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External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

Frederick University

- **Town: Nicosia (Main campus)**

- **School/Faculty: Engineering/Civil Engineering**

- **Department: Civil Engineering**

- **Department's Status: Currently Operating**

- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation:
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme 1

In Greek:

Προπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα Πολιτικού Μηχανικού

In English:

BSc in Civil Engineering

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα στη Δομοστατική Μηχανική

In English:

MSc in Structural Engineering

Programme 3

In Greek:

Διδακτορικό πρόγραμμα Πολιτικού Μηχανικού

In English:

PhD in Civil Engineering



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].



Department's programmes (to be filled by the CYQAA officer and verified by the EEC):

DEPARTMENT	PROGRAMMES OF STUDY



A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee members visited the University virtually during the period of April 12 to 13 2021 due to Covid-19 related restrictions. Nonetheless, they were provided with a significant number of resources that helped with the evaluation.

The members of the Department gave extensive and detailed presentations and were very willing to answer questions asked by the committee and offer additional data and complimentary information. The committee believes that the following report has not been affected by the virtual nature of the visit. This is thanks to the efforts of all the parties involved.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	Professor	Politecnico di Torino, Italy
Emmanouil Chatzis	Associate Professor	University of Oxford, UK
Dimitrios Lignos	Associate Professor	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland
Andreas Theodotou	Professional Civil Engineer	Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus Representative - ETEK
David Kalashnikov	Student Member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report refers to the Department as a whole (programmes offered, teaching staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, resources, etc.).*
- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*
- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*
- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*
- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), **which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report.***
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)		1 - 5
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	5
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	5
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	4
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	5
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	4
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	4
1.1.7	The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Overall the department has set up clear criteria regarding mission and strategic planning. there is coherence between programmes offered by the department.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.
2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

There are full coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.

In addition to that, there are full coherence and compatibility among Departments within the Faculty.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

N/A

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society

1 - 5

1.2.1	The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.	5
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	5
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	4
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department has organized a number of effective mechanisms for effective communication with the society, general public and technical society. A formal communication with alumni is recommended but informally this is already done.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.3 Development processes

1 - 5

1.3.1	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.	5
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1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	4
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	5
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department has set up formal mechanisms to ensure a good quality of admitted students. The programs are offered in English; as such, about 20% of the students are international students (mainly EU); 5% from third countries and the rest are Cypriots.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students: 75%
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country: 20% from EU and 5% from third countries

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The department has developed coherent programmes both in the bachelor and graduate school that effectively prepare students for their professional development. With regard to effective communication to the community and former graduates, several successful examples were demonstrated. Moreover, the department has a clear plan on maintaining its current program.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. The department presented examples involving both practical works along with emphasis on the fundamentals.
2. the course offerings at the graduate level seem quite interesting including courses related to building information modeling, which seem to be emerging in the professional world.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

A formal alumni center should be established (this is already in the works). Could be effective to consider hiring 1-2 additional visiting professors to ensure complementary course offerings of interest. However, for the bachelor program this is not necessary.



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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Compliant

2. Quality Assurance

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
2. Quality Assurance		
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy		1 - 5
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	5
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	5
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	5
2.1.4	The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1	Teaching and learning	5
2.1.4.2	Research	5
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	5
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	5
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	5
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

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2. Quality Assurance

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

1 - 5

2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	5
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	5
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective, which have been presented and discussed.	5
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	5
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	5
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	5
2.2.7	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.	5
2.2.8	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	5
2.2.9	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	5
2.2.10	The Department flexibly uses a variety of teaching methods.	5
2.2.11	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	5

2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	5
2.2.13	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
2.2.12.1	Building facilities	5
2.2.12.2	Library	5
2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	5
2.2.12.4	Technological infrastructure	5
2.2.12.5	Academic support	5
2.2.14	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
2.2.15	The Department's mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.	5
2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	5
2.2.17	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	5
2.2.18	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	N/A
2.2.19	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	5
2.2.20	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department has presented a clear and effective procedure for quality control and assurance, to the satisfaction of the evaluation committee and therefore the resulting score is high.

Regarding student diversity it is noted that the school programs are in English language, which helps diversity in the student community.

