

Doc. 300.3.1/1

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of
Departmental Evaluation)

Date: Date.

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia (Branch Athens, Greece)
- **Town:** Athens, Greece
- **School/Faculty:** School of Sciences and Engineering
- **Department:** Computer Science
- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Programme 1 – Bachelor - CS
In Greek:
Πληροφορική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc))
In English:
Computer Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc))
Language(s) of instruction: English
Programme 2 – Bachelor - DS
In Greek:
Επιστήμη Δεδομένων (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο(BSc))
In English:
Data Science (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor(BSc))
Language(s) of instruction: English
Programme 3 – [Title 3]
In Greek:
Programme Name
In English:
Programme Name
Language(s) of instruction: Language(s)



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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The onsite visit to the Department of Computer Science (henceforth: “the Department”) at the University of Nicosia (henceforth: “UNIC”) at their Athens campus (henceforth: “UNIC-Athens”) took place on May 29, 2025, during which the External Evaluation Committee (henceforth: “EEC”) was accompanied by Ms. Natasa Kazakeou and Dr. Christiana Maki from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (henceforth: “CYQAA”).

UNIC is in the process of establishing a major branch at Athens — UNIC-Athens — and within this, also establishing extensions of its existing departments at UNIC.

The EEC was tasked with evaluating the extension of the Department within UNIC-Athens, as well as evaluating the opportunity for delivery of two Bachelors programmes in Computer Science and in Data Science, already existing at UNIC, within UNIC-Athens.

The EEC wishes to recall that UNIC-Athens does not, functionally, exist yet. Specifically this means that:

- The physical building, housing the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, is still under construction — very much a construction site with no interior features. The physical locations of lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, library, etc., were therefore not visited, and its features (accessibility, adequacy, ...) not assessed.
- The extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens is not yet established, thus has no history: there is no “research output”, no “industrial relations”, and no programmes have been delivered nor degrees conferred.

Therefore:

- The students, graduates and stakeholders whom the EEC met with were from UNIC — and, specifically, were not from UNIC-Athens
- Except for the (future) president of UNIC-Athens, all governance representatives, for both the University, the School of Science, and the Department, were from UNIC — and, specifically, were not from UNIC-Athens.
- Neither of the Director of the School of Sciences at Athens, the Director of the extension of the Department at Athens, and the Program Coordinators for the two BSc programmes have not been appointed — and, consequently, the EEC has not been able to meet with them and get their vision and feedback on any of the areas being evaluated in this report.
- The Administrative staff serving UNIC-Athens has not been recruited and, therefore, the EEC has not been able to meet with them and get their vision and feedback on any of the areas being evaluated in this report.

As a consequence:

- While the EEC is cognisant that it is evaluating the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, many of the findings and recommendations in this report are based on observations from the Department and from UNIC. The EEC notes that the unanimous message from everyone, from the leadership to faculty members and administrative personnel, was that UNIC-Athens would be operated as a “mirror” of UNIC, and that the extension of the Department would be operated as a “mirror” of the department. The EEC therefore believes that our observations and recommendations will be valid for UNIC-Athens and for the extension of the Department therein.

The EEC did meet with the representatives from UNIC to whom the Director of the School of Sciences at Athens, the Director of the extension of the Department at Athens, and the Program Coordinators for the two BSc programmes will be reporting (respectively, the Dean, the Head of the Department, and the Program directors at UNIC).

Four faculty members have been identified, who will assume positions at UNIC-Athens — and the EEC met with three of them, in person.

The EEC also met with the administrative staff (Registrar, Library, Campus and Health, Advising, Admissions) at UNIC, whose services will be “mirrored” in UNIC-Athens, once recruitments have taken place, and whose efforts will be called upon to get these mirrored services “off the ground”.

The EEC appreciated the discussions that it had with members of the governing board of both UNIC and UNIC-Athens, and with members of the teaching and administration staff who assisted in the presentation and delivery of the programmes of study.

