



Doc. 300.2.2

Date: 4/11/2022

Institution Response (Institutional Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training - MIEEK
- **Town:** Limassol – Branch Absolute Institute of Technical Education (AITE)
- **Institution Status:** Existing institution, Evaluated and accredited by: Cy.Q.A.A

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].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.2.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the Institution in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, in the section building facilities, student welfare services, infrastructure, the HEI must respond on the comments and scoring of the EEC.*
- *Under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.2.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

BUILDING FACILITIES - STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES - INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Building facilities

1.1 Plans and licenses

This is a building under construction which is completed at 95%. During the visit, the Contractors were finishing the final details. It is of the highest quality standards and it is expected to be fully compliant with all the regulations concerning earthquake protection, fire safety, electrical and mechanical installations and accessibility for persons with disabilities. It is noted that due to the fact that the building is owned by the government it was not required to acquire a building permit but only a Town Planning Consent. Therefore, the two plans mentioned in 1.1.1 only bear the stamp of the Town Planning authority. According to the institute's representatives, the certificates mentioned in 1.1.3.4 (Fire Safety) and 1.1.3.5 (E&M installations) are expected to be issued soon.

- We would like to thank the EEC for recognizing that the building meets standards of the highest quality and it is expected to be fully compliant with all the regulations.
- Attachment 1: Operating licence , certificate 1.1.3.4 (Fire Safety) and 1.1.3.5 (E&M Installations)







1.2 Other facilities

The institute's architect team was present during the inspection and they presented all the above drawings and documentation to the satisfaction of the evaluating committee. Final comments The building is state of the art according to the documentation submitted and according to our observations during the visit. It is expected to be fully compliant with all the requirements of CYQAA regarding the building facilities. However, because the building is not 100% completed, some certificates mentioned above are not yet issued, it is suggested that an extension of time is

granted to the institute so that they can submit the certificates mentioned here above which are: 1. Operating licence 2. Fire Safety Certificate 3. E&M Installations Certificate

- We would like to thank the EEC for finding our other facilities (number of teaching rooms, offices, laboratories, etc.) in the building appropriate and recognizing that the building is state of the art.
- Attachment 1: Operating licence, certificate 1.1.3.4 (Fire Safety) and 1.1.3.5 (E&M Installations)

2. Student welfare services

2.1. Admission procedures and criteria take into account the applicant's socio-economic circumstances, as well as serious health issues. After admission, students fill out an electronic form with their problems or special needs. AITE provides support to students with special needs (e.g. provision of facilities to students, tutoring support, escorted by a chaperone, etc.).

- Our aim has been to address the multiple needs of students, support them throughout their studies and facilitate them to adapt to the new academic environment. This is achieved by enhancing their capacity for personal autonomy and independence and providing additional help to those facing increased stress levels, learning difficulties and other psychological problems, which are often associated with poor academic performance.
- Support offered to students with disabilities (physical as well as psychological). There are internal regulations concerning “disadvantage compensation/reasonable adjustment” for disabled students. The rooms/labs are wheelchair-accessible.
- We believe that the Academic Coordinators who support the Student Welfare Services are adequate for the number of students enrolled. As stated earlier, there will be around 200 students for the 4 programmes, split in morning and afternoon classes.

2.2. Within the premises of AITE, there is a cafeteria, an indoor multi-room for social meetings and recreation, as well as outdoor areas. Additionally, a benefits and discount plan for students and alumni is under development, which is expected to include discounts at gyms, restaurants and other entertainment venues.

The premises of AITE include a cafeteria for students, recreational space in the surrounding area and balcony in the building.

2.3. There are policies that provide academic support to students. The role of the local academic coordinators of the study programs is crucial, as they maintain personal contact and communication with the students, due to the small number per program.

The Academic Coordinators provide overall guidance to the students assigned to them, so that they can improve in key aspects throughout the curriculum. All academic coordinators follow-up all students routinely and have regular meetings in order to monitor their progress.

2.4. There are no tuition fees. Students are entitled to apply for a student grant and for the student economic package, which includes a meal allowance, a housing allowance, an allowance for the purchase of university books and an allowance for the purchase or maintenance of a computer. In addition, any other financial problems that may arise during their studies are handled by the AITE. Also, a scheme of benefits and discounts for students and graduates is under development.

The MIEEK management is committed to a well-maintained environment for students, assisting them in their personal needs wherever possible.

2.5. No counselling services are provided in house. Students at this stage have the possibility to receive psychological support services through the General Healthcare System. Finding partnerships with agencies that will organize free seminars for psychological and social support and prevention during the academic year is also being considered.

Due to the small number of students, instructors have direct contact with them, offering them immediate support. Moreover, if students are facing a problem and do not want to discuss it with the instructor, they can discuss it with the Academic Coordinators and/or with the Director of the Institution.

2.6 και 2.7. The connection of the students with the labour market is a high priority. Primarily, the connection of each Study Program with the labour market is based on sustainability studies, with the aim of predicting a satisfactory absorption of the graduates in the labour market. The internship is a part of the study programs (minimum 6 weeks per year, 12 ECTS). More than 85% of students, after their internship, are absorbed by employers and continue with full-time employment. Connecting students and graduates with the employers, to find jobs and internships is further facilitated through the online platform "DEETE", which is a communication network between employers looking for technically qualified personnel and graduates of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Cooperation with the business world is ensured through strong collaborations with the employers' organizations KEBE and OEB, whose representatives also participate in the Council of MIEK.

