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Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  American University of Beirut Mediterraneo

- **Town: Paphos**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Computer Science**

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

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

   Bachelor in Computer Science (4 years, 240ECTS)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Language(s)
  English
- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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

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A. Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following an invitation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had the opportunity to evaluate the Department of Computer Science of the "American University of Beirut Mediterraneo" (AUBM) in Paphos (Cyprus), and the BSc Programme in Computer Science offered by this new department in this new university. The committee including Prof. Paolo Ciancarini, Prof. Gregory O'Hare, Prof. Ioannis Ivrissimtzis, Mr. Christos Charalambous (professional representative), and Miss Niki Makri (student representative) travelled to Paphos on Dec 14 2022 and was received in the building where is currently located the AUBM. The EEC panelists were met by: the Rector, the Head of the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of the Department, and by the administrative staff. The committee attended a series of meetings as defined in the agenda (with the rector, with the head of CS Department, with the Faculty, with the administrative staff). In addition, an online meeting was arranged with Computer Science students and alumni from the American University of Beirut (AUB). The Committee also visited the main building of the AUBM, which includes some spaces to be used initially by the Department of CS for teaching and research. Prior to the visit, the EEC was supplied with relevant documentation. On the day of the visit, the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions and request further information, which was provided promptly. The meetings and provision of the material requested by the EEC was professionally facilitated by George Aletraris from CYQAA. A final meeting to aggregate the contributions of the EEC members to this evaluation report and to finalize the findings of the report was held on 15 and 16 December 2022. This report contains the findings of the online visit and the resultant evaluation of the EEC. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation material and the online visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met by the new programme of Bachelor in Computer Science.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Paolo Ciancarini	Professor	Univ. of Bologna, Italy
Gregory O'Hare	Professor	Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Ioannis Ivrissimtzis	Associate Professor	Durham Univ., UK
Christos Charalambous	Professional	Technical Chamber of Cyprus
Niki Makri	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
   (a) sub-areas
   (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
   (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
   (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

    1.1 Policy for quality assurance
    1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
    1.3 Public information
    1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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

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 HEI is the Department of Computer Science of the "American University of Beirut Mediterraneo" (AUBM), a new Department of a new University in Paphos. The main objective of the new B.Sc. programme in Computer Science (240 ECTS) offered by AUBM is the development of analytical skills, acquisition of knowledge and understanding of computer systems, programming languages and software development tools required for effective computation-based problem-solving. The programme spans over eight semesters (two per year). The programme is similar to the one offered by AUB in Beirut. This programme offered in Beirut by AUB is accredited by a US authority (New York State). The EEC was told that also the programme offered by AUBM in Paphos will be accredited analogously, making the programme itself accredited both in EU and in US. The programme is designed with a strong base of Mathematics and Computer Science courses and some additional special courses. The distribution over each semester is as follows:

Semester 1:   4 required 1 elective
Semester 2:   3 required 2 elective
Semester 3: 4 required 1 elective
Semester 4: 4 required 1 elective
Semester 5: 3 required 2 elective
Semester 6: 1 required 4 elective
Semester 7: 1 required 4 elective
Semester 8: 0 required 5 elective
Total: 20 required 20 elective

All courses have a value of 6 ECTS, and according to the comments received from the EEC each course is taught over about 40 hours of face-to-face lecture in class.

The first students of the programme should be enrolled in Fall 2023. A maximum of 50 students will be accepted every year; the EEC was given an estimate of about 20 students for the first year 2023-2024. Public information about the programme is still not available, as both the programme and the Department which offers it are still not accredited.

Strengths

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

The main strength of the new AUBM programme is that it is based on the analogous programme offered in Beirut by the Department of Computer Science of the AUB. Moreover, the initial Faculty and supporting administrative staff are expert, as their members come all from AUB. The policy for Quality Assurance exposed by AUBM in Paphos is based on the one developed and used by AUB in Beirut. The structure of programme is sound and supports the progresses of the students, giving them the possibility of choosing among different alternative personal curricula. The courses offered are at the state-of-the-art.

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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.

Tables 3 and 4 at page 56 of the proposal contain a list of 14 names of professors and instructors who should teach the CS courses in AUBM. The EEC was introduced to four of these 14 people, who were identified as those who will teach the first year after transferring to Paphos on a permanent basis. The EEC feels that a possible risk is that the new Faculty of AUBM is still involved with duties in AUB: the EEC recommends that the Faculty and administrative staff start their duties in Paphos well in advance before the first students arrive in Fall 2023. Furthermore, the recruitment process of new Faculty should start before the end of 2023. A complete plan for recruitment for the first 4 years would be required.

