



09 Μαΐου 2019

Καθηγήτρια Μαίρη Κουτσελίνη,
Πρόεδρο Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης Ποιότητας
Της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης (ΔΙ.Π.Α.Ε.)
Λεωφόρο Λεμεσού 5
2112 Λευκωσία

Αγαπητή κ. Κουτσελίνη,

Θέμα : Σχόλια επί της Έκθεσης της Εξωτερικής Επιτροπής Αξιολόγησης για το

1. Bachelor of Science in Architecture & Diploma of Architect - Engineer
2. Doctoral in Architecture (4 Years, 240 ECTS (Doctoral Degree))

Σε συνέχεια των Εκθέσεων Αξιολόγησης των πιο πάνω Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών, το Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου εκφράζει την ευαρέσκεια του στο Φορέα ΔΙΠΑΕ και ειδικότερα προς τα μέλη της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (ΕΕΑ), για το άρτιο και αντικειμενικό έργο που έχουν εκπονήσει κατά τη διάρκεια της επίσκεψής τους.

Η διαδικασία αυτή μπορεί να χαρακτηριστεί ως άκρως παραγωγική και εποικοδομητική, αφού τόσο τα σχόλια όσο και οι εισηγήσεις της Επιτροπής συμβάλλουν στη βελτίωση της ποιότητας και της ανταγωνιστικότητας των προγραμμάτων.

Επισυνάπτονται τα σχόλια που αφορούν τα πιο πάνω προγράμματα.

Με εκτίμηση,

Καθηγητής Γάσος Κριστοφίδης
Πρύτανης

ΚΟΙΝ :

Καθ. Ειρήνη – Άννα Διακίδου, Αντιπρύτανης Ακαδημαϊκών Υπ., Πρόεδρος Επ. Εσωτερικής Ποιότητας
Πρόεδρο Τμήματος Αρχιτεκτονικής

ΔΔ/ΧΕ

Reply to the External Evaluation Report for
the following programs of study offered by
the Department of Architecture at the University of Cyprus

- **BSc Architecture & Diploma of Architect Engineer**

The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations and its constructive findings and proposals.

Responses to the conclusions and suggestions of the external evaluation committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

The present situation of the program, good practices, weaknesses that have been detected during the external evaluation procedure by the external evaluation committee, suggestions for improvement. The EEC found the department and these programs to be characterised by a coherent, dedicated and effective teaching team of academic staff, Special Scientists and support staff. Across the meetings with all staff and students, there was consistent evidence of a collaborative learning and teaching environment, which was impressive in terms of the student experience it produced and the outputs from both programs. The programs are extremely well structured and delivered with regard to their stated goals.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

In addition to the comments raised above, we would also suggest and comment on the following:

- *The EEC would encourage the department to explicitly articulate and promote in a succinct form its distinctive approach to the discipline of architecture and its related pedagogy.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and has consequently reworked the articulation of its distinctive approach to the research of architecture.

Central to the philosophy of the program in the study of architecture, are the synergies achieved through the dynamic synthesis of design emanating both from the humanities and the technological dimensions of Architecture. Such an endeavor takes place by emphasizing the complex and fascinating aspects of the field of Architecture.

It also takes place through the formulation of a design culture that takes into account theoretical, historical, political and technological quests to redefine the role of architecture in the making of the artificial environment. The international profile of the academic faculty, all equipped with PhD degrees and at the same time being quite involved with design issues, bridges the gap between theoretical and project based courses of the program. The flagship of such bridging is the fifth year design thesis work produced by the students with the support of the faculty.

Having said that, the graduating students are well equipped with a critical spirit to deal with the challenges of architecture in the academic and professional contexts and often claim a new role with

regards to shaping contemporary society as well as with making a contribution to the manmade environment. At the same time, the Department of Architecture investigates diverse approaches that may contribute to the creation of contemporary architectural practices operating across the building the urban and the territorial scales.

In particular, as also indicated in the application of the undergraduate program of studies, this seeks to ensure a strong general architectural education with sufficient knowledge in the individual fields of study that are considered as necessary for the profession in the international field. The first three years of study form the general core of education, with the majority of the courses as compulsory, while in the following years architectural design is mainly supported by a limited selection of constrained elective courses in architecture.

The teaching of architectural design as a core part of the curriculum develops in four horizontal levels, which ultimately support that teaching and research through design are inseparable.