- **We are pleased that the EEC recognizes that all of our students are offered a wide range of career support and services, helping students with job search methods, how to do a job interview, how to write a CV and more.**
- **An important parameter for the Committee is the interconnection/relevance of our courses with the labour market and the working environment, both through visits to suitable industrial units and by inviting professionals from industry.**
- **Through the "DEETE" platform, the MIEEK Public School has developed formal and official mechanisms. The platform is now completed and is online.**
- **One of its applications is to interact with MIEEK alumni, to track their professional progress and to stimulate their interest to participate in this platform. Their participation will afford MIEEK the ability to formally gather data based on actual and real facts.**

2.8. AITE enables students to participate in the Erasmus+ Mobility Program to acquire professional training and work experience (Erasmus placements & Erasmus VET). According to the Study Rules (4.4.) all students of the MIEK Public School can submit a written application to participate in the Erasmus+

Program for internship. The selection process and in general the policy for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programs are determined and monitored by the Erasmus+ European Programs Committee of the School. According to the statistics provided by the AITE, it is found that a significant percentage of its students (average 20%) participate in outgoing mobility actions, while 8-10 students per year participate in incoming mobility.

All of our students have the opportunity to participate in professional training all over the EU. These experiences greatly enrich the knowledge, skills and competences of MIEEK students, by giving them the opportunity to learn in a wide variety of environments.

2.9. The students participate in the Student Union and each department elects its own Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of the Student Union MIEK (SP.EN.MIEK.). The Student Councils take the initiative to organize recreational and sports activities and social events. General comment: Although in the organizational structure, a Student Service is operated that provides student services, career counselling, social support, it was found that these services are decentralized, provided through the local coordinators and the relevant Committees. Their personal contact with students and their needs, due to the small number of students per program, facilitates the provision of career services, mobility and support.

We would like to thank the EEC for their understanding on how we provide student services, career counselling and social support. We would like to reiterate that the system we use is proving to be very effective due to the small numbers of students allocated to each Local Coordinator. This provides a very personal service as opposed to a non-personal central office to deal with the above. The services offered by the Local Coordinators are monitored by the Academic Coordinator and the District Director of each MIEEK campus.

3. Infrastructure

For all the above, the written documentation and the site visit supports the view that the infrastructure is adequate given the current student population. The library is small, but its space is supplemented by additional study space on campus. Also, it is not clear that the library will have all the required teaching and 'research' resources either in hard copy or electronic. The space for books is also very limited. This is a concern especially given that this institution is expected to expand in terms of student numbers.

- The library designed in the new building will provide comfortable study space for students. The library is satisfactory because students will have access to electronic libraries. As it was mentioned during the meeting with the EEC, at this initial stage only four programmes of study will be offered. The nature of the programmes and their courses differ a lot, with a variation in the courses' scheduled time. This helps a lot in minimizing the number of students requiring to use the library. Beyond that, we would like to underline the tremendous power and impact of digitalization and the preference of the students to use online resources. All students will have direct access to the digital and national libraries

provided by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. Access to those digital libraries will be very helpful to the students, since the majority of them work and study. They prefer to have access to the digital libraries as they may access it at any time at their convenience rather than to have to push themselves to visit the library after a long day, following their work and participation in a class. As it was mentioned during the meeting, all books were purchased and are stored for safety purposes at the C' Technical School of Limassol.

- The size of the library was designed by the architect in accordance with the international standards for the maximum number of expected students at any given time. Extra space for books was also allowed for any future expansion of the School.
- According to Regulatory Deed KDP 54/90, seats are required for 1/10 of the students and therefore this requirement is covered by the available seats. The library study area is next to the library and the two areas are joined by an internal door. All seats in the study area (12) have computers and internet access to support the study. In the library area there are 10 additional seats, with provisions for the use of the students' personal computers and internet access. The area of the two spaces, 30 and 50 sq.m. respectively (a total of 80 sq.m.) is in accordance with the building plan. This partitioning achieves the acoustics between the study area and the library area. In addition, the study area can be utilised independently for other uses if the need arises.
- The library areas are of high height, therefore the furniture of the libraries is 2.40m and 3.60m high and offers the possibility of hosting a large number of books and the possibility of good organization of the library. Based on the Regulation, 25 pieces are required per student who uses it, a number that can easily be served by the available space. There is also a librarian's office in the area with the necessary electronic facilities.

1. Institution's Academic Profile and Orientation

Sub-Areas

1.1 Mission and strategic planning

The mission is clearly stated, but more effort needs to be invested publicizing this mission to the stakeholders, could be through web, social media. The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Institution's development strategy. But there are gaps. The programmes leads should have a more direct say or voice in this process. The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Institution's academic development requires more work. It appears to be quite informal and not statistical or methodologically robust. A start has been made. But it is important the institution introduces robust set of indicators, which can be borrowed form of similar institutions or universities. For the other areas this institution has done an excellent job.

We would like to thank the EEC for recognizing that the MIEEK Public School has addressed its objectives through its Mission, Vision and Core Values and has made this available in the website and documentation. MIEEK will continue to develop and make its quality assurance policies publicly available in order to secure and improve its academic and operating standards. Also, programme leads and the management are open to discuss any issues and incorporate them in the decision-making process. All Quality Assurance procedures provided by the principles of the European Higher Education Area are followed in order to continuously improve and upgrade the MIEEK curricula, with a view to their compliance with the European Criteria and Quality Indicators. We will look into systems used by similar educational establishments.

