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Date: 07/03/2023

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (PSIVET) – (Pafos)
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** PSIVET Pafos
- **Department/ Sector:** N/A
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Δίκτυα Ηλεκτρονικών Υπολογιστών και Επικοινωνιών
(2 χρόνια, 120 ECTS, Διετές Δίπλωμα Ανώτερης
Εκπαίδευσης)

In English:

Computer and Communication Networks (2 academic
years, 120 ECTS, diploma).

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**



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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had preparatory meetings on 03.02.2023 and 03.03.2023 to discuss the programme evaluation process that is offered by PSIVET (MIEEK in Greek). On 06.03.2023, the EEC visited PSIVET's facilities in Pafos in Cyprus and met faculty members, staff and students in order to evaluate the Computer and Communication Networks diploma (2 academic years, 120 ECTS). The visit was arranged and facilitated by Natasa Kazakaïou, representing the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. Prior to the site visit, and in a timely manner, the EEC members were provided with relevant programme documents to review. A final meeting to aggregate the EEC members' contributions to this report and to agree on its final form was held on 07.03.2023. The EEC was presented with detailed information about the institution, the department, and the two-year degree programme. During the visit, the EEC requested and received additional material including statistics, links to some public information and regulations. During the site visit, the EEC met PSIVET's leadership peers, teaching staff, and administration personnel. The EEC also met current and past students of the programme and had a tour of the laboratories and the classrooms of the institution.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the site visit, the EEC concludes that all required standards are fully compliant. The present assessment report describes how the standards are met and provides recommendations and suggestions for improving the programme under evaluation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Michail Giannakos	Professor	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
Ciprian Daniel Neagu	Professor	University of Bradford, UK
Ferran Adelantado Freixer	Associate Professor	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain
Krinos Vasileiou	Student	Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) *sub-areas*
 - (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite 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 to be dealt with, 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. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
 - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
 - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The quality assurance policy is described in PSIVET's quality assurance handbook (Εγχειρίδιο Διασφάλισης Ποιότητας) that follows the principles from CYQAA (Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education), and EQAVET (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training). The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. Quality assurance mechanisms are present and fairly well aligned with international standards. There are a number of quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of the programme of study. Evidence collected from questionnaires filled in by students is used for Quality Assurance mechanisms of adaptation and update. Feedback information from quality assurance questionnaires is centrally collected and analyzed. Then the feedback is sent to the relevant local coordinators, where it is further analyzed and possible corrective actions are implemented. Based on the feedback, teachers improve materials and instruction. Importantly, formal quality assurance mechanisms are accompanied by informal processes which also appear to be working consistently. Also, students' mentioned that they are aware of both the formal and the informal mechanisms and they regularly make use of them to provide feedback to their teachers and the institute. They also indicated that their feedback is having an impact and corrective actions are being taken, when it was necessary.

The study programme is weighing its workload, and the workload of the various courses, based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). According to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) the study programme is at level 5B of higher vocational education and training (HiVET) and clearly meets the qualification certification requirements for its graduates. The learning objectives as well as the assessment mechanisms for each course are clearly described and follow students' progress and competence development throughout the programme. The evaluation and monitoring of the programme take place through different indicators such as the graduation rate, pass rate and questionnaires from students. The graduation rate from all the study program cohorts is relatively good, although we see variations of the drop rate from year to year. Although PSIVET has a relatively good gender ratio overall, the number of female students in this particular program needs to be strengthened.

The study program as well as all the relevant information concerning the process and the call for applications for the admission of students are posted on PSIVET's website. The selection of students is transparent and is based on a scoring system, the criteria being also posted on the PSIVET's website. In addition, information regarding the study programme is publicly posted on PSIVET's website, in particular, interested applicants can find the study programme structure, the expected learning objectives, the different courses alongside with their ECTS, learning goals, teaching method, assessment method and the bibliography.

Strengths

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

In summary, the strengths of the programme are as follows:

1. The small class size of this program allows personal interactions between teachers and students, and efficient monitoring of student progress by teachers, with an appropriate student/staff ratio.

2. The teachers have the necessary experience. This ensures high standards in terms of teaching both theory and practice. Moreover, teachers' connections to the industry are beneficial for students' future employment.
3. The information related to the program of study is clear and publicly available.
4. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate, and well-communicated to the students. The course syllabuses and course outline clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.
5. The programme is clearly designed with an application focus and an intention to integrate theory and practice.
6. Skills learned in the program enhance students' employability.
7. Regarding the students' applications the average acceptance rate is ~50% (with small deviations from one year to another), according to the extra material supplied to the EEC.
8. Due to the dual use of the infrastructure by PSIVET, the study program has very good infrastructure and labs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The design and development of the study programme are satisfactory. We did not identify any deviations from the expected standards. This can also be connected with the fact that this study programme has been recently evaluated, and some of the recommendations have already been implemented. Nevertheless, we would like to highlight the importance of modernizing the content of the courses on a regular basis, with up-to-date bibliography and resources. We understand that this is a demanding process since PSIVET needs to synchronize those updates across the different cities and teaching staff, nevertheless, it is of great importance to keep the programme updated.