- Curriculum structure: The field of architectural design at the various stages of education is not an independent thematic entity, but it is a result of theoretical and synthesis areas (architectural theory and history, architectural communication media, architectural technology and urban design), which constitute the teaching and research structure of the department.
- Thematic content: architectural design is provided every semester with the know-how, the analysis and the experience gained from individual theoretical, anthropogenic and technological courses, acting as an implementation link in a wider unified framework, which is a core component of the curriculum. Based on this, almost all the courses referred to in the architectural design are taught with the aim of practical application.
- Teaching staff: Supervision of architectural design in horizontal studios each semester is conducted by a member of the academic staff, with a relevant interest and research field, and by an architect from the practice of the profession with corresponding experiences on the subject of the study.
- Research Activities: As for the academic staff, special emphasis is placed both on multidisciplinary thematic research activities with sequential time supplying of the results in an architectural design context, as well as on design-based research in various scales of design: urban, general architecture, building etc.

By extension, the theoretical courses are interconnected with the architectural design. Architectural design is organized in a specific area of emphasizing on the corresponding course subject within the "micro-studio", or as part of a corresponding course of architectural design in unified framework.

Therefore, the general aim of the Department of Architecture is to train architects who will operate successfully both in local and global context, having the sensitivity to respond appropriately and to positively influence the built environment.

• *The EEC notes that the department exists within a Faculty of Engineering, and suggests that some consideration might be given to the potential advantages of the Faculty title being more explicating inclusive of architecture and/or design. This would be in line with general international practice.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and has consequently raised the subject in the council of the School of Engineering, while also raising the issue of restating the

school's mission and strategic plan which is under formulation, in such a way so as to fully reflect the synergies emanating from the presence of a Department of Architecture within a Faculty of Engineering.

- *The EEC notes that the head of department is appointed for a two-year period. For other architecture departments worldwide, a period of 3-5 years is more usual.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation, but also notes that department heads are afforded the possibility of reelection for an additional two-year term for a total of four years. However, the department invests on a collective and co-learning work environment, having all its Faculty members being involved in the decision making through the Department Council, supported by many committees. Furthermore, It has been a conscious decision by the faculty members of the department to give the opportunity to as many colleagues who meet the criteria for this post to be exposed to the administrative and leadership challenges entailed in said position and to interact with the majority of the administrative departments and also with the broader academic community at the institutional level of the University of Cyprus in its entirety.

- *The EEC agrees that careful consideration should be given to the long term strategic location of the department in the context of the broader academic, professional and societal environment. This would provide the department with the best prospects for its continued success. A full consultation with all stakeholders would be beneficial.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and for this purpose it has clearly and repetitively stated to both the rectorate and the executive council of the university its position regarding the numerous benefits in the context of the broader academic, professional and societal environment emanating from its continued presence in the city center. Moreover, it has stated its desire and partaken in feasibility studies to be housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success as well as to the support of its publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders. The next step will be to work together with the new University leadership to develop a plan of action to permanently locate the Department of Architecture in the city center.

- *The EEC notes that the programs are small in size compared to many other architecture departments internationally. Given the high quality of the programs, and the demand from applicants, the department might like to consider increasing in size and also to reflect on their optimum size in the medium term.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation, but it also notes that the decrease in the number of students entering at certain years in the recent past was the result of the economic crisis affecting the Republic of Cyprus. During the present period of economic recovery the current intake of students (including external transfers) has returned to the anticipated level of approximately 30 students per year, thereby reflecting the optimum size in the medium term based on the department's instructional and infrastructural carrying capacity. In addition, the Department of Architecture prefers to increase the critical mass of the students by attracting very good students through the development of post graduate programs instead of increasing the undergraduate number of students. The latter may jeopardize the high level of the students entering the undergraduate program.

Responses to the general findings raised by the Evaluation Committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

1. As to the "EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES"

The EEC notes that with a total number of around 180 full-time students across all programs, the department is considerably smaller than many leading international institutions. One consequence of this is that these two programs are somewhat exposed to fluctuations in student numbers.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. The decrease in the number of students entering at certain years was the result of the economic crisis affecting the Republic of Cyprus. During the present period of economic recovery the current intake of students (including external transfers) has returned to the anticipated approximately 30 students per year. Having said that the Department of Architecture prefers to increase the critical mass of the students by attracting very good students through the development of post graduate programs instead of increasing the undergraduate number of students. The latter may jeopardize the high level of the students entering the undergraduate program.

Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, this will be greatly improved by the incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Although the existing building has some notable shortcomings with regard to size and arrangement, we note that the central urban location is extremely beneficial to the academic quality of the courses, and is greatly appreciated by academic staff and students alike. The visibility of the department in its present location also has great benefits for the programs, department and university as whole, acting as a positive link between university, city and wider stakeholders.

Departmental Response: The department has submitted a detailed account relating to its requirements and how these will be addressed given the appropriate usage of the aforementioned investment. As to its location in the city center, the department clearly and repetitively states its position regarding the numerous benefits emanating from its continued presence in the city center and housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success as well as to its support of its publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders.

For teaching personnel, the EEC notes the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff. We recognise the high quality of the teaching staff, as evidenced by their detailed CVs in general and by the international experience and qualifications which most of them have gained.

Departmental Response: The department in its strategic plan, which was submitted as part of its latest departmental evaluation submission, spells out the need for an initial increase to 15 full-time members of staff and the longer term goal of 18 fulltime members of staff if the projected needs of the department – which include a proprietary master's degree program (with an emphasis on English as the language of instruction and which could also supplement coursework currently offered in the department's Diploma course) and participation in existing interdepartmental master's programs – are to be met.

We particularly comment the enthusiasm, commitment and expertise of the Special Scientists who provide an essential and important dimension to the teaching provision, in particular through their connection with industry and private practice. The EEC also notes that for architecture as a discipline, the percentage of practitioners engaged in teaching at leading universities is often higher than other disciplines. Given the vocational nature of architecture, this is a desirable, necessary and positive arrangement.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation!

In terms of studio sizes, for a typical class size of 30 students, the allocated two members of staff means a staff:student ratio of 1:15, which is relatively high in comparison with many leading international institutions.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. In its strategic plan, which was submitted as part of its latest departmental evaluation submission, it spelled out the need for an initial increase of staff if its current and projected research and instructional needs are to be met. Also see sections 1.3.1, 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.3.7 and 1.3.8 below.

2. As to the "PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS"

The purpose and objectives and learning outcomes of the programs are all excellent. The same applies to the program structure and content. All officers, academic staff, administrative and technical staff and students that we spoke to were fully engaged with the QA process, and entered into all discussions positively and openly. Academic staff responsible for the BSc and Diploma program had prepared very clear and informative presentations for the benefit of the EEC.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

The EEC notes the overall high quality of the management of the programs, including all aspects of learning outcomes, timing, academic autonomy, public availability of information, qualifications, evaluations and credit system.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

The EEC notes the ambition of the programs to operate on an international platform, including its existing participation in the Erasmus scheme. To further aid in international connectivity, the department might consider making English the main teaching language for the Diploma. This has the potential to widen the range of international students taking the program, and also to increase the international mobility and employability of graduates.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and it is also grateful for the committee's positive observation. The question of making English the main language of instruction is a university wide challenge and the department actively partakes in these strategic deliberations supporting said point. It should be noted that both instructors and their teaching assistants currently offer some coursework in English, and English language masters and doctoral dissertations have been submitted and accepted by the School of Graduate Studies. The department's participation in the Erasmus Placement program, as well as the staff's regional network of collaborators, has resulted in a

significant number of our Bachelors and Diploma graduates finding international employment, primarily in the European context, but also in the broader SE.ME.NA region.

The programmes are vocational in nature, and therefore enjoy appropriate connections with the labour market. The programs provided good levels of opportunity for students to engage with wider social issues and contexts.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

3. As to the "RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING"

All of the full-time staff have PhD qualifications and are engaged in active research. This is clearly evident in the teaching which they undertake and the consequent projects which students engage with. Different research methodologies are also clearly evident across the range of subjects taught within the architecture programs, from history and theory, to art and design, to structures and technology.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

4. As to the "ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK"

Administrative mechanisms for student welfare and student support are appropriate and clearly in place. Students we spoke to were strongly appreciative of these systems. As noted above, existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, but these will be greatly improved by the incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Also as noted above, although the existing building has some notable shortcomings with regard to size and arrangement, we note that the central urban location is extremely beneficial to the academic quality of the courses, and is greatly appreciated by academic staff and students alike. The visibility of the department in its present location also has great benefits for the programs, department and university as whole, acting as a positive link between university, city and wider stakeholders.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation, as noted above, and it is grateful for the committee's positive observation as to the benefits of its present location.

