

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

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

In Greek:

Εφαρμοσμένες Τέχνες με Ειδικεύσεις στην Γραφιστική, Εσωτερικός Σχεδιασμός, Φωτογραφία, και Μόδα [4 ακαδημαϊκά χρόνια, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BDes)]

In English:

Design with specializations in Graphics, Interior, Photography and Fashion [4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Design (BDes)]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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

A. Introduction

The onsite visit of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) to Alexander College, Larnaca took place on 1 December 2025, according to the agenda provided by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). The programmes under evaluation were the Bachelor in Design (BDes) with specializations in Graphics, Interior, Photography and Fashion (4 academic years / 240 ECTS).

The EEC consisted of:

- **Prof. Javier Martin (Chair)** – Berlin International University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- **Prof. Domen Fras** – Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- **Prof. Annamari Vänskä** – Aalto University, Finland
- **Prof. Gil Pasternak** – De Montfort University, Leicester, UK
- **Ms. Katerina Kaisidou (Student Member)** – Cyprus University of Technology

The visit followed a full-day schedule that included meetings with the institutional leadership, the Internal Evaluation Committee, programme directors, faculty, administrative staff, students, graduates, and external stakeholders. The day opened with a presentation by the President of the Board of Directors, senior management, and members of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, offering insight into the institution's vision, strategy, structure and quality assurance processes.

Subsequently, the EEC met with the Coordination Committee of the BDes program, including a representative of Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), overseen the BDes, being a UK franchise degree. These meetings focused on curriculum design, learning outcomes, ECTS allocation, assessment procedures, student support mechanisms, quality assurance processes, and alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

A guided tour of the facilities followed, including studios, computer labs, library services, IT infrastructure, and workshop areas. The EEC met and engaged with staff members responsible for academic quality, IT, library operations, and studio management, gaining a clear picture of the material and digital resources available to students.

The EEC also held dedicated meetings with teaching staff from all years of study, to discuss their qualifications, research interests, pedagogical approaches, and course-level assessment strategies. A separate session with administrative staff provided additional information on admissions, registrar processes, student support, Erasmus+ coordination, and careers guidance.

Meetings with current students, including an Erasmus student, and graduates across all specializations offered valuable insight into the learning experience, perceived strengths of the programmes, and areas for improvement. Participants shared their views openly, contributing significantly to the committee's understanding of the programmes' impact.

The external stakeholder session included representatives from industry, professional associations, fashion and textile companies, interior design practices, makerspaces, and creative organisations. Their feedback offered meaningful evidence regarding graduate employability, industry expectations, and the relevance of the curriculum to local and international professional environments.

The visit concluded with a final discussion with the programme leadership and quality assurance representatives, allowing for clarifications and closing remarks.

The EEC acknowledges the constructive and collaborative atmosphere throughout the entire visit. Stakeholders demonstrated openness and readiness to provide information, enabling the committee to carry out its evaluation effectively.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Javier Martín Fuentes	Chair of the committee	Berlin International University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Annamari Vänskä	Professorial member	Aalto University, Finland
Domen Fras	Professorial member	Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Gil Pasternak	Professorial member	De Montfort University, Leicester, UK
Katerina Kaisidou	Student member	Cyprus University of Technology

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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
 - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
 - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
 - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
 - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*

- *qualification awarded*
- *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- *pass rates*
- *learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

The EEC finds that the programme presents a clear and well-structured study plan, with a logical distribution of compulsory modules and specialisation modules that enables students to develop progressively towards one of the four pathways. The project-based structure is well aligned with established pedagogical practices in design disciplines, where learning through projects, iterations, and critique is central to the acquisition of design competencies. This approach also reflects contemporary professional standards and supports students in developing practical and conceptual skills in an integrated manner.