In particular, from among university, school, and Department management, the EEC met with P. Pouyioutas (Rector), P. Angelides (Vice Rector of Academic Affairs), D. Drikakis (Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering, UNIC), M. Nestoros (Associate Dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering, UNIC), A. Stassopoulou (Head of the Department, UNIC), P. Scandalakis (President UNIC-Athens), N. Ioannides (Director of Academic Affairs, UNIC), V. Stylianou (Programme director, BSc in Computer Science, UNIC), D. Trihlias (Programme director, BSc in Data Science, Athens).

The ECC also met with L. Agathokleous (Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs), A. Antonaras (VP of Student Services, UNIC), N. Gkonis (Campus and Health Director, UNIC), C. Theocleous (Director of Academic Advising, UNIC), M. Charalambous (Director of Library, UNIC), M. Panayiotou (Registrar, UNIC), P. Lyroni (Senior Admissions Officer, UNIC), E. Aloizou (Senior Admissions Officer, UNIC) .

From among the network of industrial partners of UNIC, the ECC met with M. Agathocleous (Director of AI and Data Science, AC Goldman Solutions and services), E. Erodou (Business Analysis and Optimisation, Hellenic Bank Cyprus), D. Kotzias (Software Engineer, Google Brain), I. Partalas (Principal ML Scientist, Expedia), N. Louloudes (CTO TRG Research and Development), and K. Kosta (Head of Security, ISFX Financier).

The EEC wishes to express its gratitude to these staff members and external stakeholders for having made themselves available, and for engaging in intense, deep, and constructive discussions and exchanges.

Finally, the EEC had the privilege to meet with a set of students and graduates from the BSc programmes in Computer Science and Data Science at UNIC — respectively. This provided us with — in addition to insights on the programme structure and “academic” attractiveness — valuable insights in the experience of being a student in a programme in the Department at UNIC.

Another team from the CYQAA were visiting the construction site of the future building being home to UNIC-Athens — and were providing photos of the construction site. In view of the state of the construction site, the EEC determined that the site visit would be superfluous at this stage as one could not evaluate the adequacy of the facilities, and therefore requested that this site visit be removed from the agenda.

Two days prior to the site visit, and by way of the Ms. Kazakiau from CYQAA, the EEC shared an extensive list of requested information and documents with UNIC/UNIC-Athens. The EEC wishes to express its gratitude to the presenters during the sessions of the site-visit, who had made last-minute changes to their presentations, to provide us with the information requested.

The EEC was granted access to all the information, and to all the people/stakeholders, that we requested, from UNIC-Athens. The students and graduates, from the programmes being assessed, were thoughtful and respectful in their comments — and patience with the numerous questions, whose answers greatly helped in writing this report.

The EEC wishes to thank both the officers from the CYQAA and the personnel from UNIC-Athens, for making the site visit both pleasant and informative.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Thomas Heide Clausen	Professor (Chair)	Ecole Polytechnique, FR
Damal K. Arvind	Professor (Member)	University of Edinburgh, UK
Mykola Pechenizkiy	Professor (Member)	Eindhoven University of Technology, NL
Yiannis Zapitis	Professional Body Representative (Member)	Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK)
Elina Mavrikiou	Student (Student Member)	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 each 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. Policy for quality assurance**
- 2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 3. Public information**
- 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*

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*

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*

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.

Findings for Bachelor - CS

- The BSc in Computer Science has been offered since 2007 with a mature syllabus based on the IEEE/ACM guidelines
- Processes are in place for the design, approval and monitoring of the delivery of courses
- The Department has a well-developed delivery mechanisms including the Moodle Learning Management System
- Mentoring takes place of recently-appointed lecturers for up to 5 years in all aspects of course delivery, ranging from syllabus planning, observation-based feedback on lecturing style, examination paper setting and marking,
- There is a large choice of elective courses, although their descriptions should be reviewed. It should be clarified whether all these courses are available each year to all students who have taken the prerequisite courses.

