



AGENTUR FÜR  
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH  
AKKREDITIERUNG VON  
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

## FINAL REPORT

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF LEFKE

### ARCHITECTURE

ARCHITECTURE (BACHELOR OF ARTS)

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (BACHELOR  
OF ARTS)

August 2023



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## DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- “ARCHITECTURE” (BACHELOR)
- “INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE” (BACHELOR)

### OFFERED BY EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY LEFKE, LEFKE, NORTHERN CYPRUS

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on 21 August 2023, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programmes “Architecture” (Bachelor) and “Interior Architecture” (Bachelor) offered by **European University Lefke, Northern Cyprus** are accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

The accreditations are conditional.

The study programmes essentially comply with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 September 2024**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2029**.

#### Conditions:

##### For all study programmes

1. The module handbook and the course descriptions must include all relevant information at an up-to-date level with a comprehensive documentation of all courses and examination types, teaching formats and hours, staff, etc. and be aligned to the syllabi.
2. A written document explaining academic regulations and values, such as a code of conduct, must be handed in, showing how these are implemented in both study programmes.
3. The faculty must provide written evidence of its structured quality assurance processes and how they are used for each programme’s development.
4. The faculty must provide examination regulations in written form in English and make them easily accessible for everyone.
5. The faculty must include important information and documents, such as the course descriptions, study plans and examination regulations in English on its homepage to guarantee transparency for all parties involved.

##### For the study programme “Architecture”

6. To best prepare students for the labour market, sustainability must be integrated as an aspect of architecture in the 21st century in the curriculum and it must be made visible as content in the module handbook.
7. EUL must integrate Building Information Modelling in the curriculum to ensure the future competitiveness of the programme in a globalized world and its graduates in the labour market. It must be made visible as content in the module handbook.

For the study programme “Interior Architecture”

8. The Department of Interior Design must revise its regulations on the final project and require either larger and more intricate projects, or a higher level of technical development in small projects.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programmes:

For all study programmes

1. Both study programmes should decide on a mutual credit system with an official conversion rate, that can be accessed by everybody to display the workload of courses transparently.
2. The syllabus should be more flexible to address the specific context of each semester, tackle current issues, and potentially integrate collaborations to the programmes.
3. EUL and the faculty should implement a formal representation for students to be involved in the development and quality assurance processes of the study programmes first hand.
4. EUL should make documents on procedures of progression, recognition, etc. available in English and easily accessible to all stakeholders.
5. The faculty should increase the internationality of its teaching staff of both programmes through inviting international guest lecturers and/or hiring international part-time or full-time staff or increasing the existing staff's international profile.
6. The faculty management should improve the workshops' equipment in quantity and, if possible, strive for upgrading it to a fully functional model workshop.
7. Students should learn and practice making digital models as part of their courses.
8. It is highly recommended to update the library in a way that it includes the most important handbooks also in a hardcopy and the most important ejournals are available.
9. To improve the faculty's internationalisation process, the programmes should include more international exposure for their students, in courses as well as through excursions.
10. The faculty should evaluate the possibility to fuse several or all online platforms currently used and use only one to allow more transparency and efficiency.

For the study programme “Architecture”

11. To further improve internationalisation and include international students' possible future labour markets, the programme is encouraged to incorporate different contexts, e.g., through case studies, examples, and perspectives from African countries and other international contexts.

For the study programme “Interior Architecture”

12. The programme should include more elective courses in its curriculum to allow students freedom of choice in their personal study plan.

13. The programme should put more emphasis on teaching graphic skills to students, e.g., through implementing practical exercises in the courses.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

**EXPERTS' REPORT****ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES**

- “ARCHITECTURE” (BACHELOR OF ARTS)
- “INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE” (BACHELOR OF ARTS)

**OFFERED BY EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF LEFKE, LEFKE, CYPRUS**

Visit to the university: 09-10 May 2023

**Panel of experts:**

<b>Prof. Javier Martin Fuentes</b>	Berlin International University of Applied Sciences (Germany), Faculty of Architecture and Design
<b>Prof. MSc Dipl.-Ing. Robert Thum</b>	Trier University of Applied Sciences, (Germany), Faculty of Architecture
<b>Mr Peter Goerke</b>	AECOM Deutschland GmbH (Germany) (representative of the labour market)
<b>Mr Robert Reibold</b>	Student of Nuertingen-Geislingen University (HfWU) (student expert)
<b>Coordinator:</b> Dr. Sarah Jenischewski	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

## I. Preamble

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AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

## II. Accreditation procedure

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This report results from the external review of the programmes "Architecture" (Bachelor of Arts) and "Interior Architecture" (Bachelor of Arts) offered by European University of Lefke.

### 1. Criteria

Each programme is assessed against a set of criteria for accreditation developed by AQAS: the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master). The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015. To facilitate the review each criterion features a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria. However, if single indicators are not fulfilled this does not automatically mean that a criterion is not met. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of each programme since not all indicators necessarily can be applied to every programme.

### 2. Approach and methodology

#### *Initialisation*

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in October 2021. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In July 2022, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programmes and an appendix. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,
- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 29 August 2022. The final version of the SER was handed in November 2022.

#### *Nomination of the expert panel*

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in December 2022. AQAS informed the university about the members of the expert panel and the university did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

#### *Preparation of the site visit*

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

#### *Site visit*

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place on 9-10 May 2023. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

#### *Reporting*

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS Criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the university for comments.

#### *Decision*

The report, together with the comments of the university, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 21 August 2023. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In October 2023, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.



### III. General information on the university

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The European University of Lefke (EUL) was established as a state foundation university by the Cyprus Science Foundation in 1990. So far, more than 25,000 students have graduated from the university, according to the SER. Currently, 10,532 students from 87 countries are registered in the university's eleven faculties and vocational schools, one institute (Graduate School) and one English Preparatory School. These faculties and schools offer education in 104 associate/undergraduate degree programmes and 55 postgraduate/doctoral degree programmes.

Like other institutions of higher education in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, EUL is supervised by the Ministry of National Education. Furthermore, EUL and its respective departments and programmes are accredited by YÖDAK, the Higher Education Planning, Evaluation, Accreditation and Coordination Council of TRNC, YÖK, the Higher Education Council of Turkey and international accreditation agencies, as the SER mentions.

The university's administration comprises of the Office of the Rector, the Senate, the University Executive Council, the Deans, Faculty Academic Councils, Faculty Administrative Councils, Directorates of Institutes and Schools of Higher Education, Department Chairs, and Department Councils. As the highest decision-making organ, the Board of Trustees of the Cyprus Science Foundation appoints the University Rector and delegates its executive powers to him.

