.5 hours per week;
- 3 Lecturers delivering collectively 3 hours per week;
- 1 Special Teaching Staff delivering 1 hour per week;

Provision is clearly made for the accommodation of visiting staff from international Universities and significant collaboration would seem to exist with UCLan Preston where a similar titled M.Sc offering is delivered. Indeed it is proposed that international staff/industry experts may deliver occasional lectures either in person/remotely to consolidate the educational content and learner experience.

In terms of the profile of staff there is a preponderance of Cypriot staff. The International spectrum of staff that one would often see in a University context would not appear to be present within the School. However staff do present with International experience accrued during their studies.

The proportion of both visiting, occasional and part time staff is appropriate and it is reassuring to see the high proportion of full time faculty associated with the programme. Further to this the University intention to recruit additional staff with specialisms specific to this programme of study is important and needs to be delivered upon.

Strengths

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

- Staff generally are well qualified and in the main have active research agendas as evidenced by research publications.
- The University and School seem, aware of, and striving toward publications of appropriate quality understanding the importance of ‘blue ribbon’ publications as typified by Quartile 1 journal publications. Furthermore understanding the need for a balance between international conference publications and archival journals.
- Both the university and staff seem to understand the importance of *research-led* teaching. This would be particularly relevant for a M.Sc course.
- All staff are required to successfully obtain a Fellowship of The Higher Education Academy (FHEA) and are actively supported in doing so;
- The University proactively and routinely solicits student feedback on all of its operations. In particular this includes the routine acquisition of module feedback from students. There is clear evidence that this feeds forward and where appropriate, informs module refinement in terms of content, delivery, emphasis and scheduling of assessment;
- It is clear that research, teaching and contribution to University, discipline and society all form part of the evaluation of teaching faculty in particular at promotion. Policies for promotion are well set out and promotional calls are issued annually. The EEC notes and welcomes the revision of this promotional regime moving toward a more explicit evidence-based thresholding system. The EEC would welcome persons being promoted against such KPIs and that the number of promotions in any given year was not artificially constrained by a fiscal envelope.
- Clear recruitment policies and protocols exist. These have external oversight. The EEC were concerned with the inclusion of the phrase ‘value for money’ in the recruitment description and requested that this be removed as it could facilitate an unintended interpretation.
- Clear evidence exists of the staff participating in international research consortia. The degree to which this is currently achieved is beyond the level that would generally be associated with a University of this size and age.
- Staff are linked in with many international fora.

- Staff are engaged with international conferences and there is evidence of involvement in hosting and membership of organisational committees.
- The EEC notes and commends the existence of a workload allocation model by which to balance staff load.

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 have identified a number of areas for improvement: (1) The staff associated with the programme are all drawn from one School. In the context of the M.Sc User Experience Design opportunities would exist for the involvement of staff from other Schools or indeed other areas of expertise within the School of Arts Media and Communications (2) It is unclear why particular modules form part of the curriculum and consequently some staff teaching and delivering these modules seem to have less affinity with the overall award area (3) A need exists to consolidate further the subject specific content rather than generic modules that are offered in other award programmes to different cohorts. While this presents an efficiency and certain economies to the University it does not deliver the specialised and focused curricula that would be expected around an M.Sc in User Experience Design. Furthermore it misses an opportunity in terms of curricula innovation and differentiation of the course offering on a National and even International stage. This targeted and specific M.Sc necessitates more bespoke modules that simply replace some of the generic modules currently suggested like those of Research Methods and IT Projects and Programmes (4) The EEC would recommend an explicit sabbatical/research leave policy be introduced and operationalised in order that staff may rejuvenate their research base.

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	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*

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.

4.1 Standards

The proposed M.Sc User Experience Design programme is offered by a newly formed department of Arts, Media, and Communication. The HEI clearly communicates that students admitted into the MSc should hold an undergraduate degree with a minimum of lower second class (2:2) or equivalent and competent English language skills demonstrated via a minimum of 6.5 IELTS score or equivalent. Students are welcome from all disciplines as there are no pre-requisites. After the Admissions Department reviews the applications, the candidate goes through an interview aimed at assessing their suitability to cope with the content and workload of the programme.

4.2 Student progression

Study regulations including progression strategy are included in the Course Handbook and Academic Regulations, allowing prospective students to familiarise themselves with University's principles and providing important assessment details e.g., on late submissions, plagiarism, feedback etc. Specific information regarding progression and grading in each individual module can be found in the online designated student portal i.e., blackboard.

