

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:**

**In English:**

Design Innovation and Creative Industries [1,5  
academic years, 90 ECTS, Master of Design (MDes)]

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

**In Greek:** 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].

In English: Concentrations

## 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). Among the programmes under evaluation was the Master in Design Innovation and Creative Industries (MDes), a 1.5-year postgraduate degree of 90 ECTS.

The EEC consisted of:

- Prof. Javier Martín (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 began with a presentation by the institutional leadership, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, and the programme coordinators, providing an overview of the College's strategic priorities, quality assurance processes, and the academic positioning of the MDes.

The EEC held focused discussions with the MDes programme leadership and academic team, addressing key aspects of curriculum design, intended learning outcomes, research orientation, ECTS allocation, assessment methods, and alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and relevant ESG standards. Particular attention was given to the progression from the BDes to the MDes, the programme's interdisciplinary ambitions, and its relevance to the creative industries sector in Cyprus and internationally.

A tour of the facilities—including studios, computer labs, library services, workshops, and digital resources—allowed the committee to assess the adequacy of the learning environment for postgraduate-level study. Meetings with administrative staff provided further insight into student support structures, admissions processes, the operation of Student Affairs, Erasmus+ mobility opportunities, and research-related services.

The EEC also met with graduates and external stakeholders who were familiar with the institution and its emerging postgraduate profile. Their feedback offered valuable perspectives on employability, the needs of the creative industries, and the relevance of the planned learning outcomes to professional practice.

The visit concluded with a final meeting with the programme leadership and quality assurance representatives, providing the opportunity to clarify outstanding questions and reflect on the programme's development and future potential.



The EEC acknowledges the constructive and collaborative atmosphere throughout the visit. The institution demonstrated openness, professionalism, and a strong commitment to enhancing the academic quality and strategic positioning of its postgraduate offering.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| <i>Name</i>                  | <i>Position</i>        | <i>University</i>                                                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Javier Martín Fuentes</b> | Chair of the committee | Berlin International University of Applied Sciences, Germany       |
| <b>Annamarie Vänskä</b>      | Professorial member    | Aalto University, Finland                                          |
| <b>Domen Fras</b>            | Professorial member    | Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia |
| <b>Gil Pasternak</b>         | Professorial member    | De Montfort University, Leicester, UK                              |
| <b>Katerina Kaisidou</b>     | 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 MDes presents a clear vision for a postgraduate programme, offering an appropriate balance between advanced design research, theoretical depth, and practice-led exploration. The structure is simple yet robust, providing students with essential competencies in research, ethics, strategic design, leadership, and speculative and future-oriented design practices. The integration of Artificial Intelligence across modules reflects an awareness of current developments in the design field.

The first-year courses build a solid foundation for the graduation project developed in the module Capstone Project, which is further supported by the *Research and Practice Seminar*. This sequencing supports a coherent learning journey from advanced conceptual and methodological grounding toward independent research and creative practice.

Quality assurance is overseen both internally (Internal Quality Committee, Programme Coordinator) and externally through Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). CCCU provides oversight in line with the UK Office for Students requirements and appoints an External Examiner who reviews academic standards and currency, content, and assessment integrity.

The institution demonstrates awareness of the needs of local industry, the creative sector, and BA graduates progressing into postgraduate study. Furthermore, external stakeholder and alumni feedback informed the development of the programme, and the curriculum shows a clear intention to integrate contemporary trends, including AI, sustainability, and speculative design. However, the programme's ten aims are extremely ambitious for a 90-ECTS structure, raising concerns regarding the feasibility of achieving all intended learning outcomes within three semesters.

The curriculum ensures smooth progression across modules and avoids substantial overlaps. Regular staff meetings and the small scale of the institution support effective coordination and communication among instructors.

The programme embeds transversal competencies—teamwork, communication, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial awareness—across modules rather than through standalone courses. This integration is appropriate for a Master's level.

At Master's level, the programme benefits from more emphasis on independent study and research-led learning as indicated in the limited lecture teaching hours. However, the module descriptions clearly outline workload categories, with a misalignment between workload breakdowns and actual contact hours, which could lead to inconsistent student workload distribution and unexpected and insufficient results.

The programme is fully taught in English and supports internationalisation through Erasmus+ mobility. External stakeholders contribute to the programme by offering lectures, feedback, material support, and internship opportunities.