For example, the bibliography in NETW 0106 is focusing exclusively on the use of Office products; this makes us wonder how the various learning objectives such as "Identify the basic principles of IoT, cloud computing and 3D-printing" and "Identify the structure and requirements of Data Centers", are being covered? The bibliography needs to cover all the learning objectives, and avoid repetitions from one course to another, and from high school's syllabi.

Also when it comes to the OS1 course (NETW 0301), the bibliography focuses on the USE of Microsoft, while the learning objectives go beyond the use of Microsoft. Moreover, new technologies such as sensor networks and cloud computing can benefit from a greater emphasis in the courses, and equipment such as programmable boards (e.g., Arduino, Raspberry Pi) and 3D printing can be used to further stimulate and motivate students to work with sensor networks.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Sub-areas

- 2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 2.2 Practical training**
- 2.3 Student assessment**

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*

- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment at PSIVET for the assessed programme Computer and Communication Networks diploma (2 academic years, 120 ECTS) are all explicitly approached and confirmed to consider the needs, abilities, and interests of students in the current educational process following national and institutional standards and practices.

Here are some key findings for each of the aforementioned categories:

Student-centered learning shows consideration on the general learning needs and interests of the individual student class profile based on the specific type, programme and schedule of delivery. It includes active learning, such as hands-on classes, particularly labs with available equipment, projects with components of group work, rather than continuous passive listening. The programme delivery, staff and administration encourage student autonomy and responsibility for their own learning.

Student-centered teaching is based on collaboration and friendly dialogue between students and teachers, and is acknowledged by all members of the scholar community interviewed during the visit. The standard discipline delivery considers students' prior knowledge and experiences as a starting point for learning, in many cases at fresh learner level, although flexibly adapted to different learning styles and needs. These are particularly underlined by the students' representatives who acknowledged the programme's main impact in career switch and employability, based on knowledge and skills acquired during the length of the programme of study. For example in most cases programming experience is null for most learners and the introductory programming discipline is acknowledged. Also many students have working English language experience and the relevant English modules accommodate their diverse knowledge.

Student-centered assessment is clear and followed same assessment structure over all disciplines included in the programme, and allows an overall balanced approach by assessing student learning, rather than just their ability to memorise information. The assessment methods include formative and summative assessments that measure student progress. It is aligned with learning objectives and promotes deeper understanding of the current content of delivery. The academic staff members provide feedback that is timely, specific, and constructive.

Overall, student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment are designed and aim explicitly to create an engaging and effective learning experience for students by placing them at the center of the educational process.

Strengths

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

The programme delivery benefits of strict alignment to the other (4) campuses deliveries. Students and staff are kept engaged by a list of expectations and compulsory regulations including interaction between cohorts – eg use of

institutional emails, correspondence checks; and rights: extenuating circumstances, complaints, collaborations at module delivery examples and levels.

Module Descriptors are well-defined, and aligned with the programme structure; their contents are clearly aligned with the current topic subjects. The learning outcomes are clearly linked to the module descriptor and programme expectations. Modules (e.g. English II) provide support for learner-centric development. Hybrid and interactive teaching is acknowledged (e.g. page 37). Good practice, standard communications through module questionnaires is present. Innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used as standard educational activities.

Courses assessments have the same structure – this could be efficient since students will get used to it, but they do not tackle course's individual needs. Academic misconduct is an acknowledged academic offence (as defined in internal documentation); use of Turnitin as standard is noted.

Internships and attendance are compulsory. Collaboration with industry is strong and evidenced with very good examples. Student Welfare is part of the Quality Assurance Manual and PSIVET organisation. Students' opinions are acknowledged in the SWOT analysis for curriculum design and development. Friendly collaborative dialogue between students, staff and administration are examples of good student-centered practice and are acknowledged by all parties.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

All students are adult learners, highly motivated and conscientious individuals who fully appreciate the opportunity for their personal development and community change. The current academic delivery and assessment could benefit from specific interactive ways to encourage self-reflection and self-evaluation by students, particularly given their highly focused motivation and personalised attendance to the programme.

