

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: February 17, 2021

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek: ΠΡΟΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΑΣΜΟ
ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ ΧΩΡΩΝ

ΠΡΟΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΣ ΚΥΚΛΟΣ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΓΡΑΦΙΚΟ ΣΧΕΔΙΑΣΜΟ

In English Program 1: BA IN INTERIOR DESIGN, 4 years,
240 ECTS

Program 2: BA IN GRAFIC DESIGN, 4 years, 240 ECTS

- **Language(s) of instruction:** ENGLISH
- **Programme's status:** New
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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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

Findings for [Title 1]

Point 1.1: at present, the Policy for quality assurance is just declaration of intent. In the QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND SYSTEM (p. 26 of the Department Application), the validation of new programs is described. Here the involvement of external reviewers is mentioned but not enough details are provided in this regard.

The application for evaluation of the programs of studies were reviewed by external academics, two Associate Professors and one Professor in the fields of Design and Architecture. As for the Quality Assurance Committee, it will include the Dean of The Faculty, The Head of the Department, as well as the two Deans of the other faculties and they were interviewed by the committee.

Point 1.3: since the Program is not running, and the website is not finalized yet, it is difficult to evaluate if “clear, accurate, up-to-date and readily accessible information is published”. The same applies to the information management system.

The website is already live now with minimal information as we are not allowed as per the directives of the DIPAE to publish all information, in addition we must note that at this stage our website is acy.com.cy and we will obtain the .ac once we finalize all three departments. In spite of all of these restrictions, we will be having the new design of our website published by Tuesday, February 23rd with more information.

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

Findings for [Title 1]

Since the Program is new, the evaluation of all the here listed sub-areas can be based just on the declaration of intents by the teaching staff. The opinion of students' for now is absent. In general, all these three areas were well addressed by the teaching staff, both in the application and during the discussion that took place on the occasion of the virtual visit.

The vision of AUCY is to create an education environment of high quality in which students, teaching staff and policy-makers work together to provide the best possible education. Their actions are grounded in an intrinsic motivation, a strong commitment and the wish to make education at the university as strong as possible. The different parties are all engaged and form a group where everybody trusts each other and shares the same values. Through fitting leadership, participation and transparency, the connection is made with the stable, formal and structural frameworks, like regulations, procedures, tools and working agreements on education.

Based on the ECC suggestion to “change the title of some courses” we proceeded with the following:

For the [Title 1], we change the titles of the course History of Art I, II and History of Architecture I, II, III to History and Theory of Art I, II and History and Theory of Architecture I, II,III respectively since we wish to implement a teaching approach to art and architecture based on a critical discussion of texts, works of arts and buildings presented in a thematically coherent way rather than based on strict chronology. Furthermore, the title of the course Design Methodologies changes to Design Research. The new title supports in coherent way the content of the course which deals with the study of practical and theoretical methods for the investigation of different research themes related to design.

In order to balance the list of elective courses [Title 1] and [Title 2] we propose the addition of four elective courses related to the field of Graphic Design. These courses are:

1. **3D Print Studio:** Students learn to use 3D programs, automation and electronics in their projects. The course also helps students transform their designs into practical and physical objects.
2. **Editing & Interactive Communication:** Providing students with theoretical and practical knowledge on how to carry out editing projects. Getting the student involved in an advanced design project with a methodology that focuses on creating innovative multimedia products capable of interacting with the user.
3. **New Media:** This course includes work with innovative communication formats, such as augmented reality and video mapping, in order to explore their strategic and creative potential within visual communication. Students develop an innovation project using new technologies as a basis.
4. **Copywriting:** The student learns key techniques and resources for writing an advertising text. The crucial role of text in advertising and visual communication is explained through case studies, and an individual project is developed.



Findings for [Title 2]

See above and:

For the [Title 2], we change the titles of the course History of Art I, II to History and Theory of Art I, II since we wish to implement a teaching approach to art and architecture based on a critical discussion of texts and works of arts presented in a thematically coherent way rather than based on strict chronology. Furthermore, we change the titles of all Graphic Design course by renaming them Graphic Design Studio I, II, III and IV.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings for [Title 1]

At present, the teaching staff seems under-sized for the high number of expected students. The process of their selection is not described. Also, the process for selecting 8 more members of the teaching staff is described in a standard manner. The timing of such selection is not made explicit. The presence of visiting staff members is not addressed in the application. However, this issue was raised during the remote visit, and the intention to involve visiting professors was declared. The allocation of teaching hours to the actual teaching staff raises some doubts on the time they will manage to allocate to research.

We welcome your consideration for Visiting Professors consequently we now have two Visiting Professors one in each program. The allocation to Research is 40%, another 40% allocated to Teaching, and 20% to Community Service. Furthermore, depending on the administrative duties of certain Faculty Research productivity (i.e Dean, Chairperson and other faculty) the aforementioned allocations could be modified by the Department Council.

The ECC suggested some reasoning on how to exploit the potentialities of distance learning, in the light of what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital only is not the road that we want to take as a University. We do not wish to become a distance learning institute although if the pandemic continues we have no other choice. However, the pandemic did create an irreversible dynamic: digital tools form an indispensable part of most learning environments and education practices. In this frame, we will use online teaching for courses that lend themselves to this approach, and we will only use it in the way it works well: as effective support or in preparation of face-to-face education. Educational activities that are difficult or impossible to organize online (workshops, design studios etc.), will be offered on campus as much as possible. We will develop digital tools that meet current needs in order to ensure education of high quality and attract international students. The ultimate goal is to evolve towards a well-considered, balanced combination of online and face-to-face education.