Consider that Q. 2.2.18 is ranked as N/A because the PhD program is relatively new (is running for 5 years or so) and one PhD student recently graduated. Six more PhD students are currently enrolled; therefore, this is something to be reviewed carefully in the next cycle of evaluations.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The applied procedures presented are fully satisfactory. We note the academic members' concern and interest in new and emerging trends in the fields of civil engineering and the efforts to follow these evolutions in order to adapt the departments curriculum.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

We note the strong and effective connection of the faculty members and the students with industry and professional bodies, the links with other universities, result in the effective transfer of knowledge through various channels, which assures successful learning. Interesting course offerings at the master's level including the design of wood, masonry structures as well as courses related to assessment of existing structures.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

It is suggested that the members of the Department engage in a more frequent communication with the representatives of the Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK) for potentially new course offerings of interest to the profession. Such an explanation and discussion with ETEK would be beneficial for both parties.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	Compliant
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	Compliant

3. Administration (ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
3. Administration		1 - 5
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	5
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	5
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	5
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	5
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	5
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	5
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	5
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	5
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5

3.11	Internalization of the Department and external collaborations.	5
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Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

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Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The pandemic period did not give the opportunity to the ECC members to enter directly in the department life, so that many impressions from a gelid visit on the web could not be very reliable. From the presentation it comes out that the department is running a site and updates regularly the information.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. It is particularly interesting to see that several faculty members are currently involved in EU research projects (or other) despite the small size of the department.
2. Course offerings in English give flexibility to the program and could attract international students as attested by the current admission statistics.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. Consider increasing the number of Erasmus students.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
3. Administration	Compliant

4. Learning and Teaching (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study
- 4.2 Organisation of teaching

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.1 Planning the programmes of study		1 - 5
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	5
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	4
4.1.3	Intended learning outcomes, the content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	5
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	4
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>4.1.1. The Department has a very efficient policy in reviewing academically its programme of study through regular evaluations and well-defined forms and procedures of how to react to those forms.</p> <p>4.1.2 The stakeholders interact with the University through the forms. Students participate in panels through representatives.</p>		

4.1.3-4.1.4 The assignments and final exams are of the appropriate level. The degree is oriented towards ensuring accreditation. The course of special subjects allows to incorporate recent topics of industry to industry and the profession.

4.1.5. There is good integration between theory and practice and the optional practical exercise is well appreciated by the students.

4. Learning and Teaching

4.2 Organisation of teaching

1 - 5

4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	3
4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	5
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	5
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	5
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	5
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	5
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The University is scoring very well in the areas of credit transfer for the Msc and PhD programmes. Equally a similar procedure for credit transfer is followed for the BSc. The University in all cases is communicating their policy to the candidates before admission and this policy is well correlated to the requirements of accrediting bodies. The hybrid teaching rooms of the Department work well and have received positive feedback. The student-centred system is exemplified through the support of the welfare office, the peer-support system and the role of the student administrator and the extensive office hours followed. Those have been praised by the undergraduates and graduate students of the University. The small numbers of students in all programs allow a very good ratio of students per room and lecturers.

For admissions: The admissions policy to the MSc and PhD are very good. For the BSc the admission policy involves maths and english exams. This results into classifying the students into students that can take courses full time

and others who may need to be put under probation and need to attend a foundation course prior to starting the main courses. This system is reasonable. The policy that the Department follows in terms of setting a highschool diploma as minimum entrance requirement could be improved, but is no exception to what is usually followed for private Universities in Cyprus. Perhaps the Department should consider a minimum entry mark or a minimum performance to specific highschool courses. The maths exam is a useful strategy, which could partially result in avoiding cases of students who would not eventually be able to cope with the requirements of the degree even after being put under probation.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The virtual visit demonstrated that the Department has scored well in most of the above categories and is compliant. The Department achieves a good balance between theory and practise. The degrees are very well oriented towards accreditation. The courses are of very good level and there are options that follow the recent trends in civil engineering. The Department scores well in the area of student-centred teaching and the facilities are very good for the numbers admitted. The committee is of the opinion that the fact that at least 70% of the current faculty holds a BSc degree in Civil Engineering is a plus to ensure high quality of teaching core concepts in civil engineering.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The following are innovative solutions and strengths of the teaching policy of the Department:

- The Department monitors the performance of students through the academic supervisor and the welfare office.
- Students that underperform or express difficulties are offered a peer-supervision and are placed under probation. If they continue to struggle their load is lightened but this decision involves a discussion with the student, the academic supervisor and the welfare officers
- The Department offers a foundation course to students that may be underperforming in the maths exam. This is a policy which is considered to be beneficial to students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The Department is using a Student Advocate System as an additional means to deal with students' grievances.
- The Department has already incorporated hybrid teaching in the classrooms. This has worked well and was accelerated in the pandemic.
- The small number of students results in all systems of supporting the students working on a very good level.
- The members of the Department apply an almost open doors policy through offering extensive office hours. This has now been extended due to the pandemic to zoom office hours. This system appears to work well.
- The Department offers courses that are often taught by students such as Timber and Masonry. Additionally, several courses are offered on Earthquake Engineering.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

As shown above the Department has scored very well in the previous categories. If there is a room for improvement that would be related to the BSc admissions policy. However, the Committee recognizes that:

- Definitions of a minimum entry requirement may be difficult to implement in practise from students coming from different educational systems.
- This is a Private University in a system where state-funded Universities are also of very high level and are free of tuition.
- The policy on this matter of this Department agrees with the policies followed by other, and hence competing, Private Universities in Cyprus.