While the delivery and assessment are aligned closely with learning objectives and promote deeper understanding of the disciplines contents, the student-centered delivery could add some opportunities for critical thinking, research and understanding of continuously evolving modern technologies and the learners' position to them. For example, previous accreditation recommendations on equipment and topic addition are actively considered and implemented for cloud, smart sensors and IoT technologies. Now linkage between the programming language choice (C++) and equipment advanced exploration could be exemplified - thus adding examples of programming for the equipment and technologies at hand where applicable. Projects and homework could also allow flexibility and individualisation in the learning and assessment process by recommendations and opportunities for learners to adapt flexibly the topic of assessment to their own needs by adding minor parts of lab work and assessment with open-ended or research-based components if applicable.

From the programme design and delivery perspectives, Courses' descriptors show in many places old/obsolete Bibliography (Course: 2012, 2013, Electronics I: 1999, 2001, etc.) and lack of content in the Teaching Methodology. It will be useful that in courses: Learning Objectives could be labelled so teachers could refer to them in the delivery and assessment. Teamwork and interactive developments are not necessarily identifiable in the current learning objectives. Formative feedback is not mentioned explicitly although has been acknowledged in the interviews, strengthening formative feedback will greatly enhance students' learning.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The information provided in the application and the discussions held during the visit showed that the institution recruitment process is subject to transparent and fair rules with a clear focus on hiring professionals able to bridge the gap between training programmes and industry. For instance, 20 out of 25 periods are lectured by staff working in the industry. This profile of the teaching staff is key to facilitate a two-way communication between the training programme and the industry, thus being aligned with the mission of the programme.

The teaching staff has a clear understanding of the career development and is encouraged by the institution to improve their skills with mandatory and optional seminars. Moreover, working conditions are convenient to deal with teaching, assessment, and administrative duties, while guaranteeing the quality time to update contents.

The number and the qualifications of teaching staff is adequate to meet the objectives of the programme, and students give value to the close scholar relationship with the teaching staff and the small size lab groups.

Strengths

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

ECC would like to point out the motivation observed in the teaching staff and the degree of coordination with teaching staff from the rest of institutes of PSIVET. The feedback provided by students about the staff has been excellent, stressing the willingness shown by lecturers to help, support and provide complementary learning resources for those students interested in further insights on the topic.

The industrial-academic profile of the staff is one of the most valuable assets of the programme.

In particular, we found that:

- Permanent staff are adequately qualified for conducting teaching in the disciplinary area, with good experience and connections to the industry.
- Teaching and administration staff show motivation and cohesion towards the objectives of the programme and delivering a high quality learning experience.
- Availability to students and personal effort to strengthen the quality of the study programme (e.g., provide extra support and resources) are commendable.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The set of seminars and training activities offered to the teaching staff should be listed in future applications, since it is a best practice and a quality seal of the staff.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

When it comes to students' selection and progression, there are appropriate, predefined and published regulations (PSIVET's website). The programme considers several factors in the admission process, such as army obligations for men, a secondary school certificate, while high school technical education is considered an extra. The number of enrolments is regulated (18 max) and the selection is based on clear selection and prioritization criteria (a point system). There is also a process in place to transfer students who are in the reserved list in case a student declines the offer. The number of applicants is satisfactory, as it is approximately (varies from year to year) two times the offered positions.

The institution has a strong commitment to academic standards, as evidenced by the presence good mechanisms for monitoring student progression and performance. Supportive services, including IT support, library access, and well-equipped labs, are available to facilitate student learning.

The diploma is accompanied with an appendix that follows the European conventions and regulations.

Strengths

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

There is a very good student-teacher interaction and ratio (given the relatively low number of students each year), this contributes to a positive environment, focused teaching and room for dialogue and support for students. According to students' feedback during this evaluation process, the panel observed a high level of satisfaction among students, regarding the program and the support they receive. Moreover, from the students' and graduates' input, the learning experience and the employability of the graduates is very good. There is a very clear description of the procedures, allowing for transparency and planning of course management and resource allocation. Students feedback was very positive for the study program, and the support they received from the teaching staff and other services of the university (e.g., library and labs).

The procedures are very well described based on the quality assurance handbook, allowing transparency and predictability on the selection and assessment criteria.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Although the number of students is regulated, the institution can actively promote the study (e.g., good employability and emerging topics) to attract more informed and diverse applicants. This will help with both strengthening the gender balance and minimizing dropouts from the program.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The infrastructure used by PSIVET in Pafos is adequate, making a dual use of high school's facilities and adding the necessary equipment to meet their extra needs, such as switches and routers. The teaching and learning resources are adequate and readily accessible to students, with materials and aids provided both online through Moodle but also printed for students before class. The physical resources, including high school facilities and labs, are sufficient to support the study programme, with equipment and IT infrastructure updated as needed. The resources provided are also adequate to support the update and modernization of both the equipment and the books.