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

Sub-area		*Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Compliant

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment *(ESG 1.3)*

> <u>**Sub-areas**</u>
> **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

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *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

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *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

<u>*Standards*</u>
- *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 EEC's findings are based on the Department's application for the external evaluation of its degree, discussions with members of staff during the onsite visit, and an online discussion with students and alumni of the Department of Computer Science of AUB.

The degree under evaluation is based closely on the corresponding Computer Science degree at AUB. It is evident that it was designed by a team with considerable experience in degree development.

There are complete descriptions of all the compulsory and elective courses, as well as the general education elective courses that will be offered. The course descriptions are clear and at an appropriate level of detail, and the bibliography of recommended textbooks is appropriate and up to date. Generally, there is confidence that it is a well thought-out, balanced degree, offering to the students a variety of courses, helping them find their area of interest prior to seeking employment.

The planned methods of delivery are suitable and their variety is appropriate (e.g., lectures, labs, recitations, problem solving sessions, group discussions). The number of compulsory labs is rather small for a Computer Science degree; however, instructors will have the opportunity to arrange their own optional labs and recitations.

Appropriate teaching technologies will be employed. The EEC was shown the course materials in Moodle of an AUB Computer Science module in Moodle, and the quality was deemed of high quality. The staff are familiar with current tools of enhanced learning technologies and during the pandemic acquired considerable experience in their use.

Many group projects are offered to the students throughout the curriculum, helping them not only during their studies but also in their post-graduation employment. This system was highly commended by the students and the alumni of AUB.

There will be no final year project and dissertation. Instead, practical training will be offered through a compulsory internship. Compulsory internships were also highly commended by the AUB students and alumni.

A variety of assessment methods will be employed (e.g. group projects, short and long projects, exams, lab exercises, student participation). Most courses employ multiple assessment methods, sometimes four different methods or even more. We note the fine balance between continuous assessment, which is an acceptable academic practice, and over-assessment. A close monitoring of the overall assessment load of the students is required.

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

The small size of the student cohort (up to 50 in each year) should help to create a tightly knit learning community, enhancing the overall student experience and increasing student satisfaction. Various other extra-curricular activities, from hackathons to movie nights, also help build a strong sense of community amongst students.

The system of personal advisors for academic matters seems to be working very well, and it was highly commended by the AUB students and alumni. As a minor comment, it is not clear why the student survey for the evaluation of the advisors is using a 3-point Likert scale, when a 5-point scale seems to be the standard.

The policy of requiring the completion of at least a 40% weight of assessment components at least a month prior to the final exams is helping the students with their workload management. It was highly commended by the AUB students.

As it emerged from the discussion with the AUB students and alumni, students have a central role in the Department's life, and equally important, they are aware of that. The adoption in Paphos of a similarly transparent process, where student feedback is acted upon and these actions are clearly communicated to the students, should facilitate further student integration to the life of the Department.

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.
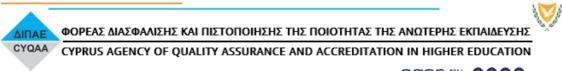
The Department has not formed yet any strong relationships with companies and organisations that will offer student internships. Since the fostering of such links takes time, it is recommended that such a process is initiated well before the first internships are expected to take place.

There is no provision for the double marking of any piece of assessment, a rather appropriate choice for a continuous assessment system. However, we recommend that the Department considers the implementation of a shadowing process, where a percentage of assessments are checked and commented upon by another member of staff before they are released to the students. A sample of marked student submissions could also be checked by a moderator for adherence to the marking criteria and for the consistency of the marking.

We recommend the formulation of a more explicit policy for students with learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia), or neurodiverse students (e.g. students in the autistic spectrum with reduced attention spans). Certain provisions for such students should be considered, for example: when possible, making the teaching materials available in advance; allowing extra exam time and extending tight coursework deadlines; giving a training course to their advisors, increasing awareness of the conditions.

The EEC panel has concerns around the risk of overteaching and over-assessment. This would overload both the Faculty and the students, as they will be given 10 courses per year requiring about 200 hours in class per semester, with multiple coursework assessments sometimes weekly. We would encourage careful consideration of workload and workload schedule to ensure students have the opportunity for reflective self-directed learning.

The EEC panel has concerns regarding the absence of a final year individual capstone project.

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.

- Overall the teaching staff seem well placed to deliver the programme;
- The staff are research active and seem suitably disposed to continue research activities;
- The number of teaching staff is adequate to cover the first cohort of students and to support the operation of the first year of the programme;
- Ultimately the teaching load that will be apportioned to the staff is on the high side. If the University truly has aspirations to strive for credible and globally competitive research output this needs to be addressed. The research output will be further compromised with the absence of PhD students;
- Procedures for recruitment seem appropriate and tested and tried. These procedures do seem to garner applications from a global base and do seem to support the recruitment of good Faculty.