To ensure fairness and quality of examinations, the HEI has both internal and external verification processes in place, necessitating two members of the academic staff and one external examiner to undertake the internal and external verification, respectively. Other safeguards in place include internal and external moderation, second marking, and online submission and marking, further solidifying a transparent and non-discriminatory assessment policy.

Information gathered regarding student progression is periodically reviewed, normally every five or six years by the internal quality committee, and annually as part of the continuous course enhancement process.

In undertaking the Master's dissertation and industry project students are offered the opportunity to originate their own project ideas or to choose from a list of proposed topics. They can choose to work towards a more research-oriented dissertation, or alternatively to collaborate with reputable companies (e.g., wargaming, with whom UCLan Cyprus has established collaboration agreements) to deliver a more industry related dissertation.

4.3 Student recognition

The HEI has an extensive APL strategy (Accreditation of Prior Learning) facilitating fair evaluation of prospective students even with unconventional/diverse backgrounds. Students with prior learning from a bachelor's degree *cannot* receive APL for master level modules.

4.4 Student certification

Student certification includes the final higher education qualification (MSc User Experience Design – 90 ECTS), double awarded with the University of Lancashire (Preston, UK) and UCLan Cyprus, and similarly for exit qualification awards of (Postgraduate Diploma in UXD – 60 ECTS/ Postgraduate Certificate in UXD – 30 ECTS).

Intended learning outcomes both in terms of knowledge/understanding and skills are communicated clearly.

Strengths

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

Students receive sufficient feedback regarding their submissions and are encouraged to discuss any issues with the tutors, module leader or student representatives. Students have expressed their satisfaction with the degree of freedom they are offered in terms of selecting topics for the master dissertation and industry project, with choices that help them gain experience relevant to their preferred future career goals.

The programme offers the unique opportunity for a double-awarded degree (UK & CY), with considerably lower cost/fees compared to its UK counterpart and indeed many other European M.Sc programmes. This is particularly the case given that no differentiation is made between EU and Non EU fees.

The programme facilitates student flexibility, offering PT and FT registration modes, remote access to resources. The programme would prove attractive to international students due to its national and international network, geographic location (e.g., facilitating Middle Eastern students), tuition through the medium of English and EU status. UCLan Cyprus's tuition fee policy of adhering to the same fees for national, EU, and international students is a key component that could be effectively marketed to attract a larger number of applicants particularly non-EU students.



Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The decision to admit students from all disciplines broadening access and presenting the opportunity for multi-disciplinary discussion and exchange of ideas within the prospective student cohort. However, this poses a significant challenge namely that of mixed-ability teaching. Considering the relatively small number of anticipated students it could be the case that students lacking core *digital skills* struggle to keep up or miss opportunities to work with emerging leading edge digital tools. The EEC requires that a mandatory module be introduced to provide the requisite digital skills for less computer literate students.

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	Partially 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.

5.1 Teaching and Learning Resources

The programme is sufficiently-equipped with excellent resources to facilitate students' learning and professional development. Relevant material in support of the main lectures and tutorials given by the academic staff, are readily available through the Student Learning Management System i.e., blackboard, which provides online, 24h access to core learning materials such as lecture notes together with additional supplementary e-resources such as videos. Students also have access to several other useful resources like “Lynda.com”, an online training and learning site, LinkedIn learning, and several academic books and articles via the online library platform.

Flexibility is integrated with the existence of the online student platform (Blackboard), and the ability to remotely access their data and software via Citrix. The option to loan laptops to the students (20) and other services like counselling, Career Hub, and language support (WISER) allow further flexibility.

Students can further enrich their learning by participating in lectures by guest staff, e.g., from UCLan UK.

The library and IT Departments review the needs of the staff and students annually in order to offer up-to-date and sufficient resources. Library budgets appear to be index linked to increasing student numbers.

5.2 Physical Resources

The HEI is equipped with modern classrooms, the UCLan Cyprus Library, several computer labs with up-to-date technology and supplies, and a CISCO networking lab. Physical resources, including facilities, libraries, study spaces, sewing room, and IT infrastructure, are sufficiently robust to effectively support the study program. In addition, the program offers comprehensive support services that cater to the diverse needs of the student population, including working professionals, international students, and those with special requirements.

The building has wheelchair access and accommodations are made if needed in order to facilitate people with disabilities e.g., lectures are scheduled to take place to accessible lecture rooms instead of the amphitheatre.

