

Doc. 300.1.2

# Higher Education Institution's Response

**Date:** 18/03/2020

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
COLLEGE OF TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT

- **Town:** NICOSIA

- **Programme of study  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

Διεύθυνση Τουριστικών Επιχειρήσεων (2 χρόνια, με προαιρετικά ένα επιπρόσθετο χρόνο για μαθήματα αγγλικής γλώσσας) Δίπλωμα, 124 ΠΜ)

**In English:**

Travel and Tourism Administration (2 years, plus an optional foundation year, Diploma) 124 ECTS

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

**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. 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.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, 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. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying

(if any) the deficiencies.

The study programme and study's programme design and development are appropriate. Nonetheless, the teaching material

and the content of the programme's modules are in need of updating as discussed in the section on "areas of improvement and

recommendations". The curriculum should become better informed by developments in the sector as well as by advancements

in travel and tourism research. Moreover, the Foundation programme consists of five (5) compulsory modules that focus solely

on English, i.e. additional modules should be offered to specifically prepare students for the first year of the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration.

ANSWER:

THE TECHNOLOGY USE BY CONSUMERS AND/OR TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION/IMPLEMENTATION BY BUSINESSES IS ADDED AS A SEPARATE MODULE NAMED TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN TOURISM IN SEMESTER E ATTACHMENT NO 1.

WE HAVE MODULES WHICH CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE FOUNDATION COURSE IF WE HAVE TO. SUCH COURSES NEED A TOTAL OF AT LEAST 26 WEEKS. WE KNOW THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH OF OUR STUDENTS WHICH ARE PLACED IN THE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL NOT COPE WITH MODULES OTHER THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE CHANGE WILL NOT HELP STUDENTS BUT IT WILL WORK AGAINST THEIR POSSIBILITIES TO PASS THE FOUNDATION EXAMS. AT PRESENT WE OFFER 25 HOURS PER WEEK. IF WE OFFER TWO NEW MODULES WE WILL REDUCE THE ENGLISH HOURS TO 19. PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE FOUNDATION EXAMS HAVE TO TERMINATE THEIR STUDIES AND TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

THEREFORE WE ARE KINDLY REQUESTING THE EEC MEMBERS TO ALLOW THE COLLEGE TO CONTINUE WITH THE EXISTING FOUNDATION PROGRAMME.

The correspondence of exams' and assignments' content to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS

Assessment in the proposed programme follows a traditional approach in terms of a combination of mid-term coursework/tests and final exams; attendance and class participation are also taken into consideration. As the degree is in administration/management, it is advised that presentation skills should be explicitly evaluated and assessed as much as possible. The number of credits attached to each module is standard.

## ANSWER

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (IQAC ) HAS ADDED THE PRESENTATION SKILLS IN A NUMBER OF MODULES . YOU WILL FIND ALL DETAILS IN THE MODULE CODE AT THE PAGE INDICATED OF THE REVISED APPLICATION RESUBMITTED NOW. ATTACHMENT NO 2.

## 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 Diploma programme in Travel and Tourism Administration targets students with a Higher Secondary Education certificate aiming to develop a career in the travel and tourism sectors. The programme is positioned as a good opportunity for students to prepare for employment and development in travel and tourism as well as in general service industries, by equipping students 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 travel and tourism. The aims and objectives of the programme, therefore, enable students to develop their skills and increase their career prospects.

During the evaluation meeting, the management team of the College provided an overview of the institution in general and of the programme under evaluation. It appears that teaching work is organised efficiently based on widely accepted ECTS-related workload standards. The two students interviewed were satisfied with the provision 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.

There is sufficient travel and tourism expertise in the teaching team for the programme but limited research output in highly respected tourism and hospitality journals. It is also evident that several members of staff are travel and tourism academic specialists and have relevant background studies. Some members of the teaching team have a good insight of the tourism and hospitality industry and they are involved in the industry and 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 less well-defined, as students submit their assignments via email to their tutors on an ad-hoc basis, and tutors use only open-access plagiarism software.

The two-year Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration was primarily designed by the senior academic

management team based on consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. Teaching members of staff are also welcomed to become involved in the process at a module delivery stage and effectively deal with any emerging issues.