1.2 Connecting with society

Overall, MIEEK Limassol has developed strong links with industry and other stakeholders with whom there is systematic communication and this translates into programs/modules that related to its mission of producing graduate who are job ready (positive impact of Society). The weakest link is in communicating with the public (1.2.2) and with graduates (1.2.4). But there is engagement high school students and other such efforts. But more needs to be done here. Communication with graduates needs to be developed. Having an Alumni office and association would be helpful. So would a newsletter (electronic) for the Alumini, as well as Alumni events.

We would like to thank the EEC for this suggestion. We strongly agree with the EEC concerning its strong professional network with the local professional community. However, through the "DEETE" platform, the MIEEK Public School has developed those formal and official mechanisms. The platform is now completed and operational. One of its applications is to interact with

MIEEK alumni, to track their professional progress and to stimulate their interest to participate in this platform. Their participation will give MIEEK the ability to formally collect required data.

1.3 Development processes

There is a transparent and appropriate process to attract permanent and part-time staff. The budget and its sources are clear (85% EU, 15% Cyprus government). Planned academic staff recruitment process are appropriate as are funding processes for the operation of the Institution and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study. But an effective strategy of attracting students/ high-level students from Cyprus is weak. The main focus of MIEEK is vocational training/education. Hence this institution needs to develop a strategy of reaching out to the best student where this track is the most appropriate one. Students and their parents need more and clear information of the advantages of a vocational education over a university education, including the expected rate of return.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth has developed its Strategic Plan in order to attract students/ high-level students from Cyprus. In this Plan, the MIEEK Public School has developed the strategic pillars mentioned in Attachment 2.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-Areas

- System and quality assurance strategy

The quality assurance structure and processes are transparent and provide the means to assure and improve the quality of the institutions and programs provided by the MIEEK Limassol. Research is not core to this vocational institution, hence N/A. On 2.1.1, this is strong, but we have an issue with how or whether the different measures are weighted. This needs to be clarified for transparency and for ease in decision-making. Also, it appears that the policy is made available on the WEB. But it is not clear how this information/web link to communicated to stakeholders. It is also not clear what documentation and type of documentation is provided on the qualification gained. But information is on the WEB.

The Internal Quality Committee notes the positive comments of the EEC concerning the quality assurance process adopted by the MIEEK Public School. The policy is well-known among all the internal stakeholders (District Directors, Academic Programme Coordinators, Local Programme Coordinators etc.) and is always available through the Quality Assurance cloud system. MIEEK will continue to develop and make its quality assurance policies publicly available in order to secure and improve its academic and operating standards.

- Ensuring quality for the programmes of study

On 2.2, there is compliance to very high standards, with some exceptions. The QA standards are well articulated and fit with the mission of this institution. There's some gaps in 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 2.2.9, and 2.2.10. On 2.2.3, specific indicators are referred to but no indication on weights assigned to the different indicators are provided. On 2.2.5, on plagiarism reference is made to turn-it-in. But the common practice modern cheat is to purchase project essays. One way to control this to have random students present or be interviewed by instructors. 2.2.9 same as 2.2.3. On 2.2.10. The library is rather small. It appears that seating will be available else in the facility. But it is important that such study space is made available. Workshop and related space is excellent, but there are issues with the cafeteria and Kitchen. It is small given the demand for related programs and also given the equipment in this space. It would be best if adjustments can be made where possible. This is of particular importance given the significance of this program for the hospitality sector in Cyprus.

- The EEC correctly notes that QA standards and processes comply with very high standards. All the Quality Assurance procedures provided by the principles of the European Higher Education Area are followed in order to continuously improve and upgrade the curricula of MIEEK, with a view to their compliance with the European Criteria and Quality Indicators.
- As far as 2.2.3 is concerned, we are currently working on weight factors for each indicator.
- As far as 2.2.5 is concerned apart from the Turnitin software used, we will

introduce the method suggested by EEA for sporadic interviews of the students by the teaching staff.

- As far as 2.2.9 is concerned, through the “DEETE” platform, MIEEK has developed those formal and official mechanisms. The platform is now completed and is online and a budget has already been allocated for hiring two persons (until the end of 2024) to deal with its further implementation. One of its applications is to interact with MIEEK alumni, to track their professional progress. Their participation will allow MIEEK to formally collect data based on actual and real facts.
- As far as 2.2.10.2 is concerned, the members of the Internal Committee disagree with the comments about the small size of the library. As it was mentioned during the meeting with the EEC, at this initial stage only four programmes of study will be offered. The nature of the programmes and their courses differ considerably, with a variation in the courses’ scheduled time. This helps in minimizing to a great extent the number of the students that need to use the library. Beyond that, the Council would like to underline the tremendous power and impact of digitalization and the preference of the students to use online resources. All students will have direct access to the digital and national libraries provided by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. Access to those digital libraries will be very helpful to the students, since the majority of them work and study at the same time. They prefer to have access to digital libraries as they may access them at any time at their convenience, rather than to have to push themselves to visit the library after a long day, following their work and participation in a class. As it was mentioned during the meeting, all books have been purchased and are stored for safety purposes at the C’ Technical School of Limassol. According to Regulatory Deed KDP 54/90, seats are required for 1/10 of the students and therefore this requirement is covered by the available seats. The library study area is next to the library and the two areas are joined by an internal door. All seats in the study area (12) have computers and internet access to support the study. In the library area there are 10 additional seats with provisions for the use of the students’ personal computers and internet access. The area of the two spaces, 30 and 50 sq.m. respectively (a total of 80 sq.m.) is in accordance with the building plan. This partitioning achieves the acoustics between the study area and the library area. In addition, the study area can be utilized independently for other uses if the need arises. The library areas is of high height, therefore the furniture of the libraries is 2.40 and 3.60 high and offers the possibility of hosting a large number of books and the possibility of good organization of the library. Based on the regulation, 25 pieces are required per student who uses it, a number that can easily be served by the available space. There is also a librarian’s office in the area with the necessary electronic facilities.
- For Kitchen and Cafeteria, please refer to section “Conclusions and Final Remarks” n. 6, pages 21-22.

