

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 30/7/2020

External Evaluation Report (Programmatic)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
College of Tourism and Hotel Management
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** n/a
- **Department/ Sector:** n/a
- **Programme of study- Name (Master of Arts, 12 Months, ECTS 90)**

In Greek:

Programme Name ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΩΝ ΑΝΑΨΥΧΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΡΙΣΜΟΥ (12 ΜΗΝΕΣ, ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ) 90 ΠΜ

In English:

Leisure and Tourism Management, Master of Arts, 12 Months, ECTS 90),

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status**
New programme: Yes
Currently operating: No



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

We, the External Evaluation Committee (henceforth EEC) examined the documentation of the Master of Arts (12 Months, 90 ECTS) to be offered by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, (hereafter CHTM or simply College). Academic members of the EEC and Ms Varvara Georgiou, the CUT student, had a first online meeting with Dr Lefkios Neofytou, the CYQAA officer over Zoom on Friday 17th of July 2020 to discuss about the online accreditation process. Subsequently, the EEC held an online meeting and discussed the documentation provided by CHTM on Friday 24th of July. An online Zoom meeting with the College's representatives took place on Tuesday 28th of July. During this meeting, the academic management team of CHTM explained the strategy and standing, the curriculum as well as other issues in further detail. Meetings were also arranged with academic and administrative staff to better understand their involvement in the design of the MA programme. Another meeting with two students from related programmes offered at the College took place to get feedback concerning their experience, satisfaction and aspirations. The EEC also had the opportunity to virtually visit the premises of CHTM, and saw the resources, class infrastructure, computer centre, and library, online and recreational facilities. In addition, some members of the EEC had the opportunity to visit the premises in January of this year.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>University</i> |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Professor Dr Andreas Papatheodorou | Chairperson | University of the Aegean, Greece |
| Professor Beverley Wilson-Wuensch | Academic Member | IUBH International University of Applied Sciences Germany |
| Dr Ioannis S. Pantelidis | Academic Member | University of Brighton, United Kingdom |
| Ms Varvara Georgiou | Student Member | Cyprus University of Technology |
| 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 MA programme in Leisure and Tourism Management targets students with a BA (or equivalent) degree aiming to develop a career in the leisure and tourism sectors. In general, the

documentation provides comprehensive guidance to the programme proposed. The programme follows a traditional and mainstream approach to teaching. Like other programmes currently offered by the College, the programme is expected to predominantly attract international but also Cypriot students interested in pursuing a career in the leisure and tourism sectors.

With respect to tourism, the programme adequately prepares students for employment and development, by equipping them with a range of skills and knowledge. This is anticipated to support the enhancement of skills and techniques, personal qualities, and attributes pertinent to a successful career in the tourism sector. The aims and objectives of the programme, therefore, enable students to develop their skills and increase their career prospects. Nonetheless, the same cannot be argued for the beyond tourism-related areas of the leisure sector such as sports, outdoor recreation, events and entertainment. In fact, the curriculum is designed in such a way so as to either treat leisure and tourism as interchangeable terms and/or to implicitly assume that non-tourism leisure elements can be adequately covered within modules that include the words “Leisure and Tourism” in their titles. The EEC is concerned about this approach given that: a) although leisure and tourism do share common activities, they are certainly not the same; and b) the content of the leisure and tourism-related modules has only very indirect explicit references to non-tourism leisure elements.

During the evaluation meeting, the management team of the College provided an overview of the institution in general and of the programme under evaluation in particular. It appears that teaching work is organised efficiently, based on ECTS-related workload standards. There is an optional, non-credit bearing module, i.e. Induction to MA in Leisure and Tourism Management; eight (8) compulsory modules accounting for 72 ECTS and a compulsory Thesis accounting for 18 ECTS. Out of the eight (8) modules, three (3) are of generic business nature (all in the first semester of studies) and five (5) are leisure and tourism specific. Assessments in the programme follow a traditional approach with a robust combination of final exams, presentations, practical assessments and coursework. As the degree is on management, it is advised that presentation skills should be explicitly evaluated and assessed as much as possible. Attendance and class participation are also taken (indirectly) into consideration. It seems that the MA programme was primarily designed by the senior academic management team based on consultation with the teaching members of staff. In fact, and as with other programmes in the College, the latter are welcomed to become involved in the process at a module delivery stage and effectively deal with any emerging issues.