The study programme is not as current as it should be and in certain aspects it appears outdated; as a result, it is not consistent with developments in the industry and its content and objectives do not always align well with each other. Networking with local travel and leisure companies are in place to provide students with internship opportunities.

The documentation provides comprehensive guidance to the programme proposed. The programme follows a traditional and mainstream approach to teaching Travel and Tourism. It offers a portfolio of practical skills and administrative learning with modules in the field of Travel and Tourism. There are seventeen (17) compulsory modules accounting for 100 ECTS and a choice of four (4) out of eleven (11) elective modules accounting for 24 ECTS. Only one (1) elective module specializes in travel and tourism, one (1) in Business Psychology while the rest relate to general languages.

Like other programmes currently offered by the College, the programme is expected to predominantly attract international students interested in pursuing a mid-level supervisory career in travel and tourism. The only two (2) students interviewed by the EEC were international (specifically from India and Bangladesh) and had expressed their satisfaction from the academic delivery and support services of the College in general.

While this programme of study is currently registered, it is not accredited. Information in relation to the programme is currently available on the College's website <https://www.cothm.ac.cy/pos-ft-tta>.

ANSWER:

RESEARCH.

THE POSITION OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR WAS VACANT FOR SOME TIME NOW.

THE IQAC SUGGESTED AND THE DIRECTOR AGREED TO APPOINT NOW DR.ROXANA MICHELIDES, AS THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH. ATTACHMENT NO. 3.

DR ROXANA TOGETHER WITH MRS ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI HAVE STARTED A RESEARCH PROJECT NAMED " CONTINUING EDUCATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ". FURTHERMORE DR.PANTELIS MITSIS IS CURRENTLY RUNNING A RESEARCH PROJECT NAMED " DO DIFFERENCES IN HOTEL ROOMS' PRICES REFLECT THE DIFFERENCES IN QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS RECORDED IN TRAVEL WBSITES?"

DR ANDREAS SIAMAROS HAS PROPOSED TO THE COLLEGE TO START A RESEARCH PROJECT NAMED " A CASE STUDY FOR A GENERIC 5G E-BUSINESS MODEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN A SMART HOTEL" FOR WHICH THERE IS DISCUSSION WITH THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE.

FURTHERMORE WE MUST MENTION HERE THAT A NUMBER OF OUR STAFF NAMELY ANDREAS CHRISTOFOROU AND ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI ARE MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL TOURISM TODAY

WHICH IS ISSUED BY THE COLLEGE TOGETHER WITH THE STATE BALL UNIVERSITY OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS ALMOST. YOU CAN FIND DETAILS OF THE JOURNAL AT THE WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL WWW.TOURISMTODAY.COM

FINALLY WE MUST THANK LECTURERS FOR PARTICIPATING AT THE PREPARATION OF MODULE DOCUMENTATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES.

PLAGIARISM.

THE COLLEGE IS USING THE OPEN-ACCESS PLAGIARISM TOOLS FOR THE LAST FEW NUMBER OF YEARS, AND THE LECTURERS FIND IT TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE. THE ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED AT THE IQA COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO NEED TO CHANGE IT, WE HAVE SIGNED CONTRACT WITH PLAGIARISM DETECTOR COMPANY TO USE THEIR PROGRAM IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING ONES.

ATTACHMENT NO. 4.

### Strengths

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

The College has a comprehensive Quality Assurance Regulations and Student Handbook across the programmes offered. The Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration includes fundamental academic and practical modules to help students prepare for the real world. This is a topical programme as Cyprus has a vibrant travel and tourism sector that is actively seeking to recruit new staff. Active collaborations with the local hotel industry facilitate the enrichment of the programme; such opportunities for continued engagement were also encouraged during the evaluation meeting.

ANSWER:

WE THANK THE EEC MEMBERS FOR THEIR GOOD WORDS FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE REGULATIONS AND THE STUDENT HANDBOOK.