3. Administration

There is compliance that meet regulatory standards.

We would like to thank the EEC for this favourable comment. The MIEEK management has created clear documentation to make its governance transparent.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-Areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

MIEEK Limassol assures that its teaching, modules, and programs are well informed by all pertinent stakeholders and integrates theory and practice. Also, modules/programs, in this way meet industry standards. Also, MEEIK offer a 2-year degree and a 5B EFQ level diploma all compliant with European professional qualifications and regulated professions standards.

All MIEEK programmes of study are well thought out and take into account labour market needs and requirements. All programmes correspond to EQF level 5 and comply with European Professional Qualifications.

4.2 Organisation of teaching

Procedures have been developed to meet the organization of teaching standards at a high level. We have concerns with 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 might also be problematic.

- As far as 4.2.4 is concerned, effective communication is achieved through the use of the electronic platforms of Moodle, the use of tools like Teams and face to face interaction.
- As far as 4.2.5 is concerned, the teaching staff replies to the students on all aspects on a systematic basis in order to secure smooth running of the programmes

5. Teaching Staff

The information provided and our onsite visit Q&A demonstrate high standards of qualification for full time and part-time academics. Also, class size appears to be small. But we need more data to provide a more detailed commentary. What we do know is that there are approximately 8 full time academic, but four have heavy administrative responsibilities. There are also part-time staff. We are not clear on the support staff available for workshops (required for health and safety as well as for training purposes). The current expectation is that there will be 200 students and 50 staff full time and part time inclusive.

- We would like to thank the EEC for this observation. The number of teaching staff as well as the amount of teaching hours per teacher is considered adequate for the proper operation of each programme. In accordance with the relevant legislation, all teachers have qualifications higher than the diploma offered by MIEEK.
- The Committee has established the adequacy of both the teaching spaces and laboratories as well as the necessary means required for the proper execution of the programme. Combined with the small number of students per department and year, they enable a student-centred and relatively personalized learning model.
- The programmes employ sufficient staff members and laboratory technicians to properly deliver the teaching of practical lessons and prepare the lab areas.
- As a general rule, each programme of study has one Programme Coordinator who is a permanent staff employed fulltime. The administration staff deals with the day to day running of the school, as well as the planning of the future programmes and expansion of the school activities.

6. Research

This is a vocational institution where doing research per se is not core.

As pointed out by the EEC, the vocational nature of the study programme does not support synergies at this stage. Individually, some of the teaching staff participate in research projects. The goal for the next stage is to build interdisciplinary projects within MIEEK's different programmes of study.

7. Resources

The institutional requirements are easily met at high standards. The budget to meet high standards of education appear to be guaranteed, being 85% provided by the EU. Even though education is free to students the financial support for the institution is solid, especially given government's strong support for the growth of vocational training to meet the needs of the Cypriot labour market.

The members of the Internal Quality Committee would like to thank the EEC for their comments concerning the quality of the appropriate financial resources and the future success of MIEEK.

B. Conclusions and Final Remarks

Overall, we find that the new campus of MIEEK, in Limassol, is an excellent facility. The modules and programs are stakeholder informed and the technology is state of the art. Also, the modes of educational delivery such flipped classes/delivery is state of the art. Staff are highly qualified and QA is at a very high level. This is an impressive facility and should have help deliver job-ready graduates to fill the gaps in the Cyprus labour market.

But there is room for improvement as listed below:

1. Efforts should be made to improve the gender balance amongst staff and students.

All applicants are treated on an equal basis, regardless of their gender. It is a fact though that, due to the vocational nature of the school, it seems we follow the European trends on gender split.

2. There should be a career counsellor available to students.

Due to the small number of students in each class the counselling of the students is carried out by the Local and Academic Programme Coordinators. From our experience during the few years since the accreditation of the School, we found that this method works very well due to the fact that the Coordinators have the opportunity to know their students very well, as well as their strengths, weaknesses and needs.

3. There should emergency phones linked to security through the campus. This safety feature should help attract more females to programmes.

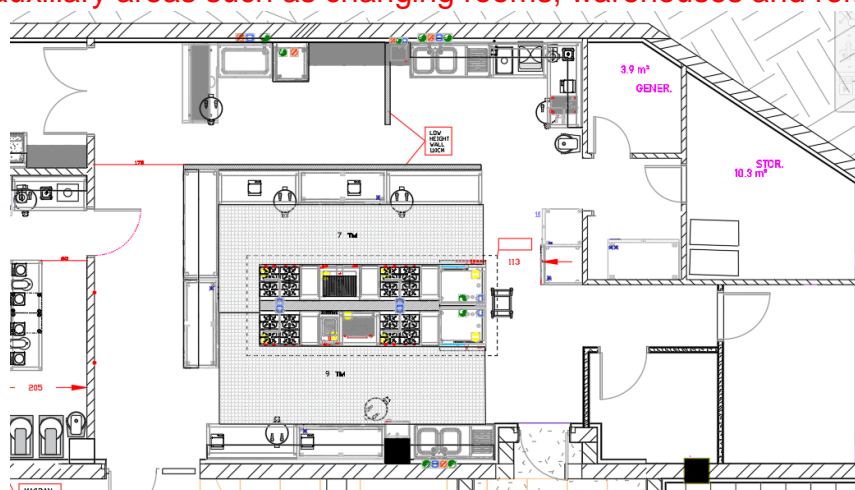
The architectural design has foreseen that there are no dead ends and dark corners and that the courtyard and outdoor spaces are visible from various points. The visibility from different levels, as well as the night lighting in the complex, largely ensure the safety of the users of the space. The building plan does not provide for the installation of an emergency telephone system. Crime rate in Cyprus is kept at very low levels and the system is not deemed necessary.