There is sufficient sectoral expertise in the teaching team but limited research output in highly respected leisure and tourism journals. It is also evident that several members of academic staff are hospitality specialists and have relevant background studies. Some members of the teaching team have a good insight of the tourism sector and are professionally involved in the industry and in other related activities. The teaching staff were able to contribute to the preparation of module documentation and learning outcomes.

Quality assurance has been documented from an internal point of view to a satisfactory degree. An internal committee meets regularly to discuss quality assurance issues and intervene when this is deemed appropriate. Processes for identifying academic fraud appear to be robustly documented in the college’s Quality Assurance Handbook. It appears that the practice of detecting

academic fraud is well-defined, as students submit their assignments via the Edmodo platform where plagiarism-checking software is embedded.

The two (international) students interviewed expressed their satisfaction from the academic delivery and support services of the College. An effective administrative structure supports the delivery of the programme. Teaching staff were passionate about their subject expertise and were reflective of their teaching methods. Networking with local travel and leisure companies is in place to provide students with career opportunities.

Information in relation to the programme is currently available on the College's website <https://www.cothm.ac.cy/pos-master-lt>. The detailed programme description states that the programme "...is registered but not yet accredited".

Strengths

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

The College has a comprehensive Quality Assurance Policies & Regulations and Student Handbook across the programmes offered. The MA programme in Leisure and Tourism Management includes academic modules to help students prepare for the real world. This is a topical programme as Cyprus has a vibrant leisure and tourism sector that will be actively seeking to recruit new staff as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. Active collaborations with the local leisure and tourism sectors facilitate the enrichment of the programme; such opportunities for continued engagement were also encouraged during the evaluation meeting.

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 is concerned about the design of the programme for four main reasons:

- a) all modules are compulsory and there are no electives thus making the structure of the programme very rigid; flexibility should be an inherent feature of postgraduate programme delivery;
- b) there are only four (4) modules per semester each accounting for nine (9) ECTS, which implies a very high workload per module; in practice, this may prove problematic to manage from a pedagogical point of view, while it may also disadvantage certain students who may face difficulties with understanding the concepts of a specific module;
- c) generic modules are not sufficiently contextualised thus possibly limiting the interest of students; to the credit of the College, though, classes in all modules (including the generic ones) will consist solely of MA in Leisure and Tourism Management students;
- d) the leisure element is significantly under-represented in the contents of the sector (i.e. leisure and tourism)-specific modules; this is not only in disagreement with the intended learning outcomes of the programme but may also result in the disappointment of students primarily interested in the beyond-tourism components of the leisure sector.

Having the above in mind, and based on the online discussions which confirmed the College's intention to use the word "Leisure" in the title of the new MA programme as an effective differentiation selling point, the EEC would like to suggest that:

- a) the College should consider introducing several elective modules into the programme by explicitly considering specific elements of the beyond-tourism leisure sector, such as Sports Management; Events Management; Outdoor Recreation; Wellness and Entertainment, etc. To do so, the College is advised to reduce the number of ECTS per module from nine (9) to six (6) and:
 - a. either to give room for two (2) extra modules per semester and keep the number of Thesis' ECTS at eighteen (18); or
 - b. to give room for one (1) extra module per semester and increase the number of Thesis' ECTS to thirty (30) – in that case, Thesis' requirements regarding the student workload would also have to increase significantly;
- b) the College should appropriately contextualize the leisure and tourism element in all generic modules offered throughout the curriculum;
- c) the majority of textbooks suggested for the modules are appropriate and sufficiently current - nonetheless, relevant leisure and tourism academic journal articles should be included in the outlines of relevant modules;
- d) The College should consider a more diverse approach to their assessment.

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 | Partially 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

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 and 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.

The programme of study at the College enjoys the benefits of small classes and so can be flexible with the teaching and learning methods which clearly aims to support students' individual and social

development. Different modes of delivery are employed, and varieties of pedagogical methods are used to help achieve the learning outcomes.

The assessment methods appear mainstream and weights of different assessment modes are applied horizontally across the entire curriculum – this may end up putting certain students at a disadvantage. The College is, therefore, actively encouraged to use variable weights but also types of assessment modes. Additionally, there are adequate facilities available for the expansion of a Master's Programme and commitment to adjust these facilities to match student demand is clear.