The university states that the Rector acts as the Chief Executive Officer of the university and is responsible for the fulfilment of the university's vision and mission. He operates the university, including its academic work, business affairs, alumni and government relations and the engagement with the broader community.

The Senate has the power to act upon educational matters and regulations of the academic community that affect more than one school, fixes the length of terms and vacations and defines the university calendar, according to the SER. Furthermore, it makes recommendations regarding educational programmes, policies and university publications.

Following its statement, the aim of the university is to be an autonomous university open to change and development, producing science and technology. It provides academic expertise, professional guidance, and resources to help students achieve their ambitions. According to the SER, students are taught to become innovative and professionally responsible individuals with distinct personalities, who are capable of critical thinking as well as to contribute to the welfare of society.

The university declares that it has a centralized budget structure. The budgeting method allows for faculty-level scrutiny. The university states that the majority of the budget comes from student tuition fees.

#### Faculty of Architecture

The faculty states in the SER that it has two departments (Architecture and Interior Design). The departments work together, and academic activities are organised jointly. From an administrative viewpoint, each lecturer is said to take responsibility within the framework of their field of interest to improve the quality level.

The faculty's primary aim is said to be educating individuals who are capable of comprehending architecture and interior architecture within qualitative and quantitative values, who respect ethical values, and integrate technical skills with professional practice, with the awareness of social issues while experiencing the Mediterranean spirit. Furthermore, the SER states that teaching staff encourages students to comprehend the ethical principles, and standards, which lead the architectural attitudes; to learn how to restrict personal tendencies, and to exclude insufficient / unprincipled decisions.

Regarding finances, the faculty can submit a written request for financial needs for the programmes and other resources to the university administration, who allocates the budget, as the SER says.

#### IV. Assessment of the study programmes

##### 1. Quality of the curriculum

###### **Bachelor's degree**

*The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.*

*The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.*

[ESG 1.2]

#### **Description**

##### General

The university states that it uses the American Credit System and European Credit System (ECTS) in its programmes and diploma supplements. Both programmes, Architecture and Interior Architecture, have a duration of eight semesters with a total of 130 credits (240 ECTS). An academic year consists of two semesters of 14 weeks, including the final examination period.

Each programme consists of 43 courses. The first year of both curricula comprises the same, while the second, third and fourth years include different specialized courses. Overall, 37 of the courses are offered as compulsory, and six of them are offered as elective courses. The Department of Architecture offers four technical elective courses and two free elective courses. The Department of Interior Architecture offers three technical elective courses and three free elective courses. The faculty states that some service courses are obtained from other related faculties (e.g., Mathematics, Turkish, Introduction to Computers). Likewise, the faculty offers courses to other related faculties (e.g., Graphic Communication, Building Construction and Detailing).

Each programme offers a course and department handbook that is updated each year.

In the first two years of the programme, students take university and faculty common courses. Beginning with their second year, but especially during year three and four students take programme specific courses. Every semester is designed as a separate module and every module has 5-6 courses to complete. According to the SER, a regular student's workload is nearly 900 hours per semester.

Both programmes have 14 defined programme outcomes in common: Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Research Skills, Basic Design Knowledge, Technical and Technological Skills, Understanding World Architecture, Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Sustainability (Social, Economic and Environmental), Societal Responsibility, Building Physics and Environmental Systems, Building Service Systems, Preparing Programme and Evaluation, Professional Practice, and Professional Ethics.

The faculty provides an overview of course-specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

##### Architecture (Bachelor)

The programme was established in 1990 with and continues to admit 25 students per year. The faculty states its mission is to graduate students with strong ethical skills, who combine their technical knowledge with professional practice, and create unique designs with a high level of social awareness. In addition, the programme

states to value strong communication skills and the Mediterranean spirit. The programme's vision is to increase the possibility of artistic and scientific experiences in architectural design education, strengthening the alliance between design and technology for more sustainable, contemporary, and professional solutions.

In addition to the common programme outcomes stated above, the Architecture programme additionally defines the following programme outcomes: Understanding National and Vernacular Architecture, Nature and Human, Architecture and Landscape Relation, and Architecture-Urban Space Relation, Health and Safety, Construction Systems, Building Envelope Systems, Building Material and Applications, Integration of Building Systems, Comprehensive Design Development, Building Economy, Architect and Client Relationship, Teamwork and Collaboration, Project Management, Application and Controlling, as well as Legal Rights and Responsibilities.

In the year 2021-22, 104 students were registered for this programme in total (1<sup>st</sup> year: 20, 2<sup>nd</sup> year: 22, 3<sup>rd</sup> year: 28, 4<sup>th</sup> year: 34).

### **Experts' evaluation Architecture**

During the visit to the European University of Lefke, it was evident that there is a genuine commitment to ongoing assessment and improvement of the curriculum, including a dedication of all (additional) resources needed. The documentation provided, along with the discussions held during the visit, demonstrated that the university has successfully created a learning environment that aligns with international standards, promotes intercultural understanding, and prepares students for global challenges and opportunities in the construction industry.

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up to date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the ILOs, which are adequate to reach the intended equivalent of EQF 6. The thirty ILOs of the Department of Architecture cover a comprehensive range of aspects related to the qualification. These outcomes encompass both subject-specific and interdisciplinary elements. The design modules, which play a central role in the curriculum, provide students with opportunities to explore diverse subject areas. Moreover, the curriculum allows the teaching staff to incorporate current real-life demands into the assignments of these modules.

However, the two prominent societal and disciplinary topics, namely digitalization and climate change/sustainability, though addressed in teaching, are underrepresented in the curriculum and module descriptions. In future curriculum development, it is crucial to give these topics a more prominent role to prepare students for the international labour market of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To achieve this goal, sustainability must be included as an aspect for architecture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in all courses and its inclusion must be transparently documented through the module handbook (**Finding 1**). Ideally, they should be integrated as a framework that structures all other Programme Outcomes, ensuring that sustainability and building in a changing environment are emphasized throughout the curriculum and always thought of in all aspects of the students' education to become architects.

Additionally, the current Programme Outcomes do not adequately represent digitalization. Building Information Modelling (BIM), which is both a design and working method as well as a software tool, is at the forefront of the current radical changes in the international construction industries. Again, to be equipped perfectly for the international labour market, students need deeper knowledge of this tool. Therefore, it is imperative to formally integrate BIM into the curriculum to ensure the future competitiveness of the Architecture Programme at the European University of Lefke in a globalized world (**Finding 2**).