Financial resources are adequate for the programs and their development, and the department is able to allocate these resources independently.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

Specific responses to comments raised by the Evaluation Committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

1.1.2 With a total number of around 180 full-time students across all programs, the department is considerably smaller than many leading international, institutions. One consequence of this is that these two programs are somewhat exposed to fluctuations in student numbers. For example, we noted that in the four years of the BSc there were between 20 and 30 students in each year, which is a significant percentage variation. For a year group of this number, there is a risk when following below a threshold of around 30 that the vibrancy of the student group and the effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning may become compromised.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. The decrease in the number of students entering at certain years was the result of the economic crisis affecting the Republic of Cyprus. During the present period of economic recovery the current intake of students (including external transfers) has returned to the anticipated approximately 30 students per year. Having said that, the Department of Architecture prefers to increase the critical mass of the students by attracting very good students through the development of post graduate programs instead of increasing the undergraduate number of students. The latter may jeopardize the high level of the students entering to the undergraduate program.

1.1.3.3 We noted that the internal evaluation assessed this as 3/Satisfactory. During our visit, course web-pages were not raised as a significant issue by staff and students.

Departmental Response: Course content is offered via specific web-pages, Blackboard functionality and printed documents.

1.1.3.6 While everyday and routine matters are clearly dealt effectively through a close relationship between staff and students, there are some indications that larger more structural issues – such as proposed alternative locations for the department – were perceived by students as not being fully consulted upon.

Departmental Response: The departmental council includes student representatives who are consulted upon and informed on all issues (strategic and tactical) pertaining to the efficient operation of the department and in addition has designated at least two students for every year / cohort of the Bachelor's and Diploma courses with whom it collectively addresses issues raised by specific years / cohorts of students. In the matter of the Department's location, the Faculty organizes frequent meetings with all students and updates them with regards to the alternative locations of the building of the Department of Architecture.

1.1.4.1 Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, we have rated this as a 4 due to the agreed incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Appropriate usage of this investment should be sufficient to raise this area to a 5 in future years.

Departmental Response: The department has submitted a detailed account relating to its requirements and how these will be addressed given the appropriate usage of the aforementioned investment.

1.1.4.2 This rating of 5 is based upon both the new library and on the provision of a localised satellite service in the department.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation.

1.1.4.3 Although the existing building has some notable shortcomings with regard to size and arrangement (notably wheelchair access and mobility), we note that the central urban location is extremely beneficial to the academic quality of the courses (which use the surrounding city as an integral part of their content and operations), and is greatly appreciated by academic staff and students alike. The visibility of the department in its present location also has great benefits for the programs, department and university as whole, acting as a positive link between university, city and wider stakeholders.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. It has clearly and repetitively stated its position regarding the numerous benefits emanating from its continued presence in the city center and housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success as well as to its support of its publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders. It further calls upon the collective leadership of the University of Cyprus to recommit itself to that purpose.

1.1.5 and 1.1.7 Although the close relationships between academic staff and students clearly work extremely well for all everyday matters of communication, it might be advisable to clarify more formal channels of communication for when informal communication is in appropriate. Note, additionally: a) the expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study. Between 25 and 30 students are expected, the majority of whom are expected to be Cypriots, with some (4-5) international students expected from Greece. b) the countries of origin of the majority of students. Cyprus and Greece. c) the maximum planned number of students per class-section. 30. See also comments on 1.1.2 above.

Departmental Response: Please note responses to sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3.6 above.

1.3.1 This rating is based on the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff. We recognise the high quality of the teaching staff, as evidenced by their detailed CVs in general and by the international experience and qualifications which most of them have gained.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. Moreover in its strategic plan, which was submitted as part of its latest departmental evaluation submission, it spells out the need for an initial increase to 15 full-time members of staff and the longer term goal of 18 fulltime members of staff if the projected needs of the department, which include proprietary master's degree program (with an emphasis on English as the language of instruction and which could also serve the Diploma component offered by the department) and participation in existing interdepartmental master's programs, if departmental needs are to be met.

1.3.4 We particularly comment the enthusiasm, commitment and expertise of the Special Scientists who provide an essential and important dimension to the teaching provision, in particular through their connection with industry and private practice.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation.