The EEC understands, based on documentation, the onsite visit, and the information available on the website, that the BDes is currently delivered as four distinct branches (Graphics, Interior, Photography, Fashion), which occasionally work together in the compulsory courses. However, this should be done the opposite way, strengthening the official degree as a Bachelor of Design. This should be clearly communicated across all official channels, including the programme website and the graduation certificate. Students specialise in one of four tracks, but the award remains a single Bachelor of Design.

In contrast to earlier revisions, the EEC recognises the BDes programme as a single Bachelor in Design. Accordingly, the structure and content of the programme should more explicitly reinforce the shared identity of a Bachelor in Design. Opportunities for specialisation could even be considered after the first year, allowing students time to build core design foundations before branching into specific pathways. However, the relatively small number of modules currently available limits the level of flexibility achievable, and this should be considered in future curriculum planning.

The curriculum shows efforts to incorporate contemporary developments—such as sustainability, digital technologies, and AI—though the extent of updating varies across pathways. Some modules remain outdated or insufficiently aligned with current disciplinary developments.

ECTS workload is clearly distributed in module descriptors. Transversal competencies (teamwork, communication, digital literacy, entrepreneurial awareness) are embedded throughout the curriculum. The programme is delivered entirely in English and supports international mobility through Erasmus+ partnerships.

To further strengthen the unity of the programme, the committee recommends exploring options that would allow students to draw from different specialisations, and—where appropriate—to graduate with a Bachelor in Design without a specific specialisation, should they wish to construct a more transdisciplinary trajectory. This flexibility would align with international trends in design education, where hybrid and cross-disciplinary profiles are increasingly valued.

Quality assurance operates through both internal mechanisms (Internal Quality Committee, programme coordination) and external oversight from Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), including the review of an External Examiner. This ensures alignment with UK Office for Students requirements and maintains a consistent monitoring structure for high-standard teaching, learning, and assessment.

Students contribute to programme development mainly through informal communication, supported by close relations with staff, although more formalised structures such as a Student Council are not yet in place. External stakeholders contribute actively to the study plan development through lectures, project collaboration, material support, and internships.

Graduate feedback indicates positive employability, and the institution has implemented scholarships and financial support to reduce dropout rates linked mainly to financial hardship.

Strengths

- Dual quality assurance structure (internal QA and CCCU oversight) ensures robust monitoring of academic standards.
- Close student–staff communication enables rapid responsiveness to student needs.
- Genuine efforts to update the curriculum with sustainability, AI, and industry-oriented content.
- Clear ECTS allocation and accessible programme information.
- English-language delivery and Erasmus+ partnerships facilitate international study.
- Active involvement of external stakeholders in teaching, projects, and internships.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Unclear programme identity, with the degree and specialisations not correctly communicated: Clarify and officially present the programme identity. The BDes is a Bachelor of Design, not four separate degrees. This must be explicitly stated on the website, in promotional material, and on the certificate, with specialisations clearly framed as optional tracks within one degree.
- Pathways are insufficiently integrated, leading to gaps in shared design knowledge and programme coherence: Strengthen programme coherence by reinforcing shared design foundations and integrating pathways more effectively.
- Student participation in programme development is informal and ad hoc: Formalise student participation through a structured Student Council with regular meetings and documented contributions and recommendations to programme development.
- Pathways contents are uneven and not consistently updated: Systematically update and modernise pathway content to ensure equal alignment with contemporary academic and industry expectations across all specialisations.
- Flows between programme and pathway-specific outcomes are incoherent, affecting EQF alignment: Enhance EQF alignment by strengthening progression between shared competencies and pathway-specific outcomes.
- Alumni data collection and graduate employment tracking are largely unofficial: Establish more structured mechanisms for collecting alumni data and analysing graduate employment trends.
- External stakeholder engagement is informal and irregular, limiting their contribution to quality assurance: Formalise external stakeholder involvement through regularised feedback mechanisms and participation in QA processes.
- Programme content and delivery descriptions are not fully aligned with EQF conventions or European HEI standards: The description of content and delivery methods need to better align with the conventions across similar or equivalent degrees at European HEIs.