5.3 Human Support Resources

As part of monitoring the student welfare measures, certain mechanisms are active to ensure the sufficiency of student support. Apart from the Students Attendance Monitoring (SAM), there are also one-to-one sessions between Student Support officers and students (online), and an assigned Academic Advisor. Counselling services are also accessible to students both on campus and online. With regards to student life, Student Support officers and Student Council take initiatives to arrange several extracurricular activities and encourage participation. The University also attends to students at risk and sets up a transparent process for handling complaints.

5.4 Student Support

To cover the needs of a potentially diverse student population, the University has created support mechanisms e.g., for international students (visa-related concerns). The University has managed to create a network of local and international partners via schemes like Erasmus and of course the very strong collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire in the UK.

The EEC commends the existence of financial aids and merit-based scholarship information and the availability of such being exposed through a publicly accessible University webpage.

This programme requires physical presence and so distance learning is not accommodated.

The EEC finds full compliance with respect to standards, indicators and criteria related to teaching and learning resources, human, physical and student support resources. The EEC found proof of adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme. All resources are fit for purpose and student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.

Strengths

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

The EEC found a great synergy among the teaching staff and students within the program. This synergy fosters a supportive environment where students receive robust support, both in terms of individual development and professional growth. They use Citrix Xendesktop to host and manage virtual PC environments and all students have remote access to software off-campus.

Student feedback and complaints are collected and considered in terms of curricula revisions/adaptations. The EEC found that students reported a highly positive experience, underscoring the excellent support they received from lecturers & support staff. Students exhibit a strong loyalty and pride in the University brand.

The building is in excellent condition and computer lab, sewing room, film/media lab, library and teaching rooms were satisfactory.

The EEC note and commend the recent transition to an in-house student counselling service.

The EEC observe the high staff-to-students ratio which facilitates *student-centric* learning and support.

The EEC commend the strong and robust Erasmus exchange/ Turing scheme. These together with the modern facilities e.g., classrooms and computer labs, cafeteria and restaurant, create a productive learning environment and encourage students to gain both knowledge and new experiences, fully taking advantage of their studies.

Additional services e.g., Counselling services, financial assistance, and scholarship schemes provide an additional helping hand, delivering a holistic learning experience for all.

The EEC note the current high student satisfaction, evident from both our discussions with the students, and collected statistics i.e., 90.63% overall satisfaction and 92.56% student support satisfaction.

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 encourages the Department to continue to invest in state-of-art classrooms/labs and complementary facilities to successfully deliver participative, active learning. In addition, 3D printer(s), additional VR Headsets, eye-tracking equipment are recommended to be added to the existing resources.

The EEC strongly recommends the provision of a dedicated space with dedicated equipment for usability testing and user studies facilitating observation studies via for example one way mirrors.

The EEC note that the library and study rooms do not have 24h access during exam periods. The EEC would encourage some reflection on this policy.

An increase in the number of students together with the rapid pace of technological advancements, especially in the context of UX Design would necessitate constant equipment upgrades as well as additional student support resources. The EEC recommends that this periodic review and investment be planned for within financial models.

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	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially 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.

The EEC were impressed with the energy, enthusiasm and conviction of the University and Department to undertake this proposed M.Sc in User Experience Design.

The EEC believe this programme would build upon *some* established expertise. This is being complimented with further emerging expertise. The EEC encourages the University to enable the further consolidation of this research hub through appropriate workload allocation models, research leave schemes and further strategic UX hires.

The EEC believe that first mover advantage for this programme would garner a significant opportunity for UCLan Cyprus.

The EEC are broadly supportive of the proposed programme but not within the current curricula structure proposed.

The EEC believe that were the recommendations delivered upon the programme would be innovative, internationally competitive and represent an enhanced educational offering.

The EEC are of the opinion that a market need exists for this course and a latent labour market exists for future graduates of this course.

The EEC strongly recommends the following curricula changes:

1. Removal of module CO4830 IT Projects and Programmes
2. Removal of CO4904 Industry Project
3. Revision of CO4828 Research Methods module to include more comprehensive UX focused research methods.
4. Inclusion of a new UX specific modules addressing issues like assessment of immersive technologies, accessibility and design thinking.
5. Inclusion of a new digital skills module.
6. The EEC would encourage the introduction of Electives. This would potentially enable Computer Science students who would not need to undertake the digital skills module to undertake alternate module(s).



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: Click to enter date