### Strengths

- Clear and strong programme structure, offering a coherent progression into advanced design research and innovation.
- Integration of contemporary topics such as AI, speculative design, ethics, and leadership.
- Well-sequenced curriculum linking foundational modules to the Capstone Project.
- Dual quality assurance system (internal QA + CCCU oversight) ensuring high academic standards.
- Active involvement of external stakeholders in teaching, projects, and internship opportunities.
- Strong communication and coordination mechanisms among staff.
- English-language delivery and Erasmus+ partnerships contribute to internationalisation.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Ambitious programme aims disproportionate to 90 ECTS: Review and prioritise the programme aims to ensure they are feasible and realistically achievable within a 90-ECTS, three-semester structure.
- Workload misalignment between module descriptors and actual contact hours: Revise module descriptors to ensure that contact hours, delivery methods, and independent study expectations are correctly aligned and appropriate for Master's level.
- Potential inconsistencies in ECTS-to-workload relationship across modules: Conduct an internal audit of ECTS allocations to ensure that workload, intended learning outcomes, and assessment weighting are aligned with EQF Level 7 expectations.
- Student participation in programme development remains informal: Establish a formally elected Student Council with a two-year mandate, fully integrated into academic committees and QA processes.
- Limited evidence of systematic external stakeholder integration into QA processes: Formalise stakeholder involvement through structured feedback mechanisms and regular participation in programme review cycles.

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

| Sub-area |                                                  | <i>Non-compliant/<br/>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                               | Not applicable                                          |
| 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 approved module descriptions, and syllabi follow these standards. Compliance with intended learning outcomes is monitored internally and verified by an External Examiner appointed in partnership by CCCU.

The institution responds effectively to students' diverse needs through Student Affairs support, systematic collection of requirements, and strong staff–student communication. Assessment methods are diversified to accommodate different skillsets, and mutual respect in the learning environment is emphasised.

General and digital competencies are embedded across modules and developed progressively. A variety of teaching methods—classroom instruction, visual aids, practice-based learning, and field visits—create dynamic learning environments.

Staff integrate new technologies, including AI and industry-standard software, though resource limitations remain a challenge. Theory and practice are interconnected through modules such as *Research Methodologies for Designers*, *Capstone Research and Practice Seminar*, and *Design Thinking in Creative Industries*. Students are expected to engage in research activities, particularly in modules led by PhD-qualified staff.

Assessment practices align with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), with regular feedback to students work to be provided. Objectivity and relevance are ensured through double marking and oversight by an External Examiner.

### Strengths

- Student Affairs support and systematic collection of individual requirements.
- Diversified assessment methods accommodate different skillsets and learning abilities.
- General and digital competencies are embedded across modules and developed progressively.
- Combination of classroom instruction and practice-based learning, creates diverse learning environments.
- Integration of theory and practice through modules.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Insufficient specialist equipment available for postgraduate-level study: Invest in updated and additional equipment to meet programme requirements and enhance the quality of learning experiences.
- Outdated or limited reading lists not aligned with contemporary research: Revise and expand reading lists to include current theoretical paradigms and recent scholarly and industry publications.
- Limited range of tools and resources to support diverse professional interests: Provide a broader set of physical, digital, and methodological tools to cater to students' varied learning needs and to strengthen wider professional skill development.

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

| Sub-area |                                                                           | <i>Non-compliant/<br/>Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.1      | Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology | Partially compliant                                     |
| 2.2      | Practical training                                                        | Not applicable                                          |
| 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 for the proposed MDes programme is drawn from a combination of experienced permanent faculty, recently appointed academics, and a number of visiting or international staff. Several staff members hold PhDs or specialised Master's degrees in design, visual arts, digital culture, or emerging creative technologies. Many have extensive professional practice, leadership roles, and long-standing teaching experience at the institution, which provides continuity and strong grounding in design pedagogy. The recent recruitment of PhD-qualified academic staff and staff pursuing doctoral studies has strengthened the programme's academic profile and supports the aim to deliver research-informed teaching.

Staff expertise spans a broad range of contemporary topics, including immersive technologies, critical management studies, sustainable design, AI, creative industries, and visual communication, which contributes positively to the interdisciplinary character of the MDes. Despite these strengths, the overall qualifications profile remains uneven for a postgraduate programme. While portions of the team meet or exceed Level-7 expectations, several staff members who will teach on the MDes do not hold a Master's degree in a design-related field or a doctoral qualification.

Only a subset of staff have experience supervising postgraduate research. This presents challenges in ensuring the academic depth, research alignment, and consistency required for a Master's-level programme. A strategic long-term staffing plan specifically for the MDes – ensuring that teaching is delivered by appropriately qualified and research-active personnel – is not yet fully articulated.