Strengths

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

- Teaching performance is intended to be routinely assessed for each module upon completion of delivery. Anonymous student questionnaires are used for this purpose and individuals made aware of their performance against the Departmental average. Conflicting versions of the questionnaires are contained within the documentation one with a 3-point Likert scale the other with a 5-point scale. We would instruct that the 5-point scale ought to be used. Further to student feedback staff engage in a peer review assessment of teaching which is welcomed.

- Training support around teaching is available. However a more systematic and coordinated set of supports ought to be made available to those staff who would benefit from such.
- Teaching methodologies as evidenced from approaches adopted at AUB seem appropriate, innovative and student centric;
- There is clear evidence that research activities and findings inform and positively bleed into teaching materials. This is encouraged as informed educational material must be built upon and informed by both research activity and applied research activity;
- Use of Moodle as an integrated learning environment together with integration of plagiarism detection within it is appropriate.

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.

Training support around teaching is available. However, a more systematic and coordinated set of supports ought to be made available to those staff who would benefit from such.

There is little evidence of intention to integrate visiting esteemed lecturers from prestigious international Universities. The EEC panel would strongly encourage such short (typically a few days) visits as this internationalises the educational experience, existing staff will benefit from close exposure to leading experts and it will foster credible international collaborations. At present, when students fail a module/component they must wait a year until this is re-examined. This is not appropriate. A programme of re-sit examinations needs to be put in place. Discussions exposed intent to potentially recruit two student cohorts within the one academic year. Were this to be done this would necessitate delivering modules twice per year. While this would facilitate the resit issue it would double the teaching burden and place additional strains on an already burdened staff. Additional staff would be a requirement for this approach.   Additional plagiarism detection software needs to be incorporated to thwart plagiarism of code. Plagiarism is becoming more subtle and sophisticated and the tools to control such need to evolve similarly.   The EEC panel was concerned around the staff identified to teach the modules. In Table 3 and 4 (pages 56-57) there are some 14 names listed. In answer to questions the panel was advised that initially a number of staff would be seconded from AUB to bootstrap the first year of the programme and that subsequently (during the first year of operation) additional staff would be hired through international recruitment. The names listed in these tables do not align with the answers given.

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	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The programme is expected to start in September 2023. It will be a conventional 4 years of study of 8 semesters. The programme requires a total of 240 ECTS as follows: 90 ECTS for Major courses, 90 ECTS for General Education courses, 10 ECTS for Math courses and 42 ECTS for Elective courses. This mirrors the general liberal arts educational model seen within the United States.

Students are expected to attend all classes and there will be a mechanism and various procedures in place to monitor students' progress. For the first year the maximum number of students that is expected is 50 with a maximum number of 200 students all four years. A prediction by the AUB Mediterraneo is that the programme is expecting to have 20 students for the first year of operation.

The admission requirements include a combination of completion of a 12-years high school program, IGCSE (O Levels), IB Certificate or any other school leaving certificate, various Baccalaureates, full IB Diploma or IGCSE/GCE (three A levels or six AS levels in addition to six O levels, excluding Arabic), SAT exams and TOEFL. There will also be a possibility to enter the programme as a transfer student or upon completion a first degree.

The EEC perception is that the student admission criteria, progression, recognition and certification are all very clear and up to a level in order to attract good quality candidates.

The Student Evaluation System of AUB in Beirut is intended to be replicated in AUB Mediterraneo.

Students' suggestions were taken into consideration and whenever appropriate resulted in curricula revisions.

The overall process appears transparent, as students mentioned they were made aware of said revisions.

The abundance of group projects enforced throughout the curriculum, will help students during the programme, as well as post-graduation, with their employment.

The programme offers a great variety of courses, dedicated to developing different skills, which appear to help students decide what area interests them the most, prior to seeking employment.

The programme is compliant with EQF Level 6 qualifications for Computer Science.

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

The admission criteria and standards are set high enough to ensure that the quality of the candidate students is good enough.

There is a very clear students' assessment policy and procedure for each course which will be communicated to students before they begin their studies.

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

N/A

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

	Sub-area	*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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.

The EEC in a face-to-face meeting with the staff from the American University of Beirut Mediterraneo (AUBM), was informed about the learning resources and student support. As the programme under evaluation will begin for the first time in September 2023, many procedures and resources were not possible to be evaluated using past statistics. Despite that, the overall perception of the EEC panel is that the Department will have the necessary resources and support to start the programme. It is pointed out that the programme will be supported by a number of expert staffs coming from the AUB in Beirut. As the expected number of students for the first years of the programme is going to be small, the physical resources and support services to the student will be adequate.