1.3.5 and 1.3.7 In addition to the comments regarding 1.3.4, we note that for architecture as a discipline, the percentage of practitioners engaged in teaching at leading universities is often higher than other

disciplines. Given the vocational nature of architecture, this is a desirable, necessary and positive arrangement.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. Also based on the observation by the evaluation committee that the staff:student ratio of 1:15 is relatively high in comparison with many leading international institutions, it poses this fact as yet another corroborating reason to increase the number of full time members of staff as stated in section 1.3.1 above.

1.3.8 In terms of studio sizes, for a typical class size of 30 students, the allocated two members of staff means a staff:student ratio of 1:15, which is relatively high in comparison with many leading international institutions.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. In its strategic plan, which was submitted as part of its latest departmental evaluation submission, it spelled out the need for an initial increase of staff if its current and projected research and instructional needs are to be met. Also see sections 1.3.1, 1.3.4, 1.3.5 and 1.3.7 above.

2.3.2 All officers, academic staff, administrative and technical staff and students that we spoke to were fully engaged with the process, and entered into all discussions positively and openly. Academic staff responsible for the BSc and Diploma program had prepared very clear and informative presentations for the benefit of the EEC, for which we were extremely grateful, in providing additional information and context. Consequent discussions were carried out in a spirit of considered reflection and critical self-evaluation.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

2.5.2 We would encourage the department to be even more expansive in their selection and deployment of visiting professors worldwide.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. Being mindful of this observation and as an increasing number of current faculty members (also via the Erasmus exchange program) take their sabbatical leave the department has requested additional visiting faculty to address its research and instructional needs and to enrich and complement its current mission. The Department has decided to run the fourth year design studios in English. Consequently, the pool of high quality candidates for the visiting professors is expected increase considerably.

2.5.3 We wish to particularly commend the high (c.50%) uptake of the Erasmus program, and the learning experiences which students gain in international universities.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation. Also note response to section 2.5.2 above.

2.5.4 For the Diploma, the department might consider making English the main teaching language. This has the potential to widen the range of international students taking the program, and also to increase the international mobility and employability of graduates. We note the high esteem with which graduates of the programs are held by the professional architecture community in Cyprus. Internationally, the programs clearly operate at an appropriate standard.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and it is also grateful for the committee's positive observation regarding the high esteem enjoyed by the department in the broader academic and professional community in Cyprus. The question of making English the main language of instruction is a university wide challenge and the department actively partakes in these strategic deliberations supporting said point. It should be noted that both instructors and their teaching assistants currently offer some coursework in English e.g. the Department has decided to run the fourth year design studios in English. The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

4.2.3 and 4.2.4 Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing, etc – is somewhat limited, we have rated this as a 4 due to the agreed incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Appropriate usage of this investment should be sufficient to raise this area to a 5 in future years.

Departmental Response: Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation.

Please also see response in section 1.1.4.1

4.2.5 This rating is based upon both the new library and on the provision of a localised satellite service in the department.

Departmental Response: Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation.

Please also see response in section 1.1.4.2

4.2.7 We would encourage consideration to be given to making induction into teaching methods and protocols essential for all new academic staff and Special Scientists.

Departmental Response: The department is making full use of the university's newly minted *Induction Program into teaching methods and protocols essential for all new academic staff and Special Scientists.*

- **Doctoral degree in Architecture**

The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations and its constructive findings and proposals.

Responses to the conclusions and suggestions of the external evaluation committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

The present situation of the program, good practices, weaknesses that have been detected during the external evaluation procedure by the external evaluation committee, suggestions for improvement. The EEC found the department and this program to be characterised by a coherent, dedicated and effective teaching team of academic staff and support staff. Across the meetings with all staff and students, there was consistent evidence of a collaborative research environment. The program is well structured and delivered with regard to its stated goals.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

In addition to the comments raised above, we would also suggest and comment on the following:

- *The EEC would encourage the department to explicitly articulate and promote in a succinct form its distinctive approach to the research of architecture. This would be of particular benefit to the Doctoral program when competing for first rank international applicants.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and has consequently reworked its distinctive approach to the research of architecture. The main objective of the doctoral program in architecture is to promote academic research, leading to knowledge and innovation in the broader architecture field, as well as in other related disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. The doctoral program in Architecture has a research orientation, with an emphasis on international architectural subjects, while promoting opportunities for local architectural development and improvement.