Workload allocation across the BDes and the new MDes also requires careful monitoring to ensure adequate capacity for teaching, supervision, curriculum development, and research.

### Strengths

- College and CCCU partners have many years of experience in developing and teaching similar programmes
- Newly recruited PhD-qualified and research-oriented staff
- High motivation of the staff and the college to develop the programme
- Teaching staff has a broad interdisciplinary expertise across emerging design fields, supporting the programme's ambitions

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Dependence on BDes teaching staff for postgraduate delivery: Increase the number of full-time, research-active academic staff dedicated specifically to the MDes and reduce reliance on staff whose primary teaching responsibilities are in the BDes.
- Imbalance between teaching, supervision, and research workloads: Review and adjust staff workload allocations to ensure a sustainable balance between teaching duties, postgraduate supervision, and research activity.
- Limited preparation for postgraduate-level pedagogy: Provide targeted professional development in postgraduate teaching methods, research supervision, and technology-enhanced learning.
- Lack of structured staff development strategy: Establish a long-term staffing and professional development plan tailored to the sustained academic development and quality assurance of the MDes programme.

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

| Sub-area |                                            | <i>Non-compliant/<br/>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         | 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

Alexander College has established structured and transparent processes for student admission, progression, recognition, and certification, supported by an institution-wide Quality Assurance system based on the PDCA cycle and aligned with ESG, ECTS, and CYQAA requirements. Admission procedures are clearly defined and publicly available, with academic, language, and portfolio criteria supported by consistent administrative oversight. Student progression is systematically monitored through annual reviews, performance indicators, internal and external evaluations, and established assessment regulations overseen by the Academic Board and Internal Quality Assurance Committee.

Similarly, the College has established pre-defined and publicly available regulations governing student certification and we were assured that, in line with conventional practices followed across the College's other programmes, students on the MDes will also receive comprehensive certification that clearly outlines the qualification obtained, including the achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content, and status of the studies successfully completed.

Procedures for recognising prior learning and credit transfer are referenced, particularly for formal learning; however, the institution's documentation does not yet explicitly mention the Lisbon Recognition Convention or provide policies for the recognition of non-formal or informal learning. Because these policies are not publicly accessible, prospective applicants may face difficulties in obtaining clear information about their eligibility pathways.

##### Strengths

- Clear and published admission criteria, including academic, portfolio and language requirements.
- Consistent assessment framework integrating formative and summative methods aligned with design-education practice.
- Transparent certification practices providing comprehensive information on qualification outcomes.
- Structured transfer procedures with Academic Committee oversight.

- Strong studio-based assessment culture promoting reflective practice and student development.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Lack of public recognition policies: Publish clear, accessible guidelines on recognition of prior learning (RPL).
- No clear definition of prior working experience for admission: Define minimum type and duration and make it publicly accessible
- RPL appeal or review mechanisms unclear: Establish and publish a dedicated review process for recognition decisions.
- No explicit reference to Lisbon Recognition Convention: Align recognition procedures with the Convention and state this explicitly.
- Recognition limited to formal learning: Develop processes for evaluating non-formal and informal learning.
- Limited transparency for international applicants: Provide clearer information on migration-related transfer steps.
- Fragmented documentation: Consolidate all admission, progression, recognition and certification policies into one publicly accessible source.

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

| Sub-area |                                           | <i>Non-compliant/<br/>Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.1      | Student admission, processes and criteria | Partially 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

Alexander College demonstrates a strong commitment to providing adequate teaching, learning, physical, human, and student-support resources for the MDes programme. Many structures, policies, and practices align well with the stated standards; however, the site-visit observations indicate important gaps that require attention to fully meet the expectations of postgraduate-level, design-focused study.

The College offers purpose-built classrooms, digital presentation facilities, specialist studios, extensive software, and online learning tools such as Moodle and the VLE. These resources support blended and student-centred learning. However, the site visit revealed limited printing facilities, insufficient model-making infrastructure, and a lack of large-format printing, all of which constrain students' ability to develop diverse design skills expected at master's level. While college management mentions contingency budgets for expansion, the current provision does not yet ensure adequacy for increases in student numbers or for supporting the full range of MDes specialisations.