While the level of architectural theory taught is deemed sufficient, there is room for improvement in integrating theory into design practice and developing students' skills. The curriculum should strive to challenge students'

preconceptions in a clear and didactic manner, fostering critical thinking and creativity. Furthermore, the translation of the ILOs into assessment criteria for some courses lacks necessary transparency, making it difficult for students to fully understand the expectations. Therefore, it is important to improve the transparency of assessment criteria and provide clear guidelines to students in the documents given to students, e.g. module handbooks or syllabi.

To further enhance internationalization and address Cyprus-specific contextual relevance, the Head of Programme is encouraged to incorporate the contexts and issues of students from various home countries in the curriculum, with a particular emphasis on Africa. This can be achieved by evaluating the inclusion of case studies, examples, and perspectives from African countries and other international contexts (**Finding 3**). By doing so, the curriculum can provide a global perspective and foster intercultural understanding among students.

Finally, extending the duration of internships can offer advantages to students by offering them more extensive and immersive learning experiences. By extending the internship period, students have the opportunity to acquire a deeper comprehension of the construction industry, cultivate a wider range of skills, and establish stronger professional connections than they have with the current timeframe. An expanded timeframe enables students to participate in more substantial projects and acquire practical knowledge that complements their academic studies.

For both study programmes, EUL is reportedly bound to decisions of the Ministry of Higher Education in Turkey (YÖK), such as changes in the title of the study programme. While the experts know that this is a structural problem that can hardly be influenced by the university, it does raise concerns concerning academic independence as well as potentially conflicting economic, political and other interests, e.g., with regard to the role and influence of the YÖK.

## Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

### Interior Architecture (Bachelor)

The programme was established in 1990 with and continues to admit 25 students per year. According to the SER, the Interior Architecture programme's mission is to educate students who are able to design functional, aesthetic and liveable interiors, which are environmentally friendly, sustainable and respectful to the cultural and historical heritage. The programme leaders intend to provide a highly communicative educational environment with team spirit and respected ethical values. The department's vision is stated to be improving education's qualitative and quantitative values while strengthening the alliance between design and technology as well as leading students to more sustainable and future-oriented design solutions.

In addition to the common programme outcomes stated above, the Interior Architecture programme additionally states the following programme outcomes for its graduates: Design Culture, Interior and Landscape Relation, Ergonomics and Safety, Furniture & Material and Applications, Integration Interior Systems, Legal Rights and Responsibilities.

In the year 2021-22, the programme counted 41 students in total (1<sup>st</sup> year: 12, 2<sup>nd</sup> year: 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> year: 11, 4<sup>th</sup> year: 9).

### Experts' evaluation

The visit to EUL provided an opportunity to gain a close understanding of the dedicated faculty behind the programme in Interior Architecture. Based on the documents provided beforehand and the discussions held

during the onsite visit, several strengths in the curriculum were identified, while also acknowledging areas for improvement.

The curriculum primarily consists of subject-specific courses, with some basic interdisciplinary ones integrated. The content is accessible and well-organized, and the attainment of the intended level of qualification is demonstrated through a final project. The curriculum is structured across different relevant areas of knowledge, which collectively addressing the necessary skills and expertise to be acquired.

Specifically, the curriculum and study plan are well-structured and support the achievement of the expected learning outcomes for an Interior Architecture programme. These learning outcomes are adequate to reach an equivalent of EQF level 6. However, the opportunities for students to customize their path through elective courses are limited, which can be attributed to the size of the student body. Whereas students learn all skills necessary to compete in the labour market, more elective courses would help them to hone specific skills and specialize in one area of Interior Design. Therefore, the Interior Architecture programme should include more elective courses in its curriculum to allow students freedom of choice in their personal study plan (**Finding 4**). Also, the different credit systems utilized, and the different values shown can create comprehensive issues. These different systems prevent full transparency of the programme, which might confuse stakeholders, especially students. The study programme of Interior Architecture should therefore decide on one credit system with an official conversion rate, that can be accessed by everybody (**Finding 5**).

The level of student work, particularly in the final design project, hardly meets the expected complexity for an international BA Programme in Interior Architecture. This is a set back for graduates, who wish to compete in the international labour market. To better equip them for it, the experts see two possible routes for future improvement (**Finding 6**): Encouraging larger and more intricate projects would be beneficial. Contrarily, while keeping the projects small and simple, a higher level of technical development should be expected.

Furthermore, there are additional concerns regarding graphic and representation skills. While technical drawings in 2D show strength overall, the graphic quality of student work does on average not meet international professional standards. The Department of Interior Architecture is therefore advised to strengthen this skill with its students to help them reach a competitive level on the labour market and make a transition easier, in case they want to deepen their studies with a Master's degree. The Interior Architecture programme should put more emphasis on teaching graphic skills to the students, e.g. through implementing practical exercises to this end in the courses (**Finding 7**).

The Module Handbook provides clear information about objectives and learning outcomes, but lacks structure and complexity expected from such an important document. To enhance transparency and inform stakeholders on all important information concerning courses, the experts recommend revising it. It would benefit from a more detailed disclosure of information such as teaching methods, hours, staff, examination format, etc. It is advisable to align the structure of the Module Handbook with that of the syllabi, creating a comprehensive and detailed document (**Finding 8**). Conversely, the syllabi would benefit from some flexibility to address the specific context of each semester, tackle current issues, and potentially integrate collaborations (**Finding 9**).

## Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

## 2. Procedures for quality assurance

### Bachelor's degree

*The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.*

*A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.*

*The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.*

*Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.*

[ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]

## Description

The Faculty of Architecture regularly updates and changes the programme outcomes, hence also the graduate profile. According to the SER, the Faculty of Architecture organises regular bi-annual meetings at the beginning of each semester and invites students to discuss new upgrades to the programme.

The SER states that all programmes at EUL are subject to semi-annual internal quality assessment procedures aiming at continuous improvement under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) of the Rectorate. Rectorate, Faculty and Departments share responsibilities in the assessment of the programmes. In addition, each faculty conducts a systematic and periodic evaluation of programmes regarding their contents, processes and outcomes.

The faculty states to regularly discuss quality issues at department meetings with the participation of all members of departments and in the Assurance of Learning Quality Committee of the Faculty. For external evaluations, the faculty collects feedback from students, the Faculty Advisory Board, alumni and employers of alumni for curriculum development, development and upgrading of teaching methods, teaching materials and equipment. According to the SER, the Faculty Executive Board meeting analyses this feedback and can submit their recommendation to the Rectorate and University Senate.

The faculty has an Assurance of Learning Quality Committee (ALQC), consisting of the Dean of the Faculty and two faculty members. In addition, the Alumni Centre of the University shares relevant data with the Alumni Unit of the Faculty. Alumni feedback is also shared with the ALQC.