The teachers are also using Moodle and MS Teams as learning management platforms and all students are provided with the Microsoft 365 suite. There is a budget for books and equipment every year, moreover, both teachers and students have access to online libraries (e.g., Παιδαγωγικού Ινστιτούτου Κύπρου, βιβλιοθήκη του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου). PSIVET is also working to extend their access to more online libraries.

The human support resources, including tutors/mentors, counsellors, and administrative staff, are appropriate and provide students with the necessary guidance and advice. The programme is designed to accommodate diverse student populations, especially those who are employed or have special needs.

Strengths

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

The institution provides exceptional facilities to its students, ensuring that all necessary hardware and software are available to achieved the desired learning objectives. The institution assigns an ample budget to improve its laboratories annually. For instance, the programming lab is re-equipped every three years.

Additionally, the institution has developed a wide range of well-defined student support mechanisms and procedures, including counsellors and alumni day, to ensure that students receive the assistance they need. Administrative staff who are responsible for providing this support area available in the institution during afternoon hours, and students are well informed of these of these support mechanisms.

Students praise the interaction with the teaching staff and their collaborative attitude. This collaborative atmosphere is essential for the students to create their professional networking, thanks to the industrial profile of the teaching staff. Apart from the access given to the library, students have access to complementary learning resources through the Moodle and other online libraries.

Furthermore, there is an agreement in place to provide the students with the opportunity to move abroad to Athens and gain international experience, although this entails different challenges given student's profiles, which consists mainly of adults with full time day jobs.

Finally, the programme is designed to accommodate diverse entry profiles at the early stages of the programme, allowing all students to achieve success regardless of their background.

The programme is overall very successful in helping students secure employment after graduation since most internships lead to hirings after their completion.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The institution ensures that students are aware of the complaint procedures and fosters an environment of open communication with the teaching staff to address any suggestions for improvement. This was observed because students have a clear knowledge of complaining procedures and they praise the informal communication with teaching faculty. Despite this, students express uncertainty regarding whether all suggestions are taken into account. It is recommended that a mechanism is established to communicate the resolution of both formal and informal suggestions/complaints, providing transparency and promoting trust in the process. By implementing such a mechanism, the institution can demonstrate its commitment to addressing student concerns effectively.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*

- regular meetings
- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

N/A

Strengths

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

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

N/A

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

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 programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC reviewed and examined the materials provided by PSIVET pertaining to its Computer and Communication Networks diploma (2 academic years, 120 ECTS). The EEC had a site visit meeting on 06.03.2023 to gather additional information for the programme. The EEC was presented with detailed information about the program, met with university leadership peers, teachers, administrators, current and alumni students, and visited the various laboratories and classrooms. Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the on-site visit, the EEC concludes that all of the standards are met.

The EEC identified the following key strengths:

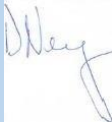
1. The small class size of this program, and the appropriate student/staff ratio, allows personal interactions between teachers and students, and efficient monitoring of student progress.
2. Good employability of the students with reputable companies in Cyprus.
3. The faculty members are competent and capable of integrating theory and practice into their teaching.
4. The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. The course syllabuses and course outline clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches, and the method of assessing student performance.
5. There is a very good learner-teacher relationship and based on the student feedback there is a good practice of communication between staff and students.
6. The indented learning goals are assessed through the use of different mechanisms (e.g., assignments, exams and project deliverables). Moreover, from graduates' feedback it was evident that their competence level when graduating, is of good quality and satisfies the industry's needs.
7. When it comes to quality assurance, there is a formal and clear process for data collection, curriculum review, resources, and revision mechanisms.

The EEC also highlights some areas for improvement:

1. Currently there is no specific policy for the review process of the programme to include input from external stakeholders (e.g., industry) and students/graduates input (e.g., alumni) in a formal context. It is recommended to specify a mechanism with a target to have input from external stakeholders and the graduates. Due to the nature of the institute (public institute), we recognize the difficulties in the proposed endeavour, nevertheless we believe that developing this synergy (even in an informal manner), will greatly benefit the quality and the recruitment of the programme.
2. The EEC recommends strengthening the recruitment strategy of the programme to be able to improve the gender ratio and minimize the dropout rate. Being able to attract informed and diverse student groups, will improve the quality of the programme.

3. The institution should continue to periodically assess (every 1-2 years) the adequacy and suitability of the learning resources and update the bibliography. Updated bibliography and state-of-the-art equipment (e.g., programmable boards) can support emerging topics such as IoT and sensor networks, but also stimulate students to engage further during their project work.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Michail Giannakos	
Ciprian Daniel Neagu	
Ferran Adelantado Freixer	
Krinos Vasileiou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 07/03/2023