4. The Kitchen area should be improved with regards to space given student numbers and the equipment in place. To the extent that the space can't be increased or reconfigured the number of students using this space needs to be reduced—to no more than 4 at time, for health and safety reasons. Indeed, given the narrowness of the 'corridors' within the Kitchen there is a possibility of some being injured given the use of hot ovens, sharp utensils, and hot plates, for example. Depending on what is being done in the kitchen, the number of students be reduced even further.

- Although it was pointed out to the EEC that the equipment was not placed to the exact positions and that the final positions were given on a plan, the EEC did not take this into account, but focused on the small dimensions of the corridor in the hot food area and the proximity to the isolating switch.
- The competent departments of the Republic of Cyprus have approved the safety of the specific area. All corridors meet the requirements of the Fire Department and the Department of Labour Inspection for required dimensions and the building has the

Certificate of Approval from the Fire Department. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth can appoint a Safety Officer for the Laboratory to ensure good operation.

- According to Regulatory Deed KDP 54/90, 2 sq.m. of space per student who uses them are required for special laboratories. The area of the kitchen workshop is 80 sq.m. and there are additional auxiliary areas such as changing rooms, warehouses and refrigerator areas.



- The members of the Council of the Programme of Study disagree with the content of the report in this section. This concerns the argumentation for poor design and exposure of the students to hazardous conditions, compromising the Health and Safety of students and staff. There is clear evidence within the content of the report which indicates that the EEC focused on the one side of the hot food production line (provided diagram in the report), which constitutes only one section in the kitchen. As a result, there was not an actual assessment of the operationalization of the kitchen as a whole and a complete production system, which creates real-life work conditions.
- The kitchen facility covers an area of 80m² and is physically organized (according to the duties and responsibilities to be performed) in different working stations (Appendix 1), which include:
 1. The hot food production system,
 2. The cold/warm food preparation section,
 3. The food/plate set-up and service area,
 4. The preliminary preparation and waiter area, and
 5. The cleaning/sanitary area.
- The kitchen has an industrial style, following and fully complying with the local quality and safety standards (see Appendix 2; page 5 in the complementary report of the Architect along with the final dimensions of corridors). For safety purposes, priority was given in minimizing the unnecessary movements of the students/cooks within the working areas. The aim was to secure the maximization of work ergonomics and effectiveness to eliminate students/cooks work interception, crossing and risks of an accident. All work duties (cutting vegetables and cooking) have been ergonomically designed to be performed by students within their working station (Appendix 1). In doing so, students on the one side, have 1,5m of running working surface (for cutting vegetables and preparing meat) and on the other side they can use the heavy equipment for cooking (stove, fryer, broiler, oven) without crossing or interfering with their fellow students. Also, below their working stations, students have direct access to a fridge within which they can store their preparations for food safety

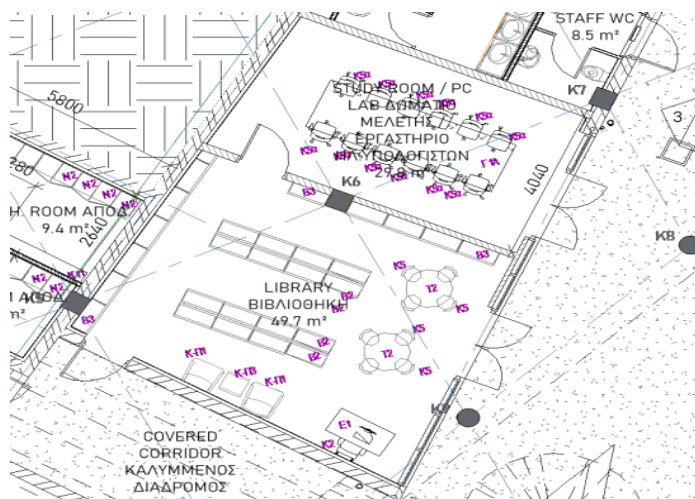
purposes. This ergonomic design eliminates the movement (forward and backwards only) of the students within the kitchen. It minimizes the risks for accidents, and it creates optimal working conditions for each student to complete their recipes in strict food hygiene and safety standards. Also, it eases the food production process, as students are able, as soon as they complete their cooking tasks, to forward their preparation directly to the food/plate set-up and service station.