The faculty is stated to collect data through course learning outcome surveys, course and instructor evaluation surveys, graduate surveys, and student surveys. Students and alumni are contacted via email and asked to complete an online data sheet.

## Experts' evaluation

Within the faculty, its quality assurance procedures have to be seen in relation to the scale of the two departments. The dean, the head of departments and the other teaching staff represent a relatively small team. This allows a close relationship with all stakeholders, especially with the students. However, structured quality procedures will be of equal importance to maintain and develop the quality of the programmes.

The SER confirms that EUL and the study programmes have no tolerance for academic fraud. The university has an Ethics Committee which is responsible for supervising academic integrity. The experts also welcome EUL's continued effort to improve cultural diversity and intercultural competence within the university and amongst all stakeholders. A written code of conduct or supporting procedures passed by the programmes confirming and safeguarding fundamental values like academic integrity, diversity and tolerance was not provided, however. Whereas this does not mean that these values are not upheld, this current informal system lacks transparency and may facilitate insecurities and problems, if current staff leaves or neither students nor staff have written documents with regulations they can rely on. Therefore, a written document explaining academic regulations and values, such as a code of conduct, must be implemented for both study programmes (**Finding 10**).

According to the SER, all programmes at EUL are subject to semi-annual internal quality assessment procedures aiming at continuous improvement under the auspices of the *Quality Assurance Office (QAO)* of the Rectorate. Except for the results of a student survey, supporting information and evidence regarding the scope and work of the QAO, such as course and/or programme evaluations, evaluation of student workload, data on progression and completion rates, minutes, reports or further evaluation tools were not made available. This makes it difficult for the experts, and stakeholders in general, to get a clear picture on the quality assurance processes of the faculty and the development of the curriculum. To demonstrate profound grounds on which decisions on programme development are taken and to prove a complete PDCA cycle, EUL must provide evidence of data for the PDCA cycle are collected and evaluated in a structured manner and are used as basis for programme development (**Finding 11**). Examples for such data include results of surveys and evaluations as basis for programme development; written meeting minutes of the ALQC; protocols of meetings and how they are used to measure improvement or a document detailing the university's quality assurance procedures.

As stated in the SER, the *Assurance of Learning Quality Committee (ALQC)* is established at Faculty level for quality assurance and development purposes. The information provided regarding the members of this committee seems to be inconsistent, i.e. it is unclear if the Dean and the two Heads of Department form the ALQC or in addition four additional Assistant Professors named in the SER. Also, the described, role ("duty") is rather general and unspecific. No supporting evidence was provided which demonstrates the work of the committee, e.g. meeting minutes (see **Finding 11**).

As reported by the senior management of the EUL, results from online surveys are being collected and sent to the relevant departments. The target is to have a course rating of at least 4 out of 5. In case of a rating of 3 or lower the department will be contacted and the course will be under surveillance. During faculty meetings, the results of courses are evaluated, and student feedback is reflected back to the teachers. Each lecturer is said to take responsibility within the framework of his/her field of interest to improve the quality level. Reportedly the students are not involved in the evaluation of the findings of the online surveys or receive feedback (**Finding 12**).

Apart from the student surveys, a students' club, which is open to all students, is used as forum for discussion. Opinions formulated here are taken to faculty meetings via a designated lecturer. A formal representation of the students, such as a students' association, elected by the student body, with defined rights and responsibilities, e.g. to participate in faculty meetings, is however not in place and should be established. This would guarantee a participation in meetings free of individual interests, relationships and can lead to more continuity, in case teaching staff changes. EUL and the faculty should therefore implement a formal representation for students to be involved in the development and quality assurance processes of the study programme first hand (see **Finding 12**).

The faculty involves external stakeholders, e.g. representatives from the Chamber of Architects / Interior Architecture, graduates and other labour market representatives to collect feedback as part of the planning for the next year's curriculum. Local representatives confirmed a close dialogue with the faculty to this respect during the meeting. However, these meetings seem to be rather informal and without written minutes. Such written minutes, as well as data on the professional development of graduates, would be highly beneficial for all stakeholders involved, especially the faculty as it helps tracking the success of measures taken to improve the curriculum and study programmes. EUL must, hence, provide evidence how meetings are protocolled and how minutes are used to track the development of the study programme (see **Finding 11**).

As for the development of graduates, hardly any data on the students' progression (e.g. student composition, study duration, completion rate, grade distribution, failed/completed exams) can be found. It did not become evident, if statistical data are collected and analysed regularly. Like surveys, these data can be a valuable performance indicator to measure the quality and the achievement of targets as part of the continuous

development, as aspired by the faculty. Without collecting these data, EUL misses a chance to track changes in the study programme from a quantitatively objective students' perspective (see **Finding 11**).

According to the senior management of the EUL a quality handbook exists, but the teachers stated they were not aware of such a document. Very limited evidence was provided of where formal procedures for quality assurance at EUL are written down, how detailed this information is and especially, how and where it is available to interested parties. To ensure transparency to all stakeholders concerning the university's and faculty's quality assurance processes, EUL must provide evidence of a detailed quality handbook and where stakeholders can access it (see **Finding 11**).

To create a holistic approach of quality assurance, the experts recommend further developing a quality management system (QMS), based on professional principles and adopted to the scale and specific needs of the programmes. The aforementioned quality handbook supports this QMS, which defines and documents in detail the goals of the faculty, responsibilities, procedures, schedules, information and documentation requirements, and any other aspects relevant to maintain and continuously improve the quality of the programmes. The purpose of the quality handbook is to provide a common and transparent reference available at hand for all stakeholders in day-to-day university life. It will also be a central source of information for on-boarding new staff. The quality handbook should be a "living document" which is regularly updated to reflect changes and the continuous development/improvement of the Faculty.

As quality assurance is one of the fundamental issues of any study programme, transparency and access to all documentation concerning it is of utmost importance. If this documentation is available only in Turkish, large parts of stakeholders, especially international students, are excluded from it. The quality handbook as well as any other documents relevant for quality assurance, hence, have to be in English to make sure that stakeholders with international background have unrestricted access (see **Finding 11**).

## Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

### 3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

#### Bachelor's degree

*The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.*

*Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.*

*Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

[ESG 1.3]

#### Description

The SER states that faculty members teach the central design studio and theoretical courses to the programmes' students. The faculty stresses the importance of lifelong learning and the students' introduction to the principles, process, tools and techniques of architectural design as a foundation for their problem-solving ability. Both departments state to use traditional teaching methods including lectures, classroom exercises, group exercises, design studio projects, assignments for independent learning, group and individual projects, workshops, seminars and site visits. Design Studio Projects are central to the programmes with the highest credit hours per week compared to other courses. Other subjects such as Construction Technology, Architectural History and others have to serve Design Studio learning each semester. For both programmes, guest



jury members from other universities and professional fields are invited to judge the students' work in studio design courses.