The campus provides modern facilities including studios, computer labs, photographic spaces, and general study areas. Yet the library is very small, lacks quiet study rooms, and holds a limited and outdated physical collection, particularly in contemporary design practice and research. Available spaces are adequate for the first MDes cohort but may become insufficient when combined with

BDes students' simultaneous use of workshops. Building constraints further limit future expansion, raising concerns about long-term adequacy.

Human resourcing is a clear strength. Teaching and administrative staff demonstrate strong commitment, pastoral awareness, and student-centred values. The staff-student ratio is favourable, although it will need monitoring as enrolments rise. Formalised structures for academic mentoring are in place and appear fit for purpose.

Student support mechanisms are well-conceived, including academic mentoring, guidance on study skills, wellbeing support, and career services. Provision for students with learning difficulties is consistent with good practice. However, the lack of a formal Student Voice system limits structured feedback loops. Opportunities for research-led engagement exist through Erasmus+ opportunities and staff expertise and facilities, but could be strengthened through dedicated lecture series and structured research engagement activities.

Hence, while the human and policy frameworks are strong, physical and specialist learning resources present key deficiencies that must be further considered to meet postgraduate-level expectations and ensure the programme's sustainability.

### Strengths

- Highly committed, supportive, and student-centred teaching and administrative staff.
- Strong digital learning environment (Moodle/VLE, software suites, intranet).
- Clear academic mentoring structure with personalised support.
- Access to extensive electronic library resources through CCCU and the Cyprus Libraries Consortium.
- Adequate studio and classroom spaces for the initial cohort; extended hours of access.
- Career Services and Erasmus+ mobility opportunities that enhance employability and international engagement with research.
- Robust quality-assurance framework aligned with ESG and national requirements.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Insufficient specialist equipment (printing, model-making): Invest in large-format printers, model-making tools, and expanded workshop facilities.
- Limited physical library space and outdated book collection: Expand the physical collection with current design research and practitioner portfolios; create dedicated quiet study areas.
- Space pressures due to shared use with BDes students: Introduce timetable zoning and resource-booking systems; consider planning for off-site partnerships for specialist facilities.
- Building constraints limiting future expansion: Conduct feasibility study for additional on-site workspace, satellite facilities or external workshop partnerships.
- Lack of formal Student Voice mechanisms: Establish a Student-Staff Liaison Committee meeting at least once per semester.



- Unclear long-term adequacy of staffing as numbers grow: Implement annual workload reviews and contingency hiring plan.
- Need for strengthened research-led engagement: Introduce a structured MDes lecture series, visiting-practitioner programme, and student research forums.

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

| Sub-area |                                 | <i>Non-compliant/<br/>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) acknowledges the strong commitment demonstrated by Alexander College to developing a meaningful and contemporary Master of Design (MDes) programme. The proposed structure reflects a clear academic vision grounded in design research, interdisciplinary inquiry, and emerging practices such as AI, speculative approaches, and leadership in creative industries. The curriculum design is relatively coherent, well sequenced, and mostly aligned with international developments in design education, offering students opportunities for both intellectual growth and professional advancement.

The institution benefits from a highly motivated academic team, including some PhD-qualified members, and supported by a robust internal and external quality assurance framework, implemented by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). The EEC recognises the College's strengths in staff dedication, student-centred support structures, and the integration of external stakeholders into learning activities. These elements collectively contribute to a programme capable of fostering advanced design competencies and supporting students through their Capstone Project and applied research pathways.

At the same time, the evaluation identified several areas requiring further development to ensure the programme fully meets the expectations of EQF Level 7 and achieves long-term sustainability. These include refining the scope of programme aims, strengthening staff qualifications and research capacity, improving dedicated facilities, and formalising student and external stakeholder participation in quality processes. Enhancing recognition procedures, particularly in relation to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, will also improve transparency and accessibility for prospective applicants, including international and non-traditional learners.

The proposed MDes, therefore, demonstrates strong potential and reflects a forward-looking strategic direction for Alexander College. With the recommended improvements, the programme can offer an appropriate postgraduate learning experience delivering advanced competencies in research, innovation, and professional practice within the creative industries.

### Conditions

1. Revise module descriptions to ensure that contact hours, delivery methods, and independent study expectations are correctly aligned with the modules' ECTS and appropriate for Master's level.
2. Define clear and explicit requirements for prior working experience as part of the admission criteria, including minimum type and duration, and make this information publicly accessible.
3. Develop and make public recognition procedures of prior learning (RPL) covering formal and informal routes in alignment with LRC principles.



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



eqar /// enqa.

**Date:** 3.12.2025