Strengths

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

In some ways the students learning needs seem to be what drives the College's daily activities. Students with different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities are taken into consideration when conducting educational activities. So, for example, when a student fails a test, individual guidance is given to help students master the material. At the same time students appreciate the rigour built into the modules and value the fact that one must "study hard" to pass the test. Further, the development of students' general competencies, supported by the educational activities are generally guided by the faculty but also additional support comes from the staff in support services e.g. IT.

Extensive support services are available to students. Students have access to computer laboratories, library services, on-campus dining facilities. Access to sports facilities is available and there are several options for sports recreation in the vicinity of the campus. There is also a vibrant student council, which steers the communication between the College and the students. Adequate opportunities and help from the staff for internship and work possibilities are available to students.

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.

Though it is a statement reflected in the strategy of the College, there is no clear indication of how students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.

Recommendations: It is important to help the students understand their role in the learning process too. Both faculty as well as support staff can more explicitly help students become familiar with the learning process, as well as the strategies, they could use to improve their learning. Teaching students how to learn is a more empowering tool than any teaching method. Self-directed learning principles lend are appropriate for small class sizes, which is common at the CHTM. Further, the College can benefit significantly from applying the following principles to enhance student centred learning:

- a) help students understand the principles of metacognition- helping students think about their own thinking, become consciously aware of oneself as a problem solver, help them monitor, plan and control their mental processing;
- b) help students develop concrete learning strategies (understanding the difference between studying and learning). Ideally students should develop metacognitive strategies that work for them;
- c) help students establish a growth and a mindset aimed at succeeding;
- d) help students understand the connection between motivation, emotions, and learning.

It is not quite clear how the students' career path from College to work is mapped. The programme's orientation at this time would benefit from further clarification and there might be a mismatch between the perceived educational preparation and career choices. A clearer establishment of professional opportunities for students once they have completed the programme is necessary. This is particularly relevant for student seeking International opportunities.

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-centered teaching methodology | Partially compliant |
| 2.2 | Practical training | Compliant |
| 2.3 | Student assessment | Partially 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.

Based on the documentation provided by the College, seven (7) members of staff are involved in teaching the programme's modules; four (4) work on a full-time basis delivering fifteen (15) periods per week (i.e. 45.45% out of the total 33), while the other three (3) work on a part-time basis delivering eighteen (18) periods per week (i.e. 54.55% out of the total 33); in other words, part-time members of staff deliver a significant part of the programme. Three (3) members of staff (two full-timers and one part-timer) are PhD/DBA holders; while the other four (4) members of staff (two full-timers and two part-timers) are holders of postgraduate degrees. In other words, only four (4) out of seven (7) members of the academic staff teach at a level which is at least one level below their qualifications.

During the remote site visit, the EEC had the opportunity to meet via Zoom all seven (7) teaching members of staff involved in the delivery of the Programme (specialization and type of occupation in parenthesis), i.e.:

- Mr Christoforou Andreas, Senior Lecturer (Hotel Management / Business Administration, FT)
- Dr Hadjigeorgiou Soteris, Senior Lecturer (Hospitality Management/ Culinary arts / Human Resources, FT)
- Mr Ioannou Christos, Senior Lecturer (Business / Accounting, PT)
- Ms Kokhanets Anna, Senior Lecturer (Hospitality Management / International Relations, FT)

- Dr Kolokasides Lefteris, Lecturer (Business Administration/ Communications/ Human Resource Management, PT)
- Dr Mitsis Pandelis, Senior Lecturer (Economics / Statistics, FT)
- Mr Georgiou Giorgos, Senior Lecturer (Computer Science/ Computer Networking, PT)

During the discussion with the abovementioned individuals it emerged that some members of teaching staff were recruited during the last academic year. The rapport between the management/ownership of the College and the members of teaching staff as well as between the latter and the students seems to be very good. The teaching staff also mentioned that they were able to contribute to the preparation of module documentation and learning outcomes; thus, they took ownership of the curriculum.