As also indicated in the application of the program of studies, Ph.D. research at the department focuses on the fields of architectural theory and history, digital communication media, technology and urban design, and is in all cases closely interrelated with architectural design. At the same time, cross-fertilization in teaching and research between other faculties of the University is strongly encouraged. The horizontal component of the Ph.D. research constitutes "the broader discipline of architecture and within multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary fields", which often leads to intense cross-disciplinary interdepartmental research activities of the faculty members. This is furthermore reflected by the fact that doctoral students with different educational backgrounds are considered to be only enriching the program and the research teams. In principle, design and interdisciplinary research projects developed, deal with Research by design processes analysis, Design projects and activities review in broader architectural, social, historical and technological interdisciplinary context, as well as Design, manufacturing processes and development of prototypes in various interdisciplinary environments.

- *The EEC agrees that careful consideration should be given to the long term strategic location of the department in the context of the broader academic, professional and societal environment. This would provide the department with the best prospects for its continued success. A full consultation with all stakeholders would be beneficial.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. It clearly and repetitively states its position regarding the numerous strategic benefits in the context of the broader academic, professional and societal environment emanating from its continued presence in the city center and housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success. This is also in line with the department's publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders.

- *The EEC notes that recently a number of Doctoral students have left the program after acquiring a significant number of ECTS credits. Currently there exists within the regulations no provision for an exit awards for students in this position. The EEC strongly suggests that the regulations and/or program specification be revised to allow for an exit award(s) for those students who acquire the requisite number of credits but do not complete the full Doctoral program.*

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and it has initiated procedures with the School of Graduate Studies with the purpose of fulfilling its long-held ambition of establishing a proprietary master's degree in Architecture. This degree would not only be useful in broadening the graduate studies offerings at the Department of Architecture beyond the ones currently offered through institutional interdepartmental collaborations, but it could additionally be both, a gate keeper to the doctoral program and an exit award for those students who acquire the requisite number of credits but do not complete the full doctoral program.

Responses to the general findings raised by the Evaluation Committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

1. As to the "EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES"

The EEC notes that with a total number of 30 full-time Doctoral students and 10 current full-time academic staff, the program has a significant presence in the department, and is adequately supported in terms of available supervisory capacity.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, these will be greatly improved by the incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area, and so are likely to contribute to PhD research opportunities.

Departmental Response: The department has submitted a detailed account relating to its requirements and how these will be addressed given the appropriate usage of the aforementioned investment. The department also shares the committee's observation that said investment will contribute to increased PhD research opportunities.

For teaching personnel, the EEC notes the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff, which will further increase the supervisory capacity and widen the range of subjects which can be researched.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. With the anticipated increase in full time members of faculty to 13 and beyond the number of both research methods courses and discipline specific courses will be augmented.

We recognise the high quality of the teaching staff, as evidenced by their detailed CVs in general and by the international experience and qualifications which most of them have gained.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

2. As to the "PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS"

The purpose and objectives and learning outcomes of the program are all excellent. The same applies to the program structure and content. All officers, academic staff, administrative and technical staff and students that we spoke to were fully engaged with the QA process, and entered into all discussions positively and openly. Academic staff responsible for the Doctoral program had prepared a very clear and informative presentation for the benefit of the EEC. The EEC notes the overall high quality of the management of the programs, including all aspects of learning outcomes, timing, academic autonomy, public availability of information, qualifications, evaluations and credit system.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations.

We note that during 2017-18 four students withdrew from the Doctoral program before entering the Comprehensive examination. We acknowledge that this might have been an unusual occurrence, but it

does suggest that a more explicit and fine-grained set of mile-stones throughout the Doctoral program might be useful. This would be in keeping with best practice at other leading universities worldwide.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. The department's ad-hoc graduate studies committee has incorporated the committee's suggestions in its briefing to current and potential doctoral candidates.

The EEC notes that the maximum period of 8 years to complete a PhD is longer than the 5-6 years maximum typically allowed by other universities internationally.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. This number is however consistent with institutional wide practices at the University of Cyprus and notes that in rare cases, the department's students who actually extent their studies to the limit do so as a result of managing their studies as part timers while concurrently engaging in practice.