- Limited familiarity of staff and QA teams with current standards and contemporary programme content: Staff and quality assurance teams should make themselves more familiar with current standards and state-of-the-art content, terminology, and knowledge offered in similar programmes.

Regarding the study plan structure and content, disclosed by the study plan and module descriptions, the EEC has the following recommendations:

General:

- Harmonise, optimise, and limit the amount of essential literature across the courses to an appropriate number of titles relevant to the course content and students' abilities.
- Revise the learning outcomes using measurable action verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy). Ensure that the outcomes are aligned with the course objectives, assessment methods, and learning activities.

Fashion pathway:

- The advanced garment construction module, *Advanced Fashion Construction and Creative Practice*, should be introduced earlier in the programme to strengthen technical progression and better support students in developing more complex work in the final years.

Graphic Design pathway:

- The content related to post-production techniques, reprographics and production processes should be integrated earlier in the pathway and embedded within other relevant modules.
- Some of the technologies taught in the *Innovation & Practice in Graphic Design* module should be introduced earlier in the programme.

Interior Design pathway:

- The structure of the programme presents several issues with regards to knowledge acquisition and progression. The content and learning outcomes are rather limited for modules carrying such a high number of credits. These issues are further produced/enhanced by the small number of modules and the narrow range of topics they address.
- The module *Fundamentals of Interior Design* presents content and learning outcomes at an advanced level, which is not appropriate for a first-semester course.
- The module *Textiles & Fabrics* focuses on a very specific and limited topic, positioned in a late semester and assigned a high number of credits. This does not align with standard international practice.
- The programme does not address key topics relevant to the discipline, such as working with buildings heritage contexts, or adaptive reuse strategies, all of which are increasingly linked to sustainability.

Photography pathway

- The photography specialisation appears underdeveloped, mixing programme-related content with generic subjects of unclear relevance to design-industry practice. Given that students graduate with a BA in Design, the curriculum should prioritise skills and knowledge directly aligned with contemporary design workflows and professional expectations in the creative and professional design industries alike.
- The pathway is missing, and could significantly benefit from including, essential industry-oriented content such as colour management, pre-press processes, digital workflows, image processing, visual storytelling, editorial narratives, and integration with styling or art direction. These omissions limit students' preparedness for design-driven photographic work and reduce the relevance of the specialisation.
- There are overlaps among courses (e.g. studio, advertising, and commercial photography) while other modules, including fine art or abstract photography and inexplicit topics like "photographic aesthetics" or "experimental photography", do not clearly support development as design-environment practitioners.
- The sequence of courses lacks pedagogical progression. Key, basic subjects like visual communication appear only in semester 8, while experimental photography is placed too late, at a point when students should be refining final project ideas rather than beginning exploratory work. The timing undermines structured skill development.
- Students are not clearly taught essential design-oriented theoretical knowledge, such as brand strategy, consumer psychology, professional and representational ethics, media theory, or design-oriented research methods.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
 - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
 - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

Findings

Teaching and assessment are aligned with the approved course descriptions and intended learning outcomes, with internal monitoring supported by the external examiner. The programme demonstrates responsiveness to students' diverse needs through strong staff–student communication, Student Affairs support, and the use of varied assessment methods that address different learning profiles.

General and digital competencies are embedded across modules and gradually developed. A combination of project-based and challenge-based learning, workshops, field trips, and lectures is used across the programme. However, students reported uneven learning experiences across pathways, particularly in the Photography specialisation, indicating inconsistent implementation of teaching approaches.

The integration of emerging technologies—including AI and industry-standard software—is evident, though resource constraints place limitations on availability and access to tools and equipment. Collaborations with organisations such as the Youth Makerspace help mitigate these challenges but do not fully address the disparities identified by students.

