

**External Evaluation Report for MSc Shipping Operations and Management
– Distance Learning, Cyprus International Institute of Management
(CIIM).**

Reply to CIIM responses

1. Study Programme and Programme’s Design and development

We are pleased to note that the management team considered the recommendations of the EEC and addressed them accordingly. Overall, the study programme is more coherent following the restructuring. The research methods module aims to strengthen the research skills of the students and its addition provides a balance in the relation between teaching and research skills.

The **progression in the program** is improved, and the link between the different courses in the program is now logical and helpful for students. Our only remaining concern regarding progression related to the timing of the methods course and master’s thesis, which is covering all three semesters in the program. We would recommend scheduling the methods course in the first semester, followed by the master’s thesis in the second and third semesters. In this way, the methods course would provide the methodological foundations for students’ subsequent and more advanced work with their masters’ theses.

The **learning goals** for each of the courses in the program are improved. In all courses, the number of learning goals now count only four. This is a significant improvement, compared to the original proposal. The reduced number of goals more clearly communicate the desired learning outcomes to students, and the most important aspects of each course now receive a stronger emphasis. Almost all learning goals have been reformulated, and more appropriate and testable verbs are used in each case. We do not have any further concerns in this regard.

Additional Actions: We would recommend scheduling the methods course in the first semester, followed by the master’s thesis in the second and third semesters. In this way, the methods course would provide the methodological foundations for students’ subsequent and more advanced work with their masters’ theses.

Classification: Compliant

2. Teaching Learning and Assessments

One of the main concerns of the committee was the development of student's research skills and the awareness of knowledge issues at the intersection of different fields. The introduction of a Research methods module and an MSc thesis dissertation address these issues as they will assist students in developing critical research skills and thinking.

The **research basis** for each of the courses in the program is improved, and it now has a much stronger academic foundation. The course syllabi now contain several recent and relevant academic journal articles. This ensures that the teaching is based on some of the most recent research in the relevant field and provides higher academic challenges to students.

As mentioned, a **research methods** course and a **master's thesis** are now included in the program. Both represent significant improvements of the academic content of the master's program. With the master's thesis, students shall independently conduct research in the fields of maritime economics and management and apply some of their theoretical and methodological learnings from the other courses in their own academic work.

These new courses are comparable to what one expects from a Master's program in other European universities.

In our original response to the accreditation application, we voiced concerns regarding the lack of a **CSR dimension** in the leadership/crew management course. Seafarers are more likely to suffer from stress, loneliness, depression and other health problems than employees in onshore jobs, and this poses particular challenges to ship and crew managers. The revised leadership/crew management course, where these issues are particularly relevant, now addresses these important topics. The course syllabus now includes several relevant references, which discuss the causes for seafarers' particular mental and physical health issues.

Additional Actions: None

Classification: Compliant

3. Teaching Staff

The main concern here was on the balance between resident and visiting faculty. Additionally, members of the EEC felt that some resident faculty lacked the expertise in online technologies. We are pleased to note that the management has now made provisions for the training and induction of faculty on the use of online technologies. Furthermore, full-time and part-time resident faculty have been recruited in order to address the imbalance and alleviate the excessive workload of resident faculty. All these measures are steps in the right direction.

Nevertheless, we are surprised to see that the management still believes that the use of **dual recordings** is pedagogically valid and efficient. This is practice of dubious efficacy and could only operate provided recorded lectures are used jointly with real-time delivery. The key idea is to explain topics covered earlier rather than repeating what was said earlier.

Additional Actions: Revisit the practice of dual recording and try to avoid overlaps.

Classification: Compliant

4. Students

This was one of the key strengths area. The management team have addressed all our previous queries

Additional Actions: None

Classification: Compliant

5. Resources

The EEC had concerns about the setup of virtual student office for support and welfare as well as the inclusion of case studies and interactive learning materials. The Management team have provided detailed replies on how these will be addressed and the use of simulation software for shipping markets seems to be an effective tool for interactive teaching.

Additional Actions: None

Classification: Compliant

6. Additional for Distance Learnings

The EEC felt that this was one area where further improvements would be required. In particular, the impression was that the program had underestimated the efforts required for the transition from a classical education program to an online program

The management have addressed those concerns by integrating interaction by the students through simulations and collaborative learning exercises. In addition, the management also acknowledged the need for interaction between the students and their peers. This form an important part of the student experience and is therefore a welcome amendment to the program design.

Additional Actions: The EEC would recommend that particular attention is given to pacing the programme to the needs of students and ensuring that there is no overloading of activities and online interaction. This could be achieved, for example, through a centralised coordination of assignment and activities that would allow to avoid lecture hours and take-home activities to overlap.

Classification: Compliant

Date: 18 May 2020

Members of the Committee:

Professor Nikos Nomikos

Professor Michele Acciaro

Professor Rene Taudal Poulsen

Professor Marcus Specht

Mrs Antri Stratoura