Every student is paired with an academic advisor at the beginning of their studies for the entire duration of the programme. The student advisor calculates the students' workloads. Fast-pacing students with a CGPA of over 3.00 can take some additional credits. The faculty requires an attendance of 80% for applied courses and attendance of 70% for theoretical courses.

The University states to use a continuous assessment process to ensure the quality of education for its students by evaluating the students' performance through a series of exams and tests that are scheduled during the academic semester. According to the SER, students have to take at least one midterm and final exam per course. Depending on the intended learning outcomes at the course level, this might be quizzes, term paper projects, presentations, or teamwork papers. The faculty states to provide all of the requirements for the courses to the students in the syllabi. The grading system uses a scale from 1-100 converted to grades A-F.

Students of both programmes have the option to participate in formal and non-formal learning activities. As examples, the SER lists design week activities, seminars, assemblies, conferences, students' best project presentations, and workshops.

### **Experts' evaluation**

The programmes of Architecture and Interior Architecture are well-designed, effectively striking a balance between workload and level of difficulty, ensuring an appropriate academic challenge for the students. The incorporation of various assessment formats within the curriculum has garnered positive feedback from students, allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in diverse ways. The focus on practical content from early on in the studies leads to a student-centred learning approach, which must be commended.

The student body in itself is distinct at EUL because of its vast diversity. The Faculty of Architecture clearly sees its student body as an asset, as it should be. Nevertheless, the experts recommend honing in on this advantage even more. As Northern Cyprus is not part of the Erasmus programme, the student body as well as lecturers would benefit from a more international perspective within the programmes' teaching. This would contribute to the recognition of the university's graduates on an international scale and give them advantages compared to other graduates when competing for jobs as well as bolster the university's reputation. Therefore, it would be beneficial for the university to explore alternative avenues to include international content and perspectives into its courses and facilitate international exchanges through more Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with additional institution.

Even though the practice-oriented approach of teaching at EUL is commendable, its execution should be improved on the whole. The material resources for model making, such as the workshop resources, with an emphasis on woodworking, should be improved to cater to students' full creativity, skills and aspirations (see criterion on "Learning resources and student support").

Whereas the realisation of learning, teaching and assessment of students does not show severe problems, the documentation of these aspects needs to be revised, updated and potentially even created. The lack of Examination Regulations in English does not allow for a full assessment of the examinations' procedures. It is not clear if there are regulations in place to compensate for possible disadvantages, illness or absence in exams. It seems that there are regulations available (in Turkish) upon request. This creates potentially an atmosphere of insecurity with students, who do not know regulations and have to ask individually. To create transparency and also ensure that regulations for special cases as the ones mentioned above or failing an exam, complaints, e.g., are in place, the faculty must provide examination regulations in written form in English and make them easily accessible for everyone (**Finding 13**).

As mentioned above, students like the diverse assessment methods with which they can demonstrate their creativity, knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, the correlation of the assessment method chosen and the ILO to be achieved does not always become clear. The faculty should strive for more transparency, especially concerning students of these courses as well as external stakeholders. Hence, the faculty must develop a comprehensive document encompassing all courses and their respective examination types (see **Finding 8**). This document should be visually engaging and easily comprehensible, providing students with a clear overview and understanding of the expectations throughout the entirety of the study programme.

### Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

## 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

### Bachelor's degree

*Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.*

[ESG 1.4]

### Description

According to the SER, the processes and management of admissions at EUL are mainly carried out by the University's Registrar's Office alongside the faculties and International Affairs Office. Generally, for admission to the first cycle of higher education studies, potential candidates must hold a high-school graduation diploma or equivalent. The university requires all students to prove their English language ability by participating in an English Language Proficiency Test or providing an internationally accepted English proficiency certificate.

The university states to admit students into the programmes from different countries with diverse educational systems. Accordingly, admission requirements are categorized according to groups of origin:

An international student with a minimum average diploma grade of 'C' is admitted to the programme. International students who possess results of GCE/IGCSE/GCFE 'O' Levels examinations (or its equivalents) are also admitted provided they have a minimum grade of 'C' or above in 5 different subjects, of which one must include Mathematics.

Candidates from TRNC are admitted to the programmes according to their performance in the entrance examinations conducted and administered by the European University of Lefke. TRNC students who possess results of UK-Based GCE/IGCSE/GCFE 'O' Levels examinations (or its equivalents) are also admitted provided they have a minimum grade of 'C' or above in 5 different subjects, of which one must include Mathematics.

Candidates from the Turkish Republic can be admitted to the programmes under review depending on their scores in the central Turkish University Entrance Examination (YKS) which is conducted by the Office of Student Selection and Placements (OSYM). Those students who are successful in the exam and have selected the related programmes in the EUL in their preference list are placed into those programmes.

Successful candidates from Turkey are contacted by the University's Call Centre set up within the University's Promotion Office to guide them. International students receive support through the International Office.

EUL uses an OIBS system where students can access their own curriculum, course programme, transcript, and rules and regulations. Additionally, online learning platforms for students provide course syllabi, course

materials, course memoranda, information on assignments, quizzes, and examination schedules. According to the University, students can obtain information about faculties, departments and programmes from various printed academic and promotional publications issued by the Office of Student Affairs, Office of International Students, Public Relations Office and Secretariat of Faculties.

In total, students are supported by four different online platforms which they can access with the same password they receive from the IT department at the beginning of the semester. Two of these platforms are used for admission and consultation and a mail system for communication with advisors and academics. The other two platforms enable students to join, ask questions and submit home works and projects or access class materials and course videos.

EUL provides the students with a diploma supplement and an official transcript (with ECTS) that bears the seal of the University, the hologram of the University and the signature of the Registrar upon graduation.

The SER states that the recognition of prior learning is regulated in the Regulations for Recognition of Prior Learning. If the credits align with the procedures set by the departments and match or exceed the course contents and credits, admission can be granted and the number of required causes may be reduced. The faculty states that students have the option to transfer some courses from different universities or departments' programmes (shown with an "E" for Exemption in the transcript).

### **Experts' evaluation architecture**

Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place at the European University of Lefke to govern student admission, progression, recognition, and certification. The admission procedures outlined in the SER align with national, Turkish, and international standards, and are transparent to applicants and other stakeholders. These procedures are carried out by the University's Registrar's Office in collaboration with the faculties and International Affairs Office.