- The kitchen has been designed as a whole production system to provide real-life working conditions and professional practicing, allowing students to develop job-fit skills, competencies and working culture for immediate employment upon graduation. The aim was to provide real work simulations and opportunities for role playing to engage students in an interactive learning process, enhancing the student-centric character of a vocational programme of study. The criticism in isolation of the capacity of the 'hot food production line only' (one side), did not allow the extraction of safe and objective conclusions.
- It is essential to assess the operationalization and capability of the kitchen as a whole production system (all its production-working stations) to accommodate the conceptualization of the programme into working-stations. Working stations are contextualized by the different duties and tasks, emerging not only from the expected learning outcomes of the programme but also from the brigade in the kitchen. The brigade in the kitchen distinguishes the role of the chef, sous chef, section cooks etc., and includes the relevant job tasks. This creates a momentum and classic opportunity for the students to learn by doing. Such a learning and practicing model promotes role-playing based on the functionality and the brigade of the kitchen to maximize students' job-fit preparedness for immediate employment.
- The kitchen has been designed according to validated industry operating and safety standards, as indicated in the complementary report of the Architect (Appendix 2; page 5) concerning the facility's compliance with the local legislation.
- The switch has been placed in such an area to ease its use for safety purposes in case of an emergency. Also, as it was stated to the EEC during their visit, the specific corridor final free space was not going to be at 90cm, as the kitchen was not in its final set up. The attached diagram illustrates the final set up of the corridor at 120cm, allowing a much bigger space for the student, following industry standards. (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2-page 5 in the complementary report of the Architect)
- As it was explained to the EEC, it was not a matter of maneuvering the dish and placing it in the oven or taking it out safely. The door of the oven opens to the right side, allowing the student to very easily and carefully remove it from the oven when it is hot and to place it immediately on the trolley, which is located at the left of the oven. This eliminates the case of an accident or a burn due to the maneuvering of the hot dish or the transfer of heat to the stainless-steel working surfaces. An additional proactive ergonomic measure to eliminate crossing and maneuvering (wrong professional practice that may lead to precarious and hazardous conditions).
- Finally, we strongly disagree with the suggested number of the four students as the maximum capacity of the kitchen. This is not a sustainable number; thus, various viability issues (budget allocation) are arising due to the programme's high operating costs. Basically, the suggested number prohibits the implementation of the programme. As it was mentioned earlier, the kitchen is not composed only by the hot food production line (it received extensive criticism in isolation), but also by the surrounding working stations (preparation area, plate/food set-up station etc.) that complete all sections and tasks run in a professional kitchen. In terms of safety standards, the kitchen fully complies with the local

safety regulations and operating standards. Twelve students is an ideal number to carry out all duties and tasks found in an organized and professional kitchen.

5. The library space is small. Students will want to spend time working in the library (student representative input) there should be study space adjacent to the library.

- According to Regulatory Deed KDP 54/90 seats are required for 1/10 of the students and therefore this requirement is covered by the available seats. The library study area is next to the library and the two areas are joined by an internal door. All seats in the study area (12) have computers and internet access to support the study. In the library area there are 10 additional seats with provisions for the use of the students' personal computers and internet access. The area of the two spaces, 30 and 50 sq.m. respectively (a total of 80 sq.m.) is in accordance with the building plan. This partitioning achieves the acoustics between the study area and the library area. In addition, the study area can be utilised independently for other uses if the need arises.
- The library areas is of high height, therefore the furniture of the libraries is 2.40m and 3.60m high and offers the possibility of hosting a large number of books and the possibility of good organization of the library. Based on the regulation, 25 pieces are required per student who uses it, a number that can comfortably be served by the available space. There is also a librarian's office in the area with the necessary electronic facilities.

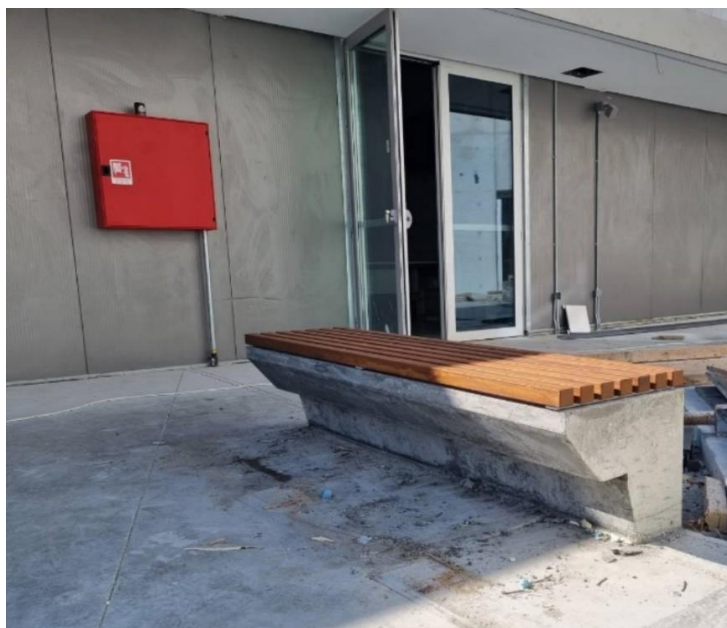


6. The cafeteria is quite small. Adjacent indoor space should be made available for eating and study.

- According to the building plan, but also based on the regulation regarding Higher Education Schools, the use of the cafeteria will function as a self-service canteen for both students and staff. It will mainly offer drinks and quick snack-type meals. Namely, the student will take the product and in most cases will leave. The canteen is fully equipped, with a bar area, a kitchen and all the necessary storage areas and sanitary areas for the staff.
- There are a total of 32 seats for indoor or outdoor use, which corresponds to 30% of the actual student attendance at any given time. In the outdoor area of the cafeteria in the inner courtyard next to the canteen, an outdoor seating area has been organized, with the ability to accommodate more seats comfortably.