The average class size across the College is about twenty (20) students. Staff are formally evaluated by the students based on a semi-structured questionnaire where Likert scales are extensively used to facilitate quantitative analysis of the results by the Programme Leader - no problems and/or concerns were reported. At the same time, however, the College does not implement a 360-degree evaluation approach, which would also involve the evaluation of the academic management team by the teaching staff. This emerged out of the online discussion but was welcomed by the academic management team as a possible way forward to improve the learning experience and increase transparency from a human resources management perspective.

Teaching members of staff commended the existence of a friendly family environment within the College, which expedites decision-making in a rather informal setting. They argued that opportunities for personal and professional development within the College are gradually increasing compared to the past; some of the members of staff have already taken advantage of the exposure offered by the Erasmus+ staff mobility programme. Few of the members of teaching staff are research active and only to a limited degree. In the past, there was a lack of proper research culture within the College although the latter co-publishes *Tourism Today*, i.e. an international peer-reviewed academic journal. Nonetheless, the appointment of a new Director of Research a few months ago may hopefully instigate a paradigm change soon.

Strengths

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

The existing staff qualifications and experience are diversified within the hospitality, travel and tourism sectors which is an asset to the programme. There are clear procedures in place for the evaluation of teaching and module delivery. Moreover, the EEC welcomes the academic partnerships developed by the College within the Erasmus+ framework as well as the fact that the College invites internationally renowned tourism and hospitality scholars as visitors and/or invited speakers.

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 staff should become more actively involved in research to understand the evolving requirements of the leisure and tourism sectors and contextualise their teaching accordingly. Moreover, non-PhD/DBA degree holders who are going to teach in the proposed programme are strongly encouraged to pursue further studies at doctoral level the soonest possible.

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 | Partially compliant |
| 3.3 | Synergies of teaching and research | Partially 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

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.

As this is a new programme, the College has not yet enrolled any students in the MA Leisure and Tourism Management but has experience of offering other postgraduate courses. The objectives set by the College are well communicated for the students' academic progress, counselling, mobility, etc. Student certification regulations are in place. Admission criteria and processes are in place and appear to be transparent. The students prior education/background is assessed.

Strengths

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

The College appears to have years of experience in managing different academic and professional programmes. The admission requirements for the study programme are clearly communicated to potential applicants and students' prior preparation/education background is assessed for both Cypriot and international students. The College provides students with personalized counselling services.

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 would like to propose that the College should improve its admission criteria by explicitly stating in their paperwork how professional qualifications or combinations of qualifications are recognised as equivalent to an undergraduate degree.

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.

In general, the College provides adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources for a postgraduate level award. Teaching and learning resources are adequate readily available and accessible for teaching staff and students. In a student-centred atmosphere, the setup of the rooms in a classroom format was quite noticeable. The use of Edmodo platform seems to be supported by other software but the online software provision for teaching and learning could be better strategized.

Strengths

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

Regarding Teaching and Learning Resources, Human Support:

- There seems to be well planned student care and counselling in place;
- As a small institution, faculty member seem to be very caring towards student achievements;
- Well-qualified administrative staff.

Regarding Physical Resources:

- The physical resources are adequate;
- The premises appear well kept and clean;
- The Library is well maintained and has a provision of online resources;
- There are good study facilities;
- The IT infrastructure is adequate;
- Some care has been taken to redesign the space to provide better access for visitors and students with mobility issues.

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.

A clear strategy in terms of online learning platforms should be established.

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 distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology
- 6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF
- 6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities
- 6.4 Study guides

6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology

Standards

- *The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF

Standards

- *Twelve weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The distance learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
 - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
 - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
 - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities

Standards

- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students and teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning.*

6.4 Study guides

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with distance learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *Are the academics qualified to teach in the distance learning programme?*

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|--|---|
| 6.1 | Distance learning philosophy and methodology | Not applicable |
| 6.2 | Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF | Not applicable |
| 6.3 | Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities | Not applicable |
| 6.4 | Study guides | Not applicable |

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

7.1 Selection criteria and requirements

7.2 Proposal and dissertation

7.3 Supervision and committees

7.1 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*

7.2 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.*

7.3 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 7.1 | Selection criteria and requirements | Not applicable |
| 7.2 | Proposal and dissertation | Not applicable |
| 7.3 | Supervision and committees | Not applicable |

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

8.2 The joint programme

8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
 - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
 - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
 - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
 - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
 - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
 - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

8.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?
- Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?
- Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?
- Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?
- Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?
- What is the added value of the programme of study?
- Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---|---|
| 8.1 | Legal framework and cooperation agreement | Not applicable |
| 8.2 | The joint programme | 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 purpose of the EEC was to evaluate the intended Masters of Arts in Leisure and Tourism to be offered at the College of Tourism and Hotel Management and make recommendations based on the presented information to the CYQAA to grant permission/or accredit the programme for delivery in the next academic year. To this end the EEC presents its conclusions below.