Practical training is effectively supported through a compulsory 10-ECTS internship, which is well-received by students and strengthened by active external stakeholder engagement. Assessment procedures include double marking and oversight by an External Examiner, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Strengths

- Teaching and assessment aligned with approved course descriptions and learning outcomes.
- Internal QA and external examiner verification ensure consistent standards.
- Strong Student Affairs support and close staff–student communication.
- Diverse assessment methods accommodating different strengths and learning styles.
- Use of project-based and experiential learning methods.
- Integration of AI and industry-standard software.
- A compulsory 10-ECTS internship supported by industry partners.
- Double marking and external examiner oversight enhance objectivity.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Uneven student experiences and teaching quality across pathways, particularly Photography: Address uneven student experiences across pathways, especially in Photography, by strengthening internal coordination and ensuring equal teaching quality across all tracks.
- Limited access to technological resources and tools: Continue expanding access to advanced technologies and industry-standard tools to reduce resource-related disparities.
- Non-standardised teaching approaches and imbalanced use of theoretical and practical teaching methods across pathways undermine a positive student experience: Improve consistency in the use of diverse teaching methods to ensure high student satisfaction across all specialisations.
- Insufficient mechanisms for feedback gathering and analysis: Develop formal, systematic mechanisms for collecting and using student feedback, particularly regarding internships and applied learning activities.
- Lack of clarity regarding internship workload in relation to ECTS: Describe the working load for the internship in total working hours (not weeks), related to the specific ECTS.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

The teaching staff of the BDes programme is competent and able to ensure quality in teaching, learning, and assessment. A core permanent team is complemented by a significant number of visiting and international lecturers, enriching the academic environment. Staffing levels and workload distribution are appropriate, supported by a low student-to-instructor ratio that enables personalised guidance.

Recent additions of PhD-qualified staff and others currently pursuing doctoral studies strengthen the academic profile of the programme and support continuity into the MDes. Staff remain active in exhibitions, research, and industry projects, ensuring teaching remains contemporary and professionally relevant. Students expressed high satisfaction with the accessibility, support, and guidance provided by their instructors. Strong student outcomes—particularly in the Fashion pathway—reflect the effectiveness of the teaching team.

Strengths

- Staff have strong professional experience in their specialist areas.
- Collegiality and low hierarchy contribute to a positive working environment.
- Recent inclusion of PhD-qualified and doctoral-level staff enhances academic capacity.
- New staff are effectively inducted into the teaching team.
- Staff remain active in exhibitions, research, and industry practice, keeping teaching current.
- Students report high satisfaction with the teaching team.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Limited structured engagement with current disciplinary research and emerging technologies: Continue strengthening research engagement, with emphasis on relevant disciplinary developments, sustainable design, and emerging technologies.
- Insufficient integration of research outputs into teaching and curriculum development: Reinforce the connection between research and teaching to support programme innovation and smooth progression from BDes to future MDes.

- Uneven resource distribution across specialisations, particularly in Photography:
Allocate additional resources to the Photography pathway to ensure parity with other specialisations.
- Lack of clarity and long-term planning in staffing composition and workload balance:
Clarify and monitor the balance of permanent, part-time, and visiting staff for long-term sustainability.
- Limited opportunities for formalised staff development and international exposure:
Expand staff development opportunities, including Erasmus+ and international collaborations.
- Risk of variability in teaching quality as staff take on responsibilities across programmes:
Maintain close oversight of teaching quality, particularly as staff also contribute to the new MDes.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

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

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

Findings

The programme demonstrates a generally sound and structured approach to student admission, progression, recognition, and certification. Pre-defined and published admission regulations are in place, outlining academic qualifications, language proficiency, and portfolio requirements. These processes appear transparent and consistently implemented, with clear guidance on transfers between programmes and from other institutions. The criteria are sufficiently detailed to support fair and informed decision-making.