To ensure transparency and accessibility, all information related to admission is published in the University's promotional materials, on its website, and in publications supporting individual programmes. Additionally, support is provided by representatives employed in the Promotion Offices of EUL.

While documents regarding progression are available, it is noted that certain procedures are only available in Turkish. This is unfortunate as substantial parts of the student body come from non-Turkish speaking countries and, therefore, oftentimes are not able to understand these documents without translation. Furthermore, documents sometimes seem to be available only upon individual request, which might prevent some students from requesting and, hence, accessing them. To guarantee full transparency, EUL should make these documents on procedures available in English and easily accessible to all individuals, ensuring they are provided in their entirety without the need for specific requests (**Finding 14**).

Students confirm that the grading system is transparent, with feedback provided in design courses. Information on schedules and examinations is published at the beginning of each semester on platforms such as Moodle and notice boards, and is also directly communicated to students during classes.

The European University of Lefke provides students with a diploma supplement and an official transcript. The transcript, credited in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), enables students to easily transfer credits and move between different universities within the international system of universities using ECTS, if necessary.

Student progress in the programmes at EUL is assured and measured through juries, exams, and submissions, as outlined in the SER and confirmed during the site visit. External academics from other institutions and professionals from relevant fields are invited to assess and evaluate student progress, further enhancing the reliability and validity of the assessment process.

## Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 5. Teaching staff

### **Bachelor's degree**

*The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.*

*Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.*

[ESG 1.5]

## Description

The faculty has twelve full-time lecturers and one part-time lecturer working for both programmes in this cluster.

The university states to provide research grant opportunities and encouragement awards to academic staff for their research activities and publications. EUL allocates grants from a Scientific Research Project (BAP) budget to the staff and financially supports the attendance of national and international conferences, as is stated in the SER. In addition, award payments are provided for publications in science-citation-index and science-citation-index expanded journals.

According to the SER, the process of staff recruitment is as follows: interested applicants hand in an application and a CV to Human Resources. Depending on available vacancies, the application is evaluated on different levels of the university (the Rectorate, the Faculty, the Department). If there are eligible applicants for a certain position, the applicant is interviewed based on their CV.

The SER highlights that training and support are also provided to administrative staff. The university offers professional development for teaching staff through seminars offered by every faculty and external expert guests on different topics based on necessity and/or up-to-date issues and technologies. Teaching staff also have the option to seek training for Architects outside of the University, such as at the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (UCTCEA).

According to the SER, the Faculty of Architecture collaborates with stakeholders such as the Union of Turkish Engineers and Architects-Chamber of Architects, Chamber of Interior Architects and Municipality of Lefke. Presidents and board members of both Chambers attend and contribute to the juries of the Faculty of Architecture and deliver talks and seminars for the students. Faculty members and students attend and contribute to the events organised by the Chambers such as the assembly on Architecture and Education of Chamber of Architects.

The faculty states that members of the Municipality of Lefke and Faculty members attend socio-cultural and educational events organised by the other institution. The municipality's architect attends the juries of the faculty, and staff of the municipality participate to the workshops and seminars organised by the faculty. Faculty members attend and contribute to the workshops, conferences, and public meetings organised by the municipality.

### **Experts' evaluation**

The faculty members within the Architecture and Interior Architecture Bachelor Programs at the European University of Lefke exhibit a commendable level of motivation and engagement, effectively establishing a

positive and productive relationship with their students. The dean describes the faculty to be a “big family” with more of a personal rather than formal setting. The teaching staff seems to be guided and motivated by her spirit, and together they aspire to create a positive atmosphere at the faculty.

The teachers’ understanding of the syllabus allows for the effective transmission of course content, facilitating a comprehensive grasp of the programme structure. Similarly, the students demonstrate commitment to their studies, displaying passion for the subject matter. Their appreciation for the teachers’ dedication are testament to the faculty members’ efforts, which often extend beyond the formal requirements of the study programme.

A majority of the teaching staff has a local academic background (e.g. EUL or EMU). One teacher holds a PhD from Oxford, one from Glasgow, one from Italy. All together there are four teachers with degrees/experience. Reportedly, the faculty previously included international teachers from Iran and Nigeria, who left during the Covid pandemic. Currently all academic staff is either from Cyprus or Turkey. The faculty’s international aspiration, visible in the high percentage of international students, is currently not reflected in the teaching team. The dean also expressed her view that they miss international input. The faculty as well as students, of whom many voiced their desire to move back to their respective home countries and work there as architects or would like to pursue their Master’s degree in another international setting would benefit from more international exposure during their studies. This could be achieved through guest lecturers and possibly even full-time teaching staff with an international background, especially from countries/regions, which are well represented in the student body, e.g. from Africa. The faculty should, hence, increase students’ exposure to international perspectives on (interior) architecture through international guest lecturers or full-time staff (**Finding 15**).

The local background of the teaching staff is also reflected in a limited practical experience outside of Cyprus or Turkey and the lack of native English speakers. As for the latter, the students do not report any language issues. However, in view of the key importance verbal and written communication in English has, not only during the studies, but also for an international career of the students, elaborate English skills seem to be a key qualification for teachers. This is especially important since almost all students are non-native English speakers. Teaching the language, not only in dedicated courses, but in day-to-day education by native or elaborate speakers, seems to be equally important as the professional education and could be addresses as a dedicated learning outcome.

Due to its small scale, the availability and commitment of each single teacher, especially the dean, is of highest importance and necessary. In terms of available resources, the number of staff needs be adequate for the size of the student body. The number of staff is adequate for a quantitatively satisfying student:teacher ratio. However, from the teaching staff’s perspective, the workload is reviewed to be challenging. Because of the aforementioned small size of the faculty, each member of teaching staff has a considerable number of additional tasks. This leads to challenges when trying to balance teaching, research and administrative tasks and find sufficient time for all three areas, especially research. This perception of unequal and unclear distribution of time for each area of work is further amplified through the unclear teaching load distribution. This appears to be unevenly distributed, with underlying reasons being unclear. Whereas currently all teaching staff appeared to be very motivated and thrilled to work at EUL, unclear work assignments or teaching duties as well as constant pressure to balance different tasks can lead to unsatisfied teaching staff over time. To keep up this motivated teaching staff, the faculty should create a document outlining the general regulations on teaching load distribution as well as reasons and amounts for deductions and times allocated for other tasks, such as administration or research. This document should be distributed amongst the faculty’s teaching staff.

Some teaching staff keeps their own office or work on projects while teaching at EUL. Practical experience and expertise is highly valuable for teaching in practically oriented study programmes like these under review. The faculty and the university should, therefore, continue to support such professional endeavours. However, such a practice puts another strain on the already busy schedules of teaching staff. EUL is well-advised to

keep the dialogue with these teaching staff flowing and, hence, to be aware of possible problems of fulfilling faculty duties early on.