The EEC notes the ambition of the program to operate on an international platform. To further aid in this regard, the department might consider making English the main language for both teaching and for submitted theses. This has the potential to widen the range of international students taking the program, and also to increase the international mobility and employability of graduates.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. While doctoral dissertations are allowed by the university regulations to be written in English language, the question of making English the main language in teaching is a university wide challenge and the department actively partakes in these strategic deliberations supporting said point. It should be noted that the instructors currently offer some coursework in English and a significant number of English language doctoral dissertations has been successfully completed. Also, the department is more actively seeking venues through which it may disseminate information about its doctoral program so as to bolster recruitment of suitable candidates beyond Cyprus and Greece. It should be noted that both a current doctoral candidate and a recent graduate come from countries other than Cyprus and Greece.

3. As to the "RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING"

All of the full-time staff have PhD qualifications and are engaged in active research. This is clearly evident in the wide range of these topics which Doctoral students undertake.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations.

4. As to the "ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK"

Administrative mechanisms for student welfare and student support are appropriate and clearly in place. Students we spoke to were strongly appreciative of these systems.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations.

As noted above, existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing, etc. – are somewhat limited, but these will be greatly improved by the incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area.

Departmental Response: The department has submitted a detailed account relating to its requirements and how these will be addressed given the appropriate usage of the aforementioned investment.

Also as noted above, although the existing building has some notable shortcomings with regard to size and arrangement, we note that the central urban location is greatly appreciated by academic staff and students alike. The visibility of the department in its present location also has great benefits for the program, department and university as a whole, acting as a positive link between university, city and wider stakeholders.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. It clearly and repetitively states its position regarding the numerous benefits emanating from its continued presence in the city center and housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success as well as to its support of its publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders.

Financial resources are adequate for the program and its development, and the department is able to allocate these resources independently.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations.

Although the level of fees are consistent with other universities, the lack of internal and external funding for the majority of Doctoral students significantly constrains the attractiveness of the program to students from both Cyprus and worldwide.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation, but also notes the recent addition of graduate fellowships, scholarships and bursaries:

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/en/postgraduate-studies/scholarships>

6. As to the "DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY"

This is all highly satisfactory. The current supervisors are clearly satisfactory for their Doctoral students, and the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff will further increase and widen the range of subjects which can be researched.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observations and it shares the committee's observation that the planned and agreed increase in full-time members of staff will further increase and widen the range of subjects which can be researched.

Specific responses to comments raised by the Evaluation Committee (committee comments indicated in italics) appear below:

1.1.4.1 Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, we have rated this as a 4 due to the agreed incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Appropriate usage of this investment should be sufficient to raise this area to a 5 in future years.

Departmental Response: The department has submitted a detailed account relating to its requirements and how these will be addressed given the appropriate usage of the aforementioned investment.

1.1.4.3 Although the existing building has some notable shortcomings with regard to size and arrangement, we note that the central urban location is greatly appreciated by academic staff and students alike. The visibility of the department in its present location also has great benefits for the programs, department and university as whole, acting as a positive link between university, city and wider stakeholders.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. It clearly and repetitively states its position regarding the numerous benefits emanating from its continued presence in the city center and housed in facilities that measure up to its continued academic success as well as to its support of its publically minded mandate to act as a positive link between the university, the city and the wider stakeholders.

1.1.7, 1.1.8 and 1.1.9 We note that during 2017-18 four students withdrew from the Doctoral program before entering the Comprehensive examination. We acknowledge that this might have been an unusual occurrence, but it does suggest that a more explicit and fine-grained set of mile-stones throughout the Doctoral program might be useful. This would be in keeping with best practice at other leading universities worldwide. Note, additionally: a) the expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study. Ten places are announced each year for the Doctoral program, typically from Cyprus and Greece. Not all of these places are filled every year. b) the countries of origin of the majority of students. Cyprus and Greece. c) the maximum planned number of students per class-section.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. The department's ad-hoc graduate studies committee has incorporated the committee's suggestions in its briefing to current and potential doctoral candidates and it is more actively seeking venues through which it may disseminate information and bolster recruitment of suitable candidates beyond Cyprus and Greece. It should be noted that both a current doctoral candidate and a recent graduate come from countries other than Cyprus and Greece.

1.3.1 The EEC notes the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff, which will further increase the supervisory capacity and widen the range of subjects which can be researched. We recognise the high quality of the teaching staff, as evidenced by their detailed CVs in general and by the international experience and qualifications which most of them have gained.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

2.2.5 We note that the internal evaluation rated this as only 3/Satisfactory, but we consider that the research methodologies and other courses taken by Doctoral students are appropriate to a Doctoral program.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. With the anticipated increase in full time members of faculty to 13 and beyond, the number of both research methods courses and discipline specific courses will be augmented.