Findings for Bachelor - DS

- Nicosia branch program launched in Fall 2020; updated and being accredited in 2025.
- Processes are in place for the design, approval and monitoring of the delivery of courses
- The Department has good IT and Learning Management System support
- Mentoring and pedagogical training are in place, including several aspects of course delivery ranging from syllabus planning, observation-based feedback on lecturing quality and style, examination paper setting and marking, ...
- The mission of the program at the high-level is to equip students with foundational knowledge, technical skills, and practical insight to the interdisciplinary field of Data Science grounded in Computer Science, Math and Statistics, and Domain Expertise or Business Knowledge.
- The EEC was not provided examples of learning materials, student work and their assessment. Based on the provided curriculum and individual course description, the EEC finds that the mission is not fully aligned with the curriculum and composition of the individual courses:
 - There are relatively many Math courses that are not tailored for the DS program
 - There are relatively many CS courses that are not of the highest relevance for the DS program.
 - There are relatively few ML/AI courses.
 - The content of specialised ML/AI courses is not strongly connected to fundamentals in math, statistics, and CS.
 - There is a large choice of elective courses, but it is not clear how students can deepen their knowledge and/or specialise in some application domains, and/or obtain hand on skills.
 - There is little formal training in data science research methods and good practices.
 - There is small amount of project work exposing students to challenge-based learning.
 - The final project is rather short – 6 ECTS. Same with the industry placement – 6 ECTS, and it is optional.
 - There are no thematic learning areas, e.g. aligned with three established focal areas in research or application areas (e.g. DS for Science, DS for Cybersecurity, DS for Sustainability, DS for Business/Entrepreneurship)
 - Descriptions of the courses possibly were not updated accurately (including examples of gibberish?) providing possible misleading impressions of the course contents.
 - For some of the key courses, e.g. NN and Deep learning the learning objectives, modes of study and assessment do not align.
 - For some courses the amount of associated ECTS to the covered content and modes of study appears to be unreasonably high. E.g. the content of DM&ML I&II are typically covered in one 4-5 ECTS course rather than 12 ECTS.

Findings for [Title 3]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor - CS

- The Department has a well-developed delivery mechanisms including the Moodle Learning Management System
- The Department has mechanisms in place for seeking advice on a need-to basis from external stakeholders from industry on trends and priorities for new courses
- A mechanism is in place to act promptly on students' anonymous feedback to improve all aspects of course delivery
- The graduates from the Degree are well regarded by industrial stakeholders who host them as interns and employ them after graduation
- The students on the Degree feel well prepared for the employment in the IT industry

Strengths for Bachelor - DS

- The high-level curriculum structure is well-aligned with European practices of teaching DS bachelor at leading universities.
- The program in Nicosia is in good demand.
- The graduates from the Degree are well regarded by industrial stakeholders who host them as interns and employ them after graduation
- The students on the Degree feel well prepared for the employment in the IT industry
- Students publish jointly with their supervisors based on their final year projects.

Strengths for [Title 3]

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - CS

- The material taught in the compulsory courses in the BSc in Computer Science degree need urgent revision and update to reflect the rapid changes in the field
- The department should undertake a root-and-branch review of the requirements for mathematics, statistics and logic in the courses taught in later years of the degree programme and create a syllabus for a foundational course on "Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic for Computation".
- The currently available course descriptions need major revision.
 - The EEC strongly recommends to calibrate the amount of ECTS that a course grants, with the covered content, format, mode of study, and objectives/outcomes and more broadly the student work-hours expected — and to revise the course descriptions accordingly.
 - The EEC recommends keeping in mind that the students are expected to, upon graduation with their BSc, be at EQF-6, that is, are "Demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems" of the different subfields of Computer Science. In revising the course descriptions, the EEC recommends working backwards from the advanced courses and (i) ensuring that these courses have that among learning objectives, and (ii) build up previous courses to provide prerequisites.

