

**Response of the Department of Architecture
in the School of Engineering at the University of Cyprus
to the CYQAA External Evaluation Report (Departmental)**

Dear colleagues at CYQAA,

Please find herein the response of the Department of Architecture in the School of Engineering at the University of Cyprus to the External Evaluation Report (Departmental) dated 12.12.29.

First of all, to our external evaluators our thanks for taking time away from busy schedules to compile their informative report (excerpt in red italics below), as well as to all members of our local agencies and institutions for their tireless guidance and assistance.

“Overall, this is a relatively small department with dedicated staff and students, which, despite its size, offer a range of high quality professional and other architecture programs.

Staff are well qualified and diverse, including significant international experience and backgrounds, and operate a range of equally diverse teaching methods.

There is a wise and effective management of existing resources.

There is a clear profile towards producing architectural professionals, which could be further enhanced by employing distinguished non-academic architectural and structural engineering professionals.

The existing building facilities offer an excellent location, but are woefully inadequate for teaching, research, departmental communication and culture; they may also present significant risks in terms of safety and disabled access.

The department's planned move to the old university campus will provide ample space, but will not provide clear involvement with either the city of Nicosia or with the rest of the university faculties, departments and students. Integration with a stimulating urban and intellectual environment is a key requirement for architectural education. This is due to the discipline's specific focus – in pedagogy, teaching subjects and research interests. For architecture, the laboratory IS the city, and a close relationship with a stimulating urban environment is essential.”

Departmental responses to the committee’s comments are organized as follows:

- Criteria that have received a marks of ‘4’ and / or ‘5’ (compliant) are addressed generally;
- Criteria that have received a mark of ‘3’ are shown in red and are addressed specifically.

General comments:

The department will continue to emphasize design as the core value of architectural training. Further consideration will be given to specific aspects as to its geographic location and context, such as but not limited to: structural design and matters of seismic risk; appropriate and responsive design to emergency situations; etc.

Also, in developing the department over future years, the department has forwarded its request to the institutional authorities in relation to new appointments (16 tenured or tenure track full time faculty members plus an additional visiting studio faculty member per semester, as has been noted in the 2019 CYQAA External Evaluation Report (Programs of Study) of the Department of Architecture at UCy).

Specific comments:

With regards to Section 2:

“The Department should ensure adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:

- *Building facilities.*
- *Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.*
- *The Department has the appropriate mechanisms, processes and infrastructure to facilitate students with disabilities.”*

In this respect *“the committee’s reservations concern the existing building facilities at the Ledras Street location, which severely impact on the department’s ability to fully carry out its academic mission and to maximize communication between teaching groups”* and also touch upon *“the serious impact on matters of safety and disabled access.”*

As with teaching and research and per the committee’s recommendations, the provision of safe and adequate departmental facilities is in the pipeline, as a result of ongoing spatial and infrastructural renovations taking place at the “Academy” campus (visited and inspected by the external committee) with a projected move-in date for the summer of 2021.

At the same time, concurrent efforts are being made for the department’s continued presence or subsequent return to Nicosia’s historic core, so as to allow the department to achieve its maximum potential and to fulfill its pedagogical and social mission, as highlighted in the committee’s report.

Furthermore and with regards to its technical laboratories, requests have been made for an assistant to the current lab technician who provides support for an extensive range of technical equipment.

This person will help alleviate the pressures placed upon the current staff member, who is over-stretched and needs to more satisfactorily support the departmental demands placed upon him and within the broader context of the health, safety and welfare of the department’s community.