- In addition, in the complex there are many outdoor seating areas which are suitable for students to take a break and socialize. For example, benches have been built in the courtyard on the ground floor, under tall trees that provide shade.
- The auditorium area also serves as a seating area for daily informal student gatherings.
- Additionally, there is a large covered courtyard on the ground floor to which seating can be added if deemed necessary. Covered and uncovered outdoor areas are generally available throughout the complex where students and staff can rest and socialize.





7. Given the Culinary Arts and Catering programs, it would make sense from a financial, sustainability, and educational perspective to have the cafeteria operated by students in this program.

The MIEEK Public School, as a vocational education and training provider, aims at providing qualitative work simulations on-campus through learning by doing and practicing situations. As it was mentioned to the EEC, the cafeteria facilities might not be run by the students at the initial stage of their use (e.g. first or second year). Sufficient time is needed during the initial implementation of the programmes to create the necessary learning and operational synergies that advance the learning experience of the students. After the initial period, the cafeteria facilities will be available for practicing and to be run by the students. Priority is given to create real life working and learning simulations and role playing, through which the preparation of lunch or dinner will be the learning outcome achievement of the Culinary students, and the food service will be the learning outcome achievement of the Catering students. Building the Cafeteria on this perspective as well, will be integrated in the programmes' implementation in order to financially, sustainably and educationally support a holistic learning and professional experience for the students. However, these efforts call for a careful and sophisticated planning and control mechanisms to ensure not only the programme's learning outcome achievement, but also to maintain high quality operating standards for the School. Consequently, it is planned to integrate the operations of the cafeteria and to be run by the students at a later stage.

8. The offices for permanent academic staff have no windows (even though there are outward looking walls). This not a conducive space for work and reduce the productivity and efficiency of staff (see attached photo).

Windows could be added in all cases without technical problems.

9. There is no office for the permanent staff and the Culinary Arts and Catering area. It is critical that such an office be constructed adjacent to this area.

- The building plan does not provide for individual permanent offices for each teacher, whether full-time or part-time. There is a common office area, the staff room, for all teaching staff, whether permanent or part-time, on the first floor, as provided for in the higher education school regulations.
- The Higher Education School Regulation provides for 2 sq.m. per teacher and the available space is 53 square meters (that is, it is allowed to serve up to 25 teachers)
- In this context, there is not a permanent office for the kitchen/restaurant teacher either.
- In all the classrooms, there are desks-chairs for use by the teachers during the lesson.
- In addition, the architectural design has foreseen that in the laboratories that were judged to have excessive noise/dust and specifically in the welding, heating, air conditioning and plumbing laboratory, that a small independent space with an office-seat can be created that will serve the teachers for the lesson time. The lessons in these workshops are of a practical nature and the teacher will always be among the students, while the space is for keeping personal belongings. In these areas, with the exception of one where it was not possible, there are electrically controlled skylights that provide sufficient lighting, but also artificial lighting.
- However, if the intention is to provide permanent, exclusive use of office space by teachers, full-height windows could be added in all cases without technical problems.

10. It is important that part-time staff have the space conducive to prepare lectures, interact with permanent staff and students. Shared offices would be useful. This optimizes the learning environment. It is not clear that this is being planned for. Currently, it appears that the view that part time staff are expected to leave after teaching. This will not make for a vibrant and dynamic learning environment. Spatial configuration is important here.

- In relation to the proposal for meeting places for academics and students in quiet rooms, there was no corresponding requirement in the building programme for the creation of such areas, nor is there such a regulation in the Law on Higher Education Schools.
- Our suggestion is, if it is deemed necessary, to add to the waiting area (lobby) rather than the administration area, some units of mobile furniture like meeting pods-cubicles of free arrangement that allow short meetings or to serve as a temporary workplace for teachers or student meeting/work area. There are modern examples of such furniture, of various types in terms of extent of privacy and size.

11. Communication with graduates needs to be developed. Having an Alumni office and association would be helpful. So would a newsletter (electronic) for the Alumni, as well as Alumni events.

The Internal Committee strongly agrees with the EEC. However, we would like to indicate the fact that through the “DEETE” platform, the MIEEK Public School has developed those formal and official mechanisms. The platform is now completed and is online. One of its applications is to interact with MIEEK alumni, in order to track their professional progress.

12. More effort needs to be invested publicizing this mission to the stakeholders, could be through web, social media. The programmes lead should have a more direct say or voice in this process.

The MIEEK webpage includes a photographic archive which can be found [here](#). Each programme also maintains web pages on all popular social media with information, photographs and activities, thus promoting their programme.

13. The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Institution's academic development requires more work.

- All Quality Assurance procedures provided by the principles of the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are followed in order to continuously improve and upgrade the curricula of MIEEK, with a view to their compliance with the European Criteria and Quality Indicators.
- Please see section 2.2 above.

14. It is important that the institution introduces robust set of indicators, which can be borrowed form of similar institutions or universities.

Key Performance Indicators are as shown on, Attachment 3. Furthermore, MIEEK is currently applying weight factors to each indicator.

15. More effort needs to be devoted to communicating with prospective students and their parents. This can be through social media and guidance counsellors, for example. Communication with graduates needs to be developed. Having an Alumni office and association would be helpful. So would a newsletter (electronic) for the Alumni, as well as Alumni events.