2.3.2 All officers, academic staff, administrative and technical staff and students that we spoke to were fully engaged with the process, and entered into all discussions positively and openly. Academic staff responsible for the Doctoral program had prepared a very clear and informative presentation for the benefit of the EEC, for which we were extremely grateful, in providing additional information and context. Consequent discussions were carried out in a spirit of considered reflection and critical self-evaluation.

Departmental Response: The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

2.4.2 The EEC notes that the maximum period of 8 years to complete a PhD is longer than the 5-6 years maximum typically allowed by other universities internationally.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. This number is however consistent with institutional wide practices at the University of Cyprus and notes that the department's students who in rare cases actually extent their studies to the limit do so as a result of managing their studies as part timers while concurrently engaging in practice.

2.4.7 It is not apparent from the documentation that any formal student evaluation is provided for the Doctoral programme. This is not unusual in comparison with other universities worldwide, but might be something which could be considered.

Departmental Response: The department's ad-hoc graduate studies committee has incorporated the committee's suggestions in its briefing to current and potential doctoral candidates and it is actively suggesting ways in which doctoral students engage in doctoral workshops here and abroad and engage in in-house peer-to-peer presentations of ongoing work.

2.5.2 We would encourage the department to be even more expansive in their selection and deployment of visiting professors worldwide. One possibility is that one or more of these visiting professors could adopt an advisory role for the Doctoral program.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and notes that a number of visiting professors had participated as members of specific and expanded doctoral evaluation committees.

2.5.4 The department might consider making English the main language for both teaching and for submitted theses. This has the potential to widen the range of international students taking the program, and also to increase the international mobility and employability of graduates. Internationally, the program clearly operates at an appropriate standard.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation and it is also grateful for the committee's positive observation that internationally, the program operates at an appropriate standard. The question of making English the main language of instruction is a university wide challenge and the department actively partakes in these strategic deliberations supporting said point. It should be noted that the instructors currently offer some coursework in English and a significant number of English

language doctoral dissertations has been successfully completed. The department is grateful for the committee's positive observation.

2.6.1 and 2.6.2 In discussions, academic staff voiced some concern that there might be limited employment opportunities for their graduates. This is not a concern shared by the EEC, who note the wide range of academic and non-academic positions which Doctoral graduates now frequently take up.

Departmental Response: The department is reassured by the committee's positive outlook.

4.2.3 and 4.2.4 Although the existing facilities – computers, student workshops, printing etc – are somewhat limited, we have rated this as a 4 due to the agreed incoming 1.2 million Euro investment in this area. Appropriate usage of this investment should be sufficient to raise this area to a 5 in future years.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. Please also see response in section 1.1.4.1

4.2.7 We note that Doctoral students who undertake Teaching Assistant duties are given close supervision and mentoring by full time academic staff, but this could be supplemented by more formal training and induction into teaching procedures, methods and responsibilities.

Departmental Response: The department is making full use of the university's newly minted *Induction Program into teaching methods and protocols essential for all new academic staff and Special Scientists and which is also extended to doctoral teaching fellows.*

4.3.1 This rating is based on the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. Moreover in its strategic plan, which was submitted as part of its latest departmental evaluation submission, it spells out the need for an initial increase to 15 full-time members of staff and the longer term goal of 18 fulltime members of staff if the projected needs of the department.

4.3.4 Although the level of fees are consistent with other universities, the lack of internal and external funding for the majority of Doctoral students significantly constrains the attractiveness of the program to students from both Cyprus and worldwide.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation, but also notes the recent addition of graduate fellowships, scholarships and bursaries:

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/en/postgraduate-studies/scholarships>

6.7 Although the current supervisors are clearly satisfactory for their Doctoral students, the planned and agreed increase from 10 to 13 full-time members of staff will further increase and widen the range of subjects which can be researched. We note that academic staff have between 1 and 5 supervisions each, with an average of 3. This is appropriate. We also note that all supervisors are at the rank of Associate Professor or Assistant Professor, and that none are at the rank of full Professor.

Departmental Response: The department shares the committee's observation. See also response to Sections 2.2.5 and 2.5.2.