- The syllabus for algorithms and data structures and principles of programming languages should be taught in an integrated manner to expose students, by the end of the first year, to sound methods in computation, and linked to principles of programming languages in order to appreciate different paradigms – imperative, functional, object-oriented, logic, and their influence on the choice of algorithms and data structures.
- Machine learning is currently taught as an elective course which is surprising given its growing importance and pervasive influence in the information economy. Principles of machine learning should be taught as a compulsory module by the second year of the degree programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - DS

- The EEC observes that the vision about DS program is not well-aligned yet with its offering in the curriculum and individual courses. The EEC advises to make the alignment stronger.
- The EEC strongly recommends tailoring Math fundamentals courses (notably, linear algebra) for the needs of the DS program and demonstrating their relevance for future specialised courses.
- The EEC strongly recommends increasing the number of highly relevant electives for the DS program such that students can deepen their knowledge and/or specialise in some application domains, and/or obtain hands-on skills.
- The EEC strongly recommends connecting some of the content of specialised and advanced ML/AI courses to fundamentals in math, statistics, and CS.
- The EEC recommends introducing formal training in data science research methods and good practices.
- The EEC strongly recommends increasing the possibilities for, and duration of, project work exposing students to challenge-based learning. The EEC strongly recommends to consider longer final project and longer industry placement.
- The EEC strongly recommends introducing thematic learning areas and/or application areas.
- The EEC strongly recommends improving the descriptions of the courses and possibly their content and alignment with learning goals and modes teaching/study and assessment.
- The course descriptions currently available need major revision. The EEC strongly recommends calibrating the ECTS credits granted to a course with its content, format, mode of study, and objectives/outcomes and more broadly the student work-hours expected — and to revise the course descriptions accordingly. As an example (please generalise these comments across the course catalogue):
 - For the course on NN & Deep learning:
 - The course description states the learning objectives at the level of conceptual understanding - student should be able to “describe” and “explain” NN architectures. According to the EQF level 6, however, the expectations are for a graduate to be beyond “describing and explaining”, and include “Demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems” — that is, “application for problem solving” is among the expected outcomes, yet this is not included in the objectives in the course description.
 - According to the course description, there is no connection to the “foundations” and there is no connection to “practice”.
 - However for that course, assessment and modes of study suggest that there will be some projects and homework, during which students would be expected to be getting some “hands on experiences”.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for [Title 3]

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>		
		<i>Bachelor - CS</i>	<i>Bachelor - DS</i>	[Title 3]
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially Compliant	Partially Compliant	Choose answer
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially Compliant	Partially Compliant	Choose answer
1.3	Public information	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
1.4	Information management	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

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

Sub-areas

- 1. Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 2. Practical training**
- 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. 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.

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 and 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.

Findings for Bachelor - CS

- The ECC observes that the intended practical training of students appears to be rather limited throughout the curriculum – particular the industry placement is short and optional, the final project is also short.
- The EEC observes that learning goals in the courses are not fully aligned with assessment methods.
- Students report that they can actively engage with the material through hands-on practice, and real datasets. However, their hands-on experience is limited, and they do not always feel well prepared for internships or jobs after the graduation.
- UNIC Nicosia has a track record of involving students in research. However, structurally, there is no involvement of students in research as part of the curriculum. There is no training in DS research methods.
- The EEC observes that inquiry-based and problem-based learning or challenge-based learning do not appear frequently as a learning method.
- Group assignments are practised. However, the EEC observed from the discussion with students that they do not seem to be benefiting from collaborative and peer learning. On the contrary, they mentioned that it is not uncommon for a minority of students do the work while the group are free-riding.

Findings for Bachelor - DS

See “Findings for Bachelor-CS”

Findings for [Title 3]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor - CS

- The students reflect positively on receiving timely grading and feedback on their work.
- The students reflect positively on availability of education staff for face-to-face meetings
- The students reflect positively on possibilities to do internships with industry
-

Strengths for Bachelor - DS

See “Strength for Bachelor-CS”

Strengths for [Title 3]

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - CS

- The EEC recommends to improve quality assurance with more regular and formal cycles of course evaluation and improvement, and providing teaching staff with timely pedagogical training for all aspects of course design and execution.
- The EEC suggests introducing structurally elements of challenge-based learning (e.g., data challenges, hackathons, case studies e.g. from science or application domains that are focal areas of the department.).
- The EEC suggests introducing structurally elements of collaborative and peer learning, e.g., code reviews and pair programming, peer evaluation of ML pitfalls from conceptualisation to modelling to evaluation, reproducing results, discussing privacy and ethical issues, etc.
- The EEC recommends establishing a PhD-Teaching Assistant (TA) program that can facilitate closer supervision and mentorship of student groups and individual students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - DS