- Mieek reaches out to prospective students and parents through the yearly organised School open days. The fact that MIEEK is part of the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training of the Cypriot Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth helps us to utilise the carrier counsellors of all secondary schools to promote our courses.
- MIEEK will continue to publicize information related to the programme of study, on the Website, social media etc., to maintain the necessary communication channels and promote the uniqueness of the programme's expected learning outcomes and technical skills. This will assist the academic team in their promotional visits at secondary schools to inform prospective students about their offered programme of study.
- MIEEK also utilises DEETE platform. One of its applications is to interact with MIEEK alumni, to track their professional progress and to stimulate their interest to participate in this platform. Their participation will afford MIEEK the ability to formally gather data based on actual and real facts.
- The procedures for the involvement of the students and graduates in all the necessary data collecting processes for the evaluation of the courses, the lectures, the methodological tools used is clearly described in the Quality Assurance Handbook and are ready to be implemented immediately.

16. An effective strategy for attracting students/ high-level students from Cyprus is weak. The focus of MIEEK is vocation training/education. Hence this institution needs to develop a strategy of reaching out to the best student where this track is the most appropriate one. Students and their parents need more and clear information of the advantages of a vocational education over a university education, including the expected rate of return.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth has developed its Strategic Plan in order to attract students/ high-level students from Cyprus. In this Plan, the MIEEK Public School has developed the strategic pillars mentioned in Attachment 2.

The Strategy for attracting excellent students is based on the following axes:

- Outstanding students are given the opportunity to continue their studies in Vocational Education and Training, since additional points are given to excellent students with a performance/grade of >17/20 in order to be accepted to enrol at the MIEEK Public School
- Communicating the benefits of studying at the MIEEK Public School to the public, through an advertising campaign

17. With regards to indicators re QA, the indicators should be assigned weights for reasons of transparency to facilitate more efficient and effective decision-making.

Key Performance Indicators are as shown in Attachment 3. Furthermore, MIEEK is currently applying weight factors to each indicator.

18. It is not clear what processes are in place for the effective communication between academics and students. We are told students can meet staff after class in the workshop or teaching spaces. But this does not conform with education industry standards. There should be office hours and students should be able to meet academic in office/quiet rooms. There can also be meetings using Cloud capabilities (Teams or Zoom, for example). This institution is just being launched so we can't comment on timely feedback. However, acting on the above should facilitate timely feedback. Also, quiet spaces should be provided to the part-time staff so that they can correct assessments and projects in a timely manner.

When it was stated to the EEC that students can meet staff after class hours, we meant «office hours» within the school timetable. Most programmes have these «office hours» very clearly marked on the timetable given to the students. Also, every member of the teaching staff has channels of communications embedded in the electronic platforms we use.

19. It is not clear how and the extent to which MIEEK “carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.” We note that there is a robust procedure for consultation of all pertinent stakeholders. What is not clear is under what conditions an existing module is deemed to be unsustainable. Moreover, it is not clear what criteria are used to determine if new module or program should be launched. This is important given that the budget appears to be quite flexible and supportive. Criteria for sustainability should be specified.

Criteria for sustainability are as shown in Attachment 4.

The Strategy on how we decide about the programmes that will be withdrawn or launched is based on the following axes:

- The viability criteria for the programmes that will be launched are based on the identification of the needs of the labour market, in cooperation with the employers' organizations and the faculty's ability to implement the new programme. At the beginning of

any new programme and due to the fact that it is not yet widely known, it can be offered even with small numbers of students since there is support with funding from the ESF.

- The evaluation of the risks, the sustainability of the study programmes and the feedback on the operation of the MIEEK Public School is carried out in the context of the submission of reports to the ESF.

20. During our discussion with teaching staff, concern was expressed that there might not be adequate part-time staff and lab, or workshop assistants given the state of the labour market and the distance that qualified staff might have to travel to Limassol (time and transportation costs). This labour shortage could significantly and negatively affect the quality of students' education. It was recommended that efforts be made to attract and retain such staff. Providing office space might be one such measure as would subsidizing travel expenses and relaxing some of the hiring standards.

Most of our workshop-based modules require a lab assistant along with the member of the teaching staff. We consider that distances in Cyprus are very short compared to Europe. Teaching staff are asked in their application to indicate the towns they are interested in teaching to.

Relaxing the hiring standards is not considered a preferred path since we want to keep the level of our trainers at very high standard to provide the best possible education and experience to our students.

Most of what we recommend is relatively easy to implement. We believe that what we suggest would improve the quality education provision and the social impact of this new MIEEK campus in Limassol. We would like to express our thanks to all those involved in preparing the documentation for this accreditation.

In our opinion, the building is a modern, structurally and technologically perfect complex and should be judged in terms of its function in the context of its design. We are extremely pleased that the EEC not only found that the School has excellent facilities to deliver its programmes, but also that our staff, albeit still small, is well-qualified and passionate about their work. We would like to thank the EEC for acknowledging that our School facilities and resources are excellent, making it a very attractive work environment.

C. Higher Education Institution Academic Representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr Elias Margadjis	Chairman of the MIEEK Council	
Pantelis Zacharoplastis	Quality Assurance Officer	
Costas Schinis	District Director, Limassol MIEEK	
Antonis Pierides	Deputy District Director, Limassol MIEEK	
A.Vasiliou	MIEEK Coordinator Computer and Communication Networks	
S.Sofokleous	MIEEK Coordinator CNC Technology & Woodworking Industry	
A.Eleftheriou	MIEEK Programme Coordinator Cooling & Air Handling Installations	
Dr.M.Anastasiou	MIEEK Programme Coordinator Culinary Arts & Catering Services	

Date: 04/11/2022