-The Department mitigates risks to students through the maths entry (and secondary the English entry) exam.
 -The Department follows an honest policy of advising students that perform unsatisfactorily on the above exams about them being placed in a preparatory route involving a reduced load in the first years before they are admitted.
 -The Department is not near the limit set by the University which is 50 students admitted per year
 Nonetheless, the Department can consider a policy where students that show evidence that they would not cope with the requirements of the degree, even despite any help in the first years, are not admitted. The Committee has no strong feelings on this matter for the previous reasons mentioned, but the members believe that a minimum entrance mark or a pass/fail level mark for the maths (and English) entry exam/or some other policy could be helpful in such cases. The Committee did not see evidence that students who would fall in this category, are currently being admitted.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	Compliant
4.2 Organisation of teaching	Compliant

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
 3: *Partially compliant*
 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
5. Teaching Staff		1 - 5
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	5
5.2	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.	5
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	4
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	5
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	4
5.6	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.	5
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

While the quality of the program is ensured with efforts of existing faculty, it would be beneficial if few 1-2 more visiting professors are hired for complementary course offerings.

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: 10
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: 6
- Number of visiting Professors: 1

- Number of special scientists on lease services: 3

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Based on the presentation sessions during the virtual visit, the department comprises 10 permanent teaching staff in civil engineering, 6 faculty from other departments complement existing courses (e.g., technology and pathology). Moreover, three other special teaching staff are employed for pertinent coursework (e.g., BIM). Finally, one visiting professor assists in teaching.

Two dedicated scientists and a laboratory assistant aid the teaching process in terms of laboratory works and demonstrator courses. Moreover, the university features a mobility coordinator for Erasmus, a librarian and an infrastructure coordinator.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. Good technical depth in coursework.
2. While the department is fairly young, it ranks 201 of at least 1000 universities in u-multirank ranking system.
3. Laboratories for teaching and learning complement the department facilities and ensure active learning and hands on experience for students and scientists.
4. Dedicated master's program with emphasis on structural engineering.
5. Interesting coursework on complementary topics at the graduate level.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

While the department is currently running in a fairly optimal way, the hiring of 1-2 visiting professors could be an asset to maintain the existing trajectory and achieve even more over the next few years.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	Compliant
Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

6. Research

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
6. Research		1 - 5
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	4
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	5
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	4
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	5
6.5	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.	4
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	5
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	5
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	4
6.9	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

It is important to note that the Department has only recently initiated their PhD program, specifically in 2015. And as a result, there has been a single graduate from that program, with 6 PhD students currently working to complete their PhD. Consequently, the small numbers of PhD students and the complete lack of before 2015:

6.5: Has affected the activity of the members of the Department which is nonetheless reasonable and the papers produced are in journals of good standing.

6.8: Has affected the ability of the Department to compete with state funded Universities in Cyprus for funding. Nonetheless, the members of the Department have achieved a respectable amount of funding from a variety of national and European sources, that are close to 2 million euros over the decade, with 1.5 million since 2015 (a further indication that the competitiveness of the Department will improve as the group of PhD students grows).

6.3: Has inevitably affected the size of the experimental facilities, which also taking into account the small size of the Department is nonetheless reasonable, but inevitably smaller than state Universities in Cyprus.

6.1: mean that the reasonable policies designed by the department have not been tested in depth but will be tested in the following years with more PhD students graduating. The policies are nonetheless reasonable and conform to those followed by most institutions of high academic standing.

With the above it seems that the University can further support the Department:

6.9: The internal funding for research purposes is modest, again this is reasonable due to the size of the cohort of PhD students, but as the numbers of PhD students are increasing the University should support that effort with also increasing the internal funding for research. This will ensure further growth and there are signs-e.g. the recent grants- that the Department would generate additional overheads through an increase of the external funding.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department has only recently initiated their PhD program, specifically in 2015. And as a result, there has been a single graduate from that program, with 6 PhD students currently working to complete their PhD. Despite that important factor the members of the Department have secured a respectable amount of funding of the order of 2 million Euros over the decade, and 1.5 million Euros since 2015, and have participated in projects with international partners in Cyprus and other countries. Equally, the publications of the members over this period are reasonable especially when taking into account that those publications have not been supported, up until recently by PhD students. The research facilities have improved over the recent years in a targeted way, by the acquisition of equipment that is optimized for the research needs of the members. Inevitably, due to the size of the University and the Department, the research facilities are small. Yet the Department is mitigating this by optimizing space and also ensuring that the students can use facilities in other (state) Universities through collaborations. The Department has a new PhD program and an identified priority of growth in that area. The University should support this effort of growth for the numbers of the PhD students of the Department.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

-The members of the Department have produced research of good quality despite having access to very limited resources (PhD students). The increase in the number of PhD students will further improve the performance in this area.