Student progression is governed by institutional regulations that are publicly available and implemented across all modules. Assessment principles, responsibilities, and learning methodologies are well documented. Students are informed of assessment requirements, deadlines, and criteria in advance. Progression is tracked through formal publication of grades, examination procedures and prerequisite structures, indicating that monitoring tools are functional and embedded within the programme's quality assurance processes.

Formal recognition of prior learning is addressed primarily through credit transfer, with evaluations conducted by the Academic Committee. However, current documentation does not explicitly reference the Lisbon Recognition Convention, nor does it include policies for the recognition of non-formal or informal learning. The lack of publicly accessible information in this area may limit transparency and consistency for prospective applicants, particularly international candidates.

Student certification processes are clearly defined, and graduates receive documentation that reflects the qualification obtained, including achieved learning outcomes, level, content, and status of studies. This aligns with the expected standards of student certification. However, the certificate should better address both the program description and the graduation achievements of the students.

Strengths

- Clear, published admission regulations including portfolio requirements.
- Transparent assessment principles ensuring fairness and consistency.
- Strong use of studio-based and formative assessment methods.
- Well-structured progression monitoring through institutional procedures.
- Comprehensive certification documents detailing learning outcomes and level.
- Clear procedures for internal and external student transfers.
- Student assessment appeal process is formalised and accessible.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- No explicit reference to Lisbon Recognition Convention: Publish a recognition policy aligned with LRC principles.
- No policy for non-formal or informal learning: Develop and publicise RPL procedures covering informal routes.
- Recognition information not easily accessible: Add clear recognition guidelines to the website.
- Potential inconsistency in international transfer procedures: Standardise evaluation criteria and publish examples.
- Portfolio assessment criteria are not publicly detailed: Publish transparent portfolio evaluation criteria or even rubrics to help applicants understand expectations and prepare for the application process effectively.
- Timing and management of programme transfers may cause confusion: Create a concise, user-friendly guide for students outlining timelines and required steps.
- No formal procedure for requesting deadline extensions or deferrals: Establish and publish clear guidelines to support students who need extensions for personal reasons or deferral of coursework in more serious circumstances, including required evidence, application timeframes, and decision timelines.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Partially 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.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

Findings

The programme benefits from several notable strengths in teaching, learning, and student support. Overall, students experience a supportive learning environment enriched by dedicated and caring staff who demonstrate strong commitment to student development. The favourable staff–student ratio further enhances personalised learning, while students report being well informed about available academic, administrative, and welfare services. Digital learning resources (such as the VLE, specialist software suites, and access to the Cyprus Libraries Consortium) provide substantial support for coursework and independent study. Workspaces and studios are available throughout the day, enabling flexible and student-centred learning practices.

However, a number of challenges limit the extent to which the programme fully aligns with its stated standards. While current facilities enable students to meet programme requirements, several specialist resources are underdeveloped in comparison with contemporary academic and industry expectations, especially the photography studio, model-making facilities, and printing infrastructure. This restricts opportunities for students to acquire a broader set of practice-based skills. Similarly, the physical library is rather small, considering the number of programmes and students serving, storing a somewhat outdated and limited book collection and no designated quiet study rooms, which could become a matter for great concern should student numbers increase, on the programme and / or beyond.

Human support resources are a major strength, but mechanisms for student feedback are not yet formalised; the absence of a structured channel of communication such as a Student Voice committee limits consistent student feedback regarding potential programme improvement. Student support for personal issues is readily available, although the introduction of a designated Pastoral Care Tutor would strengthen coordination and ensure clearer pathways for students needing additional assistance.