See “Areas of Improvement and Recommendations for Bachelor-CS”. Additionally, for the BSc-DS:

- The EEC recommends providing students with more relevant electives.
- The EEC recommends providing students with clearer personalised paths, e.g., thematic areas of learning, different possibilities for specialisation in data science methodologies and techniques that would guide students to choose electives.
- The EEC suggests providing students with possibilities to connect data science to broader societal, ethical, and domain-specific contexts, e.g., to consider extending the privacy course to include data ethics, bias, and privacy and integrate relevant elements in other suitable courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for [Title 3]

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		
		Bachelor - CS	Bachelor - DS	[Title 3]
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 1. Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 2. Teaching staff number and status**
- 3. Synergies of teaching and research**

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.*

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. 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.

Findings for Bachelor - CS

- The Department extension at UNIC-Athens is currently composed of four faculty members. This includes one full professor, one assistant professor and two currently unranked faculty members. They cover several expertise areas such as data mining, machine learning, biostatistics, time series modelling, and data management.
- The EEC observes that the current plan is to hire two additional member every year, growing the Athens branch to 10 faculty members in support of both the BSc in CS and the BSc in DS, and with faculty members teaching courses for both programmes.
- EEC estimates that the current faculty members of the Department, both within UNIC and UNIC-Athens, have the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects.
- The EEC identified several apparent inconsistencies between the presentations during the visit and the material submitted for the evaluation and accreditation. As such, the EEC is not sure what specialised courses will be offered in the proposed programmes, and how those are mapped to the expertise areas of the to-be-hired faculty members, for example:
 - In the submitted material for the BSc-DS programme, there is a confusion about the NLP course appearing under both the codes COMP-448 and COMP-348.
 - More precisely, in the submitted material for the BSc-DS programme, on page 44, COMP-448 Natural Language Processing appears to be linked to the competencies of hire F9 — which is a profile with expertise in Machine Learning / Deep Learning / NLP. However on p. 49 COMP-448 corresponds to Computer Vision (Elective). On p 48, Natural Language Processing appears under COMP-348.
- The EEC also identified several apparent inconsistencies between the profiles of the projected faculty member recruitment for the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, and the profiles of the programmes that the extension of the Department will be proposing, for example:
 - In the presentation of the BSc-DS programme given during the site visit, NLP was listed as one of the specialised cross-domain major electives. However, it does not appear in the competences of the to be hired faculty F9 (or anyone else's). Instead, the Computer vision course under 448 is linked to the expertise of F9.
 - Neither NLP nor Computer vision are listed in the Curriculum Alignment Matrix making it difficult to disambiguate what electives will be effectively offered to students, in person, by a faculty member in UNIC-Athens.
- It was not clear to EEC whether new hires should be strong in, for example, the theory of machine learning or their applications to real-world problems.
- The EEC observed that there is no plan in place for visiting and adjunct Professors, special teaching staff and special scientists.
- The EEC observed, from the presentations given, examples of guest lecturers from industry for specific applicative topics.
- The EEC notes that in a steady-state situation after the first three years there will be about 400 students actively enrolled in the two programmes (BSc-CS and BSc-DS) at UNIC-Athens — supported by 10 faculty members. This would result in a Student-to-Staff-Ratio (SSR) of 40:1.
- The EEC detected an ambiguity regarding the program management, notably whether the two programmes will be managed by, and the faculty supported by, programme coordinators physically at UNIC-Athens:
 - In the written material submitted for evaluation and accreditation, the two positions as “program coordinators” for the BSc-CS and BSc-DS programmes were listed as “not yet appointed”
 - During the site-visit, the presentations of the two programmes were given by the current programme coordinators for the programmes at UNIC — who were also part of the session of the site-visit otherwise labeled “**ONLY** with members of the teaching staff on each course” (emphasis from the site-visit agenda), suggesting that the two programme coordinators would be part of the full-time and permanent UNIC-Athens faculty.

- Yet, in the presentations of the department and of the programmes, these two programme coordinators were not listed as faculty members at UNIC-Athens.