Limited information was provided about the staff's particular qualification and background in relation to the courses they teach and the expected learning outcomes, e.g., their specific academic and/or practical experience and expertise in the respective field. This can raise questions with all stakeholders involved and prevents transparency on the teaching staff's suitability. While this is generally not questioned by the experts, including academic CVs that also entail the staff's practical experience, on the university's homepage and make them easily accessible to all stakeholders, would highly benefit the programmes' credibility and can possibly even attract new students to these study programmes. The faculty is, therefore, advised to present its teaching staff's academic and practical qualifications more openly, e.g. by including CVs on the homepage or other published material.

It has to be noted that the Department of Interior Architecture does not include any academic staff with an education and degree in this field. The reason is said to be a more attractive labour market for interior architects in the industry and private labour force. Nevertheless, students of Interior Architecture would undoubtedly benefit from teaching staff educated in Interior Architecture or practitioners, who teach part-time at EUL. The Head of Programme and the Dean of the faculty should actively recruit interior architects to teach in this programme.

Regarding research, the SER indicates a dedicated budget within the faculty for this purpose. In theory, teaching staff counts with one day per week to concentrate on their research and publications. Transferring this opportunity into reality can become difficult, though, because of other tasks such as advising students or administrative assignments as mentioned earlier. Additionally, an overall research strategy of the faculty, its focal points or procedures for funding could not be figured out. The experts recommend discussing potential benefits of implementing such a strategy for the faculty as well as creating a document detailing the process to secure internal funding to incentivise staff to also focus on research. Ideally, they link their research to their teaching and, hence, simultaneously enhance the learning experience of the students.

According to the SER, EUL supports the academic staff's professional development with a yearly budget of 100,000 €, e.g., by paying travel to and attendance at international conferences. It is also stated that seminars are offered by the faculty and external expert guests. However, this could not be proven through a document providing examples of trainings offered, procedures to apply for these trainings or containing other information needed by teaching, administrative or supporting staff. Such a document, subpage on the internal EUL homepage or other written information should be made available and easily accessible for all employees interested in further developing professionally. EUL is, therefore, advised to create transparency concerning the training possibilities it offers and how to apply and take advantage of them.

The SER refers to contracts with academic staff with periods of three to five years, which are extended on demand, to secure continuity of the programmes. A underlying concept for staff development, especially a successor plan for key positions, was not available. During the site visit, there did not seem to be the immediate necessity for such a plan due to imminent big changes in the teaching staff. However, unforeseeable circumstances may occur that can prove the advantages of having such a plan available. The experts, therefore, recommend developing a plan how changes in key positions should be dealt with in the near future.

A problem mentioned is that to obtain the position of professor, candidates at EUL have to hold a PhD. For architects / interior architects coming from the private labour market, an academic degree is often of less importance. This leads to them not being eligible for this position for formal reasons, independent of their other qualifications. EUL possibly loses well-reputed and qualified teaching staff that could be beneficial for its student body because of this formal requirement. While academic education should by no means be left out of

the hiring process, a balance between it and practical qualification should be discussed for professors of this faculty to secure the best possible teaching staff.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 6. Learning resources and student support

### Bachelor's degree

*Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.*

*Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.*

[ESG 1.6]

### Description

The Faculty of Architecture has a 3-storey building on the campus of the University. The classrooms are in the Faculty building for classes taught by the Faculty of Architecture. According to the SER, some design studios can also function as classrooms. According to the SER, 2 computer laboratories provide the necessary software and are used to teach drawing programmes. It is stated that the following programmes are available to Architecture students: Rhinoceros 5, MS pro + Office2016, Auto Desk ReCap, Auto Desk Inventor, AutoCAD, AutoCAD Architecture, AutoCAD MEP, Sketchup, Photoshop CS6 and 3D Max. While the Faculty building does not have its own library, the main library offers a section for Architecture. The library is equipped with 62,000 printed publications and books as well as over 243,000 digital books or sources available (periodicals, journals, encyclopaedias and electronic publications) for students and staff. The Faculty has access to a 3D Design and Production Laboratory (Cezeri Lab) which includes 3D printers and scanner, laser cut and other technologies. According to the SER, the University invested in its physical infrastructure in anticipation of the growing demand for its programmes, including a new education complex and student and guest housing.

For support throughout the study programme, the faculty provides an advisor to each student during the registration week. Students have access to a study portal service that helps them to access their curriculum, transcripts, schedule, advisor's name and registration process. The SER states that a Social and Cultural Activities Centre organises activities to familiarize new students with life on campus. The University has a Career Centre that provides counselling to students of the programmes. Furthermore, the University states to offer support through a Student Office, a Counselling and Guidance Centre and the International Office.

The university states that they offer three different kinds of scholarships to students: 1) Academic high-performance scholarships, 2) sibling and spouse discounts, and 3) sports scholarships for success in sports and cultural fields.

### Experts' evaluation

In general, the learning resources and the student support are adequate for architecture and interior architecture students at European University Lefke. The campus is a nice place to study with many facilities for the students. The University provides medical and psychological support as well as sport facilities and places to meet. Lecture halls and buildings are sufficient for studying architecture or interior architecture. The facilities are accessible for handicapped students and the EUL has shuttle buses to take students to the dorms and supermarkets that are not on campus.

Most information for their courses and learning outcomes is directly distributed by the teaching staff to the students or it gets published on black boards. Computer workplaces are in place and some of them even in a very new condition. Still, learning resources can be improved, specifically the model workshops and the library. The experts saw the workshop as not sufficiently equipped for the study programmes. Augmenting the workshop facilities would provide students with the necessary tools and adequate space to work on their models and prototypes, employing diverse techniques and significantly enhancing the quality of their designs. The faculty management should improve the workshops' equipment in quantity and, if possible, strive for upgrading it to a fully functional model workshop (**Finding 16**). To best prepare students for their future in the labour market, the experts also recommend encouraging students to make digital models as part of their practical exercises (**Finding 17**). This aligns the programme with current international standards and industry practices and, therefore, supports students to be able to compete with graduates from other universities.

Concerning the library, even though it was found to include some books on architecture and interior architecture, literature was not up to date and, hence, not very useful for students. Students themselves admitted that they rarely use the library. To improve the students' learning resources and give them the best possible learning environment, it is highly recommended to update the library in a way that it includes the most important handbooks also in a hardcopy and the most important e-journals are available (**Finding 18**).