-The members of the Department have achieved a reasonable amount of funding. This can only improve as the number of PhD students grows in the upcoming years.

- The equipment obtained for the labs appears to be optimized to the needs of the research staff.
- The University has supported internal bids for equipment.
- The members of the Department have a good research background, are experienced researchers with participations in technical committees of high standing.
- The Department has collaborations with other Universities in Cyprus and internationally.
- PhD students can use facilities in other (state) Universities. This is a very clever policy as, regardless of growth, a Department cannot become autonomous in terms of research facilities.
- There is a good integration between research and teaching. The new PhD students are involved as teaching assistants in courses while the members of the Department have incorporated elements from their research in both the BSc and MSc courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The PhD program is relatively recent (it started in 2015). The Department is making an active effort to increase the number of PhD students. The Committee members feel that this is a step in the right direction. There will be many benefits from this growth for the Department in terms of it improving its research capacity and competitiveness at all levels. The University should support this effort.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Research mechanisms and regulations	Compliant
External and internal funding	Compliant
Motives for research	Compliant
Publications	Compliant

7. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
7. Resources		1 - 5
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	4
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	3
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	5
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	4
7.5	The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	5
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

In 7.2, the grading of 3 is only related to research (in the PhD program), which at the moment is evolving and it has a promising trajectory given the focus of the department, which is on teaching. Moreover, the data are not sufficient to further support a higher score. However, to be fair this should be carefully evaluated in the next revision as the results from the investment in the PhD program will be more evident after at least 5 years.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Covid emergency did not permit a fully evidence of the situation in the Department. From the materials that have been examined and from the presentation, it comes out a good team of professors strongly motivated in increasing

the potentialities in innovative field of research in civil engineering. The Department has been founded recently but the prospective appear promising.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Although the resources do not appear particularly major, the Department is sufficiently organized for the two principal missions regarding teaching and research. The research topics presented to the committee cover current trends in civil engineering and a good link with the practise is established.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Probably a stronger connection with external universities should be encouraged.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
7. Resources	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.

The members of the committee found the policy followed by the Department in all the above categories to be compliant.

The Department ensures a good mix of theory and practical courses and implements good connections between students and industry. There is a mixture of courses of high importance to both theory and practise, such as the design of masonry and timber structures. There are also courses related to BIM which are very useful for practise and theoretical courses on earthquake engineering. These courses match the expertise of the teaching staff, and are also occasionally covered by visiting professors. There is a dedicated MSc on structural engineering which is built around the expertise of the faculty. The committee considers that further appointment of 1-2 visiting professors could benefit the Department so as to cover more courses. The Department appears to be in communication with ETEK and the Committee believes that further communication between the two parties will continue to benefit the development of the curriculum over the following years. The Department assures Quality through following a series of forms. Stakeholders are involved in this process, e.g., student representatives, as well as ETEK representatives.

Several of the members of the faculty are involved in European projects and this is very positive. The Department also applies a series of policies that help the students such as the peer-supervision system and the student's advocate systems. The welfare and library officers support the students very well. The hybrid teaching classrooms have received very positive feedback from the students and indeed appeared modern and spacious (albeit this is a virtual assessment).

The Department follows very good accreditation policies for all degrees. The admissions for MSc and PhD are also very well defined. The Department is following a maths examination for entry to the BSc which is a good policy to classify students. There is also a mechanism of preparatory courses to help students that perform less well on the exam. This could be beneficial to students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Committee has suggested that the Department can consider setting rejection criteria for students that would struggle with the requirements of the degree.

There is a good ratio of teaching staff to students. The programmes are in English which allows for international students attending. The students commented very highly on the office hours policy followed by the lecturers. Further growth of the Department might be temporarily accommodated by increasing the number of visiting professors or permanent staff.

The Department started admitting PhD students in 2015. Despite that they have achieved reasonably well in terms of publications and have secured 1,5 million Euros since 2015. The labs are reasonable for a Department of this size, they are optimized for the needs of the members and any additional requirements are covered through students visiting other Universities. There is one graduated PhD student and 6 active. The Departments wants to grow in this area and the Committee is supporting this direction. It would be beneficial to the Department and would allow an increase of research outputs and funding.

Recommendations:

- The University should support the Department in the growth of the PhD programme.
- Increase of the number of visiting professors can help with growing the numbers of the MSc programme.
- The Department should continue the discussions with ETEK on further developing the syllabus to future needs of the market.
- The Department can consider a minimum entrance requirement for BSc students.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Giuseppe Andrea Ferro	
Emmanouil Chatzis	
Dimitrios Lignos	
Andreas Theodotou	
David Kalashnikov	
FullName	

Date: 16.04.2021