Findings for Bachelor - DS

See “Findings for Bachelor-CS”

Findings for [Title 3]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor - CS

- The currently identified UNIC-Athens faculty members are active researchers in their fields. They conduct application-inspired research aiming to make societal impact. They contribute to Open Science, e.g., by publishing open datasets that can foster research development on societally important topics notably, in healthcare.
- There are indicators of a very good faculty–student engagement within the Department
- There are indicators of a very good engagement between Alumni and the Department
- Faculty members are well-informed about quality assurance aspects including individual course improvement, and on how to deal with potential misconduct of students.
- Faculty members are well-informed about the student safety aspects.
- The Department provides mentorship for new hires, and informs them about expectation for promotion to higher ranks.
- New hires may apply for, and can obtain, an UNIC Seed-grant.

Strengths for Bachelor - DS

See “Strengths for Bachelor-CS”

Strengths for [Title 3]

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - CS

- The EEC estimates that the current hiring plan introduces a risk in not having sufficient well-qualified staff in place to deliver the programmes at the quality that is expected, and to contribute to evolving the programme as the state-of-the art advances.
- The EEC recommends establishing a PhD-Teaching Assistant (TA) program to boost the development of robust and vibrant ecosystem at UNIC Athens facilitating reduced load, and higher quality research and education, synergy between research and education and industrial collaboration.

- The EEC also recommends establishing a programme for Visiting Professors for the same reasons, as well as to foster further help with establishing a more competitive DS course offering and strengthening the curriculum, research strategy and education vision of the department.
- The EEC suggests providing pedagogical training beyond the current requirement helping existing staff and especially for to-be-hired staff to develop rich portfolio of teaching methods including flipped classrooms, challenged-based learning, and research-inspired education.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - DS

See "Areas of Improvement and Recommendations for Bachelor-CS". Additionally, for the BSc-DS:

- The EEC notes that it may be difficult to hire experts in some of the topics, such as deep learning, generative AI, and modern NLP, at short notice. The EEC urges UNIC-Athens to consider opening positions and to start scouting for qualified educators (with PhD and publication track record in deep learning, generative AI, and modern NLP) as soon as the financial situation allows. An alternative plan could be to grow local talent at UNIC (e.g., through proposing PhD fellowships within these fields), specifically targeting recruitment at UNIC-Athens.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for [Title 3]

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		
		Bachelor - CS	Bachelor - DS	[Title 3]
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially Compliant	Partially Compliant	Choose answer
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

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

Sub-areas

- 1. Student admission, processes and criteria**
- 2. Student progression**
- 3. Student recognition**
- 4. Student certification**

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.*

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.*

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. 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?*

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.

Findings for Bachelor - CS

- The requirements for admission to the BSc courses are stated clearly in the publicly available website.
- The English language requirements are mentioned
- The ECTS credits for the courses are explicitly stated
- The process for credit transfer is documented
- The Student Admission support is in place in UNIC-Athens mirroring the well-refined processes established in UNIC-Nicosia

Findings for Bachelor - DS

See “Findings for Bachelor-CS”

Findings for [Title 3]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor - CS

- The university has name recognition in Greece with news stories in the media heralding the new UNIC-Athens campus
- The well-tested processes for admission have been refined over many years and are being translated to Athens.
- Given the cultural affinity between the two countries the changes during transfer is minimal

Strengths for Bachelor - DS

See “Strengths for Bachelor-CS”

Strengths for [Title 3]

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - CS

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - DS

See “Areas of Improvement and Recommendations for Bachelor-CS”. Additionally, for the BSc-DS:

Areas of improvement and recommendations for [Title 3]

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		
		<i>Bachelor - CS</i>	<i>Bachelor - DS</i>	[Title 3]
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.2	Student progression	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
4.4	Student certification	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

1. Teaching and Learning resources
2. Physical resources
3. Human support resources
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*



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



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.

Findings for Bachelor - CS

- The planning for the library and access to online learning resources for the UNIC-Athens campus has been undertaken and will reflect the current provisions at UNIC-Nicosia.
- Recreational facilities have been arranged with the local sports complex with support from the mayor and municipal authorities.
- Links with the Greek Migration Office have been established for overseas students with visa issues.