### 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 majority of textbooks suggested for the modules are appropriate but rather outdated; moreover, relevant travel and tourism academic journal articles can be included in the outlines of travel and tourism modules. The EEC, therefore, recommends that:

- a) all modules outlines should be updated both in terms of contents as well as in terms of references to reflect the latest developments in the travel and tourism industry, including among others the role of online travel agents, New Distribution Capability (NDC) and ancillaries in revenue management.
- b) the provision of travel and tourism related elective modules could be expanded at the expense of language modules ECTS-wise; otherwise, the College may consider offering languages that reflect business demands (largest guest arrivals) in the travel and tourism sector, e.g Russian, Arabic or Mandarin;

c) the College should consider introducing at least one compulsory module in relation to travel and tourism technology to ensure that students of this programme are knowledgeable about the current and future trends in the sector;

d) referencing skills and academic writing should be integrated in the ‘The technique of writing and language studies I and II’;

#### College's comments

a. The following modules of the Travel and Tourism Administration program have been renewed and updated according to the recommendations. ATTACHMENT NO. 19

b The French and German languages modules have been eliminated from all four semesters. We have added the Financial Accounting I ACC102, The Technology and Innovation in Tourism HOT407, the Tourism Planning and Development TOU221, Microeconomics ECO101 and Macroeconomics ECO201. ATTACHMENT NO.5

c. The College has added the module of Technology and Innovation in Tourism HOT407. ATTACHMENT NO. 1

d. The course outline of the module: The technique of writing and language studies I and II’ has been updated to include referencing skills and academic writing. ATTACHMENT NO.6



## 2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

### Strengths

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

The EEC would like to commend staff members of the College for the support that they offer to students with extra seminars and activities that enhance their learning opportunities, as well as the friendly approach towards students and any personal issues students may have.

The teaching rooms are of appropriate size and there is flexibility in the way they can be configured. All teaching rooms appear to be well equipped with data projectors and all have wifi capabilities.

Learning and other module-related materials are made available to students in advance via Edmodo, i.e. an online platform which is also available as a mobile application. The EEC encourages the lecturers to upload their materials well in advance to assist students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

WE THANK THE EEC MEMBERS FOR THEIR GOOD WORDS.

THE IQA COMMITTEE HAS INFORMED ALL LECTURERS ABOUT THE NEED TO UPLOAD THEIR MATERIALS ON EDMODO WELL IN ADVANCE TO ASSIST STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND THE ACADEMIC DIRECTOR IS MONITORING IT. THIS IS IMPLEMENTED NOW.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. More emphasis should be placed on research by developing research-based formative and summative assessments throughout the programme but more specifically in the second year of study.
2. Academic journal articles should be included in the modules' list of references to better inform the curriculum about the latest research developments in the fields of travel and tourism especially in the second year of study.
3. A peer-review system, a formal mentoring system for less experienced academics (by more experienced ones) and the sharing of best practice are also recommended.
4. A system of internal moderation or second marking needs to be implemented to ensure transparency and objectivity.

### ANSWER:

1. The modules have been renewed and updated in a manner that included more research for the second year. In addition, the modules were re-designed to include more assignments and research-based assessments

THE COLLEGE HAS PREPARED THE GUIDELINES GIVEN TO ALL LECTURERS WHO TEACH AT THE LAST TWO YEARS OF THE PROGRAMME TO ENSURE THAT COURSE WORK GIVEN TO STUDENTS IS RESEARCH BASED. ATTACHMENT NO. 9.

2. The modules have been renewed and updated in a manner that included more research for the second year. In addition, the modules were re-designed to include more assignments and research-based assessments

WE HAVE CONTACTED THE FOLLOWING TWO JOURNALS AND WE HAVE SUBSCRIBED FOR ONE YEAR TO BE ABLE TO PRINT ARTICLES TO BE USED AT THE LECTURES.

A. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY & TOURISM ADMINISTRATION,

WWW.TANDFONLINE.COM

B. ANATOLIA: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TOURISM & HOSPITALITY RESEARCH.

WWW.TANDFONLINE.COM

ALTHOUGH THE JOURNALS ARE OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE BY EBSCO WHICH WE ARE USING AT THE COLLEGE WITH A DELAY OF EIGHTEEN MONTHS FROM DATE OF PUBLISH, WE DECIDED TO SUBSCRIBE AND WE PAY EXTRA MONEY, IN ORDER TO HAVE THE JOURNALS AT THE TIME OF PUBLISHING. ATTACHMENT NO. 10.