Findings for [Title 2]

See above

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Findings for [Title 1]

At present, the students' admission process is solely based on GPA. This seems in contrast both with the proper evaluation of aspirant designers and with the declared emphasis on soft skills (i.e., empathy, creativity, adaptability, work ethic).

Portfolio is an especially important part of potential students' application in AUCY. We would like to attract the best and most creative minds internationally, so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking individual portfolios into account.

Following is our Admissions Requirements where in addition to those, students applying to the Department of Design are required to submit a portfolio:

Admission Requirements and Criteria

AUCY will seek to admit students from Cyprus and all over the world. Students will be selected based on their eligibility

to join the desired program. Students will be advised and oriented to join the program that best suits their personality

and academic caliber, in order to ensure their success at AUCY as well as after graduation. Some programs may require

additional requirements depending on the decision of the Faculty Board.

At AUCY, we believe that the diverse composition of the student body enriches Campus life. The university will strive

to implement a multicultural, multinational, and diverse approach to its admission process.

The main categories for undergraduate admission are:

SOPHOMORE AND FIRST YEAR ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must hold the Cypriot Baccalaureate Part II or its equivalent, as determined by the Cypriot Ministry of

Education, in order to be eligible for the Sophomore or First Year Class. All applicants must have completed their

secondary school education or the high school program, consisting of (or equivalent to) twelve years of schooling, to

be considered for admission to an undergraduate program, and hold a bachelor's degree for admission to a graduate

program.

English Entry Level Requirements:

TOEFL: AUCY requires a minimum score of 550 for paper based, 213 for computer based and 79 for internet based.

IELTS: AUCY requires a minimum score of 6, however if a student scores between 4.6 and 6, he or she will receive

supporting classes for the first year. Alternatively, students can sit for the AUCY English Entrance Test.

IGCSE: AUCY requires a " C " grade in English.

Students who have not taken any of the above exams can opt for the AUCY's English Entrance Test.

TRANSFER ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants who have completed at least 24 credits at the Sophomore level and/or First Year level outside AUCY with



a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0/4.0 beyond their secondary school education, and have been accepted by AUCY's Admissions Office to register for a full-time load during the Fall or Spring semester, are considered transfer students. Courses earned at other institutions recognized by the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Higher Education, graded "C" or higher, and matching courses offered at AUCY, are considered transferable.

Findings for [Title 2]

See above

Portfolio is an especially important part of potential students' application in AUCY. We would like to attract the best and most creative minds internationally, so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking individual portfolios into account.

5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

Findings for [Title 1]

A description of several facilities and infrastructures was provided during the on-line visit (e.g. the library, the 2 PC labs with 20 desktops each, the Engineering lab, the IT infrastructure, the University Management System, the Student Information System). However, it is difficult to appreciate such resources remotely. The same goes for the teaching and learning resources, both for the need to evaluate them remotely and for the program being a new one. In general, the ECC noted that a dedicated library for arts and design is missing. Moreover, it is unclear whether the library will be fully operating with an adequate number of books for the two design programs, by the time students will arrive.

1. Being a non operational University yet, and knowing that we already finished installing most of our academic supporting facilities, All the facilities were supervised physically and not remotely by the Accreditation Committee with DIPAE during our institutional license. However, our Computer labs are already there, 20 most sophisticated high-tech PCs are already installed for the Design Department as well as 20 PCs for other use. A MAC Lab will be installed soon to meet the requirements. As for the Library, AUCY Libraries strive to provide quality services by acquiring, organizing, preserving, and providing access to a variety of information resources. The libraries, thereby, support the University's mission to foster excellence in scholarship and lifelong learning and to educate students to be future leaders who can exercise reason based upon knowledge.

Recognizing that the Library is central to fulfilling the mission of the University, AUCY Libraries keep up-to date with the latest publications relevant to the major programs of study through purchases and an active local and international gifts and exchange program. The Libraries welcome and encourage donations and institutional exchanges that support the University's academic programs and the scholarly, teaching, and research interests of AUCY community.

The Library will provide access to an expanding collection of core reference and circulating materials in print, manuscript, electronic, audio, visual, cartographic, and other appropriate formats. It also provides individual and group study space for more than 100 simultaneous users, an Information Commons with appropriate support and access to information and technology resources and a classroom for Library instruction and for quiet, individual study.



AUCY Libraries are open to the public, however, only AUCY faculty, students, staff, and alumni are currently granted borrow privileges. AUCY Libraries guests and visitors are allowed to access and use the library's resources within the confines of the library only.

We will be hosting an E-library connected to all E-Libraries in the world. Hence, articles from all over the world will be accessible by our students and guests. Researches from all can be accessed immediately.

The libraries will be connected to all servers through the PC's on a daily basis and we have a plan to open them for 24 hours, 7 days a week.

As for the Design Department and as per the recommendation of the visiting committee, a dedicated library is already in the process of being finalized very soon.



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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7. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

As a conclusion, AUCY's Administration in general and the Faculty of Arts in particular takes this opportunity to thank DIPAE and the visiting committee for their trust and their final statement where they recommend the programs to be accredited. We promise to take all the recommendations very seriously and we already started their implementation. Thank you so much for making Cyprus a great place for Higher Education.



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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr. Mark-Antoine Zabbal	Rector	
Dr. George Phylactou	Vice President	
Dr. Ioannes Michaloudis	Dean	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

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