Strengths

- Excellent staff commitment and nurturing academic culture.
- Favourable staff–student ratio allowing personalised learning.
- Clear systems for learning-support adjustments and inclusive practice.
- Accessible workspaces available after hours.
- Active encouragement of participation in competitions, exhibitions, and similar co-curricular engagement activities.
- Erasmus+ mobility opportunities supporting international experience.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Underdeveloped specialist facilities: Invest in enhanced photography, printing, and model-making infrastructure to enhance adherence to academic and industry standards.
- Limited diversification of workspaces: Create additional specialist and flexible studio areas to broaden skills development.
- Limited library book collection and effective study areas: Expand holdings with current academic texts and especially practitioner portfolios, and develop quiet study rooms.
- Lack of formal student feedback structures: Establish a Student Voice committee from across year groups for systematic dialogue and programme action planning.
- Unclear resource planning for future growth: Develop a transparent, space-focused resource expansion plan aligned with projected student numbers.
- Pastoral support not formalised: Appoint an existing staff member as a Pastoral Care Tutor to coordinate personal student support and sensitive referrals.
- Inconsistent industry engagement: Introduce a structured guest-speaker and industry-link programme of talks and consider including virtual sessions to reach international practitioners as well.
- The Photography pathway is severely under-resourced with small, poorly equipped studio and basic cameras, all of which fall significantly short of industry standards, leaving students unfamiliar with contemporary professional tools and workflows.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) concludes that the Bachelor of Design (BDes) at Alexander College demonstrates several noteworthy strengths, including a dedicated teaching staff, a supportive learning environment, strong staff–student communication, and the potential to increasingly gain international orientation through English-language delivery and Erasmus+ partnerships. The programme benefits from a dual quality assurance structure supported by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), ensuring alignment with established academic standards and the UK Office for Students requirements.

The programme shows genuine commitment to contemporary topics such as sustainability, AI, and digital technologies, and students achieve positive outcomes, particularly in pathways like Fashion. External stakeholders engage actively with teaching and internships, contributing meaningful insights into industry standards and employability trends.

However, the EEC identified several structural and pedagogical issues requiring significant attention to ensure that the programme fully aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and CYQAA expectations. Chief among these is the need to reinforce the identity of the BDes as one unified degree with four specialisations, rather than four parallel programmes. This lack of coherence affects curriculum alignment, public information accuracy, and the clarity of qualification awarded. The official degree title must be consistently communicated across all platforms, including the website, promotional materials, and graduation certificates.

Further improvements are required to modernise curriculum content across all pathways, address uneven student experiences (especially in Photography), expand specialist facilities, and strengthen the systematic involvement of students and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes. The curricula presents clear areas for improvement that should enhance EQF alignment—including clearer progression of learning outcomes, and improved mapping of competencies.

The EEC recognises substantial potential within the programme, supported by committed staff and motivated students. With targeted adjustments, improved resource planning, and stronger structural coherence, the BDes can achieve significantly higher academic robustness, international comparability, and strategic alignment with European design education standards.

Conditions

1. Clarify and officially present the programme identity. The BDes is a Bachelor of Design, not four separate degrees. This must be explicitly stated on the website, in promotional material, and on the certificate, with specialisations clearly framed as optional tracks within one degree.
2. Strengthen programme coherence by reinforcing shared design foundations and integrating pathways more effectively.
3. Enhance EQF alignment by strengthening progression between shared competencies and pathway-specific outcomes.
4. The description of content and delivery methods need to better align with the conventions across similar or equivalent degrees at European HEIs.
5. Revise the learning outcomes using measurable action verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy). Ensure that the outcomes are aligned with the course objectives, assessment methods, and learning activities.
6. Allocate additional resources to the Photography pathway to ensure parity with other specialisations.
7. Develop and make public recognition procedures of prior learning (RPL) covering formal and informal routes in alignment with LRC principles.
8. Standardise evaluation criteria for international transfer procedures and make these publicly accessible examples.
9. Publish transparent portfolio evaluation criteria or even rubrics to help applicants understand expectations and prepare for the application process effectively.
10. Create a concise, user-friendly guide for students seeking to transfer between programmes outlining timelines and required steps.
11. Establish and publish clear guidelines to support students who need extensions for personal reasons or deferral of coursework in more serious circumstances, including required evidence, application timeframes, and decision timelines.



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Date: 3.12.2025