Programme Aims, Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The Master of Arts in Leisure and Tourism aims and objectives are quite commendable. One aim of the programme is to help fill the recognized skills gap in the market by providing students with a solid foundation of education enabling them to become effective managers anywhere in today's globally competitive fast changing environment of leisure and tourism. Another aim is to help students develop their management and leadership skills, to be able to operate effectively in a multicultural environment. The College has responded quickly to market conditions propelled by the changing social, political, legal, technological, environmental and economic conditions; by seeking to educate well-rounded managers for the leisure and tourism sectors. More specifically, the main objectives of the programme are:

- To apply theoretical concepts and principles of management to the rapidly developing leisure and tourism industry;
- To adopt an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of leisure and tourism management;
- To encourage planning and implementation of original research in the tourism and leisure industry;
- To promote a student-centred learning approach in an interactive environment;
- To enhance students' problem-solving capabilities and strategic thinking by developing key personal skills.

Once the student completed their Master of Arts degree at CTHM they should have gained a thorough understanding of the leisure and tourism industry and its specific characteristics. At the same time, the basic managerial skills necessary to pursue a successful career in the leisure and tourism industry should be acquired. Diverse skills and competencies such as problem solving, analytical personal and professional skills are mentioned as outcomes of the program.

Specific Recommended Changes

Despite these ambitious yet commendable goals the EEC is concerned about the design of the programme. These concerns are based on the following four reasons, and we reiterate the main points of what was discussed in detail in Section 1:

1) all modules are compulsory and there are no electives thus making the structure of the programme very rigid; flexibility should be an inherent feature of postgraduate programme delivery;

2) there are only four (4) modules per semester each accounting for nine (9) ECTS, which implies a very high workload per module; in practice, this may prove problematic to manage from a pedagogical point of view, while it may also disadvantage certain students who may face difficulties with understanding the concepts of a specific module;

3) generic modules are not sufficiently contextualised thus possibly limiting the interest of students; to the credit of the College, though, classes in all modules (including the generic ones) will consist solely of MA in Leisure and Tourism Management students;

4) the leisure element is significantly under-represented in the contents of the sector (i.e. leisure and tourism)-specific modules; this is not only in disagreement with the intended learning outcomes of the programme but may also result in the disappointment of students primarily interested in the beyond-tourism components of the leisure sector.

Though the EEC understands the rationale for the use of the word “Leisure” in the title of the new Master of Arts programme, we feel that a clear choice should be made in order to avoid confusion especially in the international arena. We therefore would like to suggest that:

- a) the College should consider introducing several elective modules into the programme by explicitly considering specific elements of the beyond-tourism leisure sector, such as Sports Management; Events Management; Outdoor Recreation; Wellness and Entertainment, etc. To do so, the College is advised to reduce the number of ECTS per module from nine (9) to six (6) and:
 - a. either to give room for two (2) extra modules per semester and keep the number of Thesis’ ECTS at eighteen (18); or
 - b. to give room for one (1) extra module per semester and increase the number of Thesis’ ECTS to thirty (30) – in that case, Thesis’ requirements regarding the student workload would also have to increase significantly;
- b) the College should appropriately contextualize all generic modules offered throughout the curriculum;
- c) the majority of textbooks suggested for the modules are appropriate and sufficiently current - nonetheless, relevant leisure and tourism academic journal articles should be included in the outlines of relevant modules;
- d) The College should consider a more diverse approach to their assessment.



E. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Professor Dr Andreas Papatheodorou | |
| Professor Dr Beverley Wilson - Wunsch | |
| Dr Ioannis S. Pantelidis | |
| Ms Varvara Georgiou | |
| Click to enter Name | |
| Click to enter Name | |

Date: 30/07/2020