Findings for Bachelor - DS

See “Findings for Bachelor-CS”

Findings for [Title 3]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor - CS

- Once built students will have access to a state-of-the-art campus in UNIC-Athens

Strengths for Bachelor - DS

See “Strengths for Bachelor-CS”

Strengths for [Title 3]

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - CS

- On-campus counselling and psychological support provided by KESY at the UNIC Nicosia campus. This support should be translated to UNIC Athens as well.
- As the physical infrastructure is being completed, it is unclear whether the buildings are friendly for students who are physically challenged and visually impaired.
- New robots and computers should be part of the teaching resources.
- It is unclear whether access to libraries and laboratories will be given out-of-hours and weekend access to students, which will be especially important for part-time students.



Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor - DS

See “Areas of Improvement and Recommendations for Bachelor-CS”. Additionally, for the BSc-DS:

Areas of improvement and recommendations for [Title 3]

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>		
		<i>Bachelor - CS</i>	<i>Bachelor - DS</i>	[Title 3]
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	N/A	N/A	Choose answer
5.2	Physical resources	N/A	N/A	Choose answer
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	Choose answer
5.4	Student support	Compliant	Compliant	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 each programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The project of creating a new university branch, and with that extensions of departments and programs, clearly is exciting — and the faculty and admin personnel that the EEC met during the site visit were all enthusiastic about being part of the project, despite the complications, overhead, and disturbances that it will impose on their professional (and, in view of the transitioning / moving personnel for training new colleagues in Athens) and personal lives.

The faculty members from the Department at UNIC were committed to accompany and help their future colleagues at the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens to succeed — and the future faculty members at UNIC-Athens that we met were likewise optimistic.

In short, the EEC observed, and appreciated, a shared ambition and enthusiasm for this project.

With that said, the EEC has some hesitations and reservations. Firstly, regarding the people who will commence and be part of this adventure at UNIC-Athens — their quality, enthusiasm, and excellence, are not in question, but we are concerned that their numbers would be inadequate and venture in Athens might be under-resourced.

Although 4–5 faculty members may appear sufficient to deliver the courses required immediately for the first year of the two BSc programmes, it is suboptimal for creating an academic and scientific environment for initiating a “research university branch”, and for providing a “boutique” and “deluxe” environment for the initial cohorts of students. It also does not allow to absorb incidents (for example, if a faculty member becoming incapacitated in some way) without impact on program quality.

The EEC recognises the quality of the educational programmes proposed to be offered at the extension of the Department at UNIC-Athens, as evidenced by both the student satisfaction, and by the documented employability of graduates from the programmes as presently delivered at UNIC.

Notwithstanding, the EEC has found that both of the Bachelors programme of the department are in need of refreshing, to ensure the coherency of each course, the currency of the programmes, and alignment with European standards. Specifically, the EEC finds that the learning objectives in the advanced-level course descriptions do not capture the level of knowledge and skills expected for a programme at EQF Level-6 — and that the course succession leading to, by providing prerequisites for, these advanced-level course is not explicit in the course descriptions. The EEC also find that, according to the course descriptions and the information gathered during the site-visit, a misalignment between the course contents, the student work, and the number of ECTS credits that they contribute.

The intuition of the EEC is that part of the solution to these misalignments may be to add additional lab exercises, assignments, and homework (in addition to, not in substitution of, the current contact-hours of the courses) — overseen by the faculty members, but (so as to not increase their workload) monitored/graded by lab assistants / TAs. The EEC encourages the faculty members to consider the pedagogical aspects, and the Department, School, and University management to support these initiatives.

Overall, the EEC finds that the Department, the faculty members strive to attain high quality in their offerings, are experienced instructors and professors, and are enthusiastic about both the programmes, and being part of the UNIC-Athens adventure. This gives the EEC confidence that they will be able to competently address the various recommendations given in this report.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Thomas Heide Clausen (chair)	
Damal K. Arvind (member)	
Mykola Pechenizkiy (member)	
Yiannis Zapitis (member)	
Elina Mavrikiou (student member)	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 2025-05-31