When it comes to acquiring new learning resources, such as the ones stated above, the faculty is highly dependent on the university's finances. According to information by the Senior Management of EUL, about 80 - 85% of the university's budget is generated from the student's tuition fees, the remainder from research, the Ministry of Education of Northern Cyprus and the Turkish government. The university distributes the financial resources according to the needs of the different faculties and schools. While there was no indication that economic interests of the EUL jeopardize the quality of education at the faculty, no written information was available which demonstrates how potential conflicts of interest are identified/avoided at university level. To improve planning security for the faculty, it would be beneficial for EUL to have regulations or guidelines, accessible internally, that lay down ground rules for the distribution of financial means.

The EUL provides scholarships which is an important as well as positive point for students, especially international ones.

If students choose to do their internships in Cyprus, the Career Centre helps with distributing potential internship places. Nevertheless, most of the international students choose to do their internships in their home countries.

Each student gets a personal advisor when they start their studies whom they can contact with many different kinds of problems. It is to be mentioned that teaching staff in general has a very close relationship with the students, and students can contact all of them at any given time, not just their advisor.

A big portion of the quality assurance and involvement of students is also based on this close relationship. An appointed teacher meets with students to discuss their concerns and wishes. This teaching staff then acts as the students' voice in committee meetings. This handling of student involvement works well at the moment. Still, is very dependent on the teaching staff, might not cover all kinds of problems and signifies that students are not involved as stakeholders first hand. There is no official student representative for any student at this university. This is a huge concern as quality assurance and problem solving methods strictly rely on the teaching staff and no student is anywhere involved. The university must therefore involve students directly as stakeholders in their quality assurance system (see **Finding 12**).

Currently there is no student exchange happening for architecture or interior architecture students. EUL is not allowed to participate in programmes like Erasmus or similar due to the international position of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). Also, there are no excursions, which reduces the possible interaction



with any kind of international architecture and, therefore, does not prepare students ideally for the international labour market. To improve its faculty's internationalisation process, the head of programmes should implement more international exposure for their students, in courses as well as through excursions (**Finding 19**).

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 7. Information

### Bachelor's degree

*Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders.*

[ESG 1.8]

### Description

According to the SER, all supplementary materials, catalogues and announcements related to transportation, accommodation, registration, programme, and available student support are provided on the university's web page. Furthermore, the admission information is published in university promotion materials, on the University website and in publications supporting individual programmes.

### Experts' evaluation

Information is not well provided to all parties involved. Important documents such as the examination regulations and more are not available in English, only in Turkish. These Turkish versions are not available on the homepage or similar places, though, and only available to students upon request.

The homepage is quite difficult to navigate and is also lacking important documents. There is only a small description of the Faculty of Architecture or the departments, but no information on the study programmes themselves. This results in a lack of transparency for everyone interested. The faculty must include important information and documents, such as the syllabi, study plans and examination regulations in English and Turkish on its homepage to guarantee transparency for all parties involved (**Finding 20**).

The university uses four different platforms to inform and navigate. There are different platforms for exams, schedules, to get documents such as a study certificate and more. This is confusing as well as time consuming for those looking for information/data as well as those in charge of the different platforms. To remedy this confusion, the faculty should evaluate the possibility to fuse several or all online platforms together and use only one (**Finding 21**).

On these platforms most of the relevant information is distributed to the students.

Information about exams and schedules are provided to the students via online platforms or on black boards, which works well.

The teaching staff takes care to keep the information up to date.

### Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

## V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

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Two experts recommend accrediting the study programmes “Architecture (Bachelor)” and “Interior Architecture (Bachelor)” offered by European University Lefke with conditions.

Dissenting from this opinion, two experts recommend postponing the decision on the study programmes “Architecture (Bachelor)” and “Interior Architecture (Bachelor)” offered by European University Lefke.

### Commendation:

The experts commend the motivation all staff at EUL to provide the best possible study experience for their students. The close bond between teaching staff and students is a huge bonus of EUL as is its commitment to support student activities by not only encouraging student clubs, but even supporting them financially.

### Findings:

1. To best prepare students for the labour market, sustainability must be integrated as an aspect for architecture in the 21st century in the curriculum and visible in the module handbook.
2. EUL must integrate Building Information Modelling in the curriculum to ensure the future competitiveness of the programme in a globalized world and its graduates in the labour market. It must be made visible as content in the module handbook.
3. To further improve internationalisation and include international students' possible future labour markets, the Architecture study programme is encouraged to incorporate different contexts, e.g., through case studies, examples, and perspectives from African countries and other international contexts.
4. The Interior Architecture programme should include more elective courses in its curriculum to allow students freedom of choice in their personal study plan.
5. Both study programmes should decide on a mutual credit system with an official conversion rate, that can be accessed by everybody to display the workload of courses transparently.
6. The Department of Interior Design must revise its regulations on the final project and require either larger and more intricate projects or a higher level of technical development in small projects.
7. The Interior Architecture programme should put more emphasis on teaching graphic skills to students, e.g. through implementing practical exercises in the courses.
8. The module handbook and the course descriptions must include all relevant information at an up-to-date level with a comprehensive documentation of all courses and examination types, teaching formats and hours, staff, etc. and be aligned to the syllabi.
9. The syllabus should be more flexible to address the specific context of each semester, tackle current issues, and potentially integrate collaborations to the programmes.
10. A written document explaining academic regulations and values, such as a code of conduct, must be handed in, showing how these are implemented in both study programmes.
11. The faculty must provide written evidence of its structured quality assurance processes and how they are used for the programme's development.
12. EUL and the faculty should implement a formal representation for students to be involved in the development and quality assurance processes of the study programme first hand.

13. The faculty must provide examination regulations in written form in English and make them easily accessible for everyone.
14. EUL should make documents on procedures of progression, recognition, etc. available in English and easily accessible to all stakeholders.
15. The faculty should increase the internationality of its teaching staff of both programmes through inviting international guest lecturers and/or hiring international part-time or full-time staff or increasing the existing staff's international profile.
16. The faculty management should improve the workshops' equipment in quantity and, if possible, strive for upgrading it to a fully functional model workshop.
17. Students should learn and practice making digital models as part of their courses.
18. It is highly recommended to update the library in a way that it includes the most important handbooks also in a hardcopy and the most important ejournals are available.
19. To improve its faculty's internationalisation process, the programmes should include more international exposure for their students, in courses as well as through excursions.
20. The faculty must include important information and documents, such as the course descriptions, study plans and examination regulations in English on its homepage to guarantee transparency for all parties involved.
21. The faculty should evaluate the possibility to fuse several or all online platforms currently used and use only one to allow more transparency and efficiency.