The programme will be supported by student welfare mechanisms for assisting students to make appropriate academic and professional decisions. Some other services for students ie access to a big collection of electronic books, orientation, collaboration tools, career support, internships, would significantly add to the students' experience. The EEC panel would encourage their introduction.

A strong student support system will be established, to cater both academic as well as more practical/psychological needs, e.g., the peer-to-peer mentorship programme, the availability of on-site psychologists as well as the hotline provided for emergencies.

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

The programme has a very good structure and support. The expert and passionate staff are well organised and it is expected they will provide high quality support to students.

The necessary procedures are in place and good practices will be applied as they will be mirrored from the AUB in Beirut.

Students that participated in the interview through videoconferencing have been studying in AUB in Beirut, they were very enthusiastic about their studies and the support they receive from the AUB in Beirut.

A strong student support system will be established, to cater for both academic and more practical/psychological needs, e.g., the peer-to-peer mentorship programme, the availability of on-site psychologists as well as the hotline provided for emergencies.

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 internship, as it is a major required course, needs to be re-evaluated to ensure that students will actually have the chance to apply for placement in Cyprus or will have the necessary funding to travel abroad. The institution has, as yet, not initiated strong relations with any prospective companies regarding placement of students. It is recommended that for a compulsive internship to be feasibly implemented, the University should cater towards accommodating the students in that sense.

There are no plans for construction of dormitories for the students. It is recommended that more permanent and viable solutions are proposed.

The continuation for funding of the programme is critical for its sustainability.

It is recommended to make a special effort to attract a significant ratio of female students.

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*

> - *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		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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.
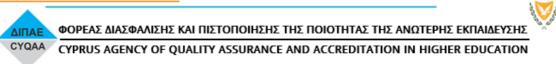
The primary strength of the AUBM programme is that it is based on an analogous programme offered in Beirut by the Department of Computer Science of the AUB. Moreover, the initial Faculty and supporting administrative staff present with considerable experience accrued from AUB.

A number of programme strengths were identified:

- There was a palpable sense that all staff, academic and professional, were strongly committed to, and passionate about, the establishment of AUBM;
- The policy for Quality Assurance exposed by AUBM in Paphos is based on the one developed and used by AUB in Beirut;
- The structure of programme is sound and supports student progression, giving them the possibility of choosing among different alternative personal curricula;
- The courses offered are well-informed by the state-of-the-art;
- The programme appears to be compliant with EQF Level 6 qualifications for Computer Science, however the EEC panel notes that there is little discussion about this point in the proposal;
- There are complete descriptions of all the compulsory and elective courses, as well as the general education elective courses that will be offered. The course descriptions are clear and at an appropriate level of detail;
- The planned methods of delivery are suitable, and their variety is appropriate;
- There is clear evidence that research activities and findings inform and positively bleed into teaching materials. This is encouraged as informed educational material must be built upon and informed by both research activity and applied research activity;
- The admission criteria and standards are set sufficiently high to ensure the quality of the candidate students;
- Students that participated in the interview through videoconferencing that have been studying in AUB in Beirut, were very enthusiastic about their studies and the support they receive from the AUB in Beirut. If this experience is satisfactorily transferred and localised to AUBM this will provide a positive student experience.

A number of suggestions for improvements were identified:

- The EEC panel has concerns around the staff identified to teach the modules. In Table 3 and there are some 14 names listed. In answer to questions the panel was advised that initially a number of staff would be seconded from AUB to bootstrap the first year of the programme and that subsequently (during the first year of operation) additional staff would be hired through international recruitment. The names listed in these tables do not align with the answers given;
- Ultimately the teaching load that will be apportioned to the staff is on the high side. If the University truly has aspirations to strive for credible and globally competitive research output this needs to be addressed;

- There is little evidence of intention to integrate visiting esteemed lecturers from prestigious international Universities. The EEC panel would strongly encourage such short (typically a few days) visits as this internationalises the educational experience, existing staff will benefit from close exposure to leading experts and it will foster credible international collaborations;
- At present, when students fail a module/component they must wait a year until this is re-examined. This is not appropriate. A programme of re-sit examinations needs to be put in place;
- The EEC panel has concerns around the risk of over-teaching and over-assessment. This would overload both the Faculty and the students, as they will be given 10 courses per year requiring about 200 hours in class per semester, with multiple coursework assessments sometimes weekly. We would encourage careful consideration of workload and workload schedule to ensure students have the opportunity for reflective self-directed learning;
- The EEC panel has concerns regarding the absence of a final year individual capstone project.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Paolo Ciancarini	
Gregory O'Hare	
Ioannis Ivrissimtzis	
Christos Charalambous	
Niki Makri	
Click to enter Name	

Date: December 16, 2022