3. THE FOLLOWING ARE ADDED IN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK PAGE 84 ,WHICH RELATES TO THE PEER REVIEW AND MENTORING SYSTEM.

The College's quality assurance policy and committee wants to assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They aim to apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

The process starts with the induction program that all lecturers are obligated to attend. The induction sessions are followed by training from the Academic Director and the officers, along with a strong support and mentoring system.

Following the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee; the College's administration and the Quality Assurance Committee established a formal mentoring system that involves mentors and mentees meeting up for frequent face-to-face mentoring sessions during the academic year. The basis of this system is peer-review evaluation and validation, where mentors are the more experienced lecturers and mentee the newly-hired lecturers. The peer-mentors will be appointed at the beginning of every academic year after the Internal Quality Committee's approval.

Furthermore, every semester the academic department organizes the student evaluation procedure, where the students get to evaluate their lecturers, the administration services, the student resources and their courses. The results regarding the teaching staff are examined and analysed by the academic department and they are communicated to the lecturers through personal email.

4. THE IQAC HAS DECIDED TO AMMEND THE QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK BY INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING AT PAGE 83, WHICH RELATES TO THE SECOND MARKING

The College's quality assurance policy wants to ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

To ensure proper method of assessment, the Committee has also established the Double Marking scheme. According to the scheme, 10% of the exams papers are randomly selected for second marking by the more experienced lecturers and are reviewed by the Academic Director if required. For the time being, the lecturers that undertake the responsibility of second marking are: Mrs. Andria Hadjistylli, Mr. Andreas Christoforou and Mrs. Roxana Michaelidou. If, following double marking, the First and Second Markers cannot agree on the marks of one or more of the students undertaking a component of assessment, and a resolution is not possible, the Head of School, or their formally-appointed nominee, will appoint a senior member of staff, who has not acted as either a First Marker or a Second Marker for the component of assessment, to review all the work covered by the first and second markers concerned, and whose marks will be those reported to the Board.



### 3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

#### 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, almost all members of teaching staff hold Masters degrees and a limited number also hold a Doctorate degree (PhD or DBA). In other words, they all teach at a level which is at least one lower than their qualifications; thus, no compliance issues are raised. The only exception is Ms Soteroula Christodoulou, i.e. the Programme Coordinator, who holds a Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration. Ms Christodoulou is also an IATA Certified Instructor and delivers eighteen (18) periods per week predominantly in practical elements of the Programme.

During the onsite visit, the EEC had the opportunity to meet the following nine (9) members of teaching staff involved in the delivery of the Programme (specialization and type of occupation in parenthesis):

Mr Adamides Constantinos (Computer Science, FT)

Ms Christodoulou Soteroula, Programme Coordinator for the 2-year Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration (Travel and Tourism Administration, FT)

Mr Christoforou Andreas, Programme Coordinator for the 4-year BA in Hospitality Management (Hotel Management/Business Administration, FT)

Ms Dede Erasmia (English Language, FT)

Dr Hadjigeorgiou Sotiris (Hospitality Management/Culinary Arts/Human Resources, FT)

Mr Koumeras Ioannis (Accounting, PT)

Ms Kyriacou Maria (French Language, FT)

Ms Michael Georgina (English Language, FT)

Ms Panayiotou Sofronia (Modern Greek Studies, PT)

During the discussion with the abovementioned individuals it emerged that a good number of members of teaching staff were recruited in 2019. 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. Having said that, several members of teaching staff noted that the level of student quality is rather low, which makes motivation admittedly difficult. It was mentioned that 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 Coordinator - no particular problems and/or

concerns were reported.

Members of teaching staff commended the existence of a friendly family environment within the College, which expedites decision-making in a rather informal setting. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that opportunities for personal and professional development within the College are limited although they did mention that they take occasionally advantage of the exposure offered by the Erasmus+ staff mobility programme. Very few of the members of teaching staff are research active and only to a very limited degree; this is not expected to change at least in the near future. 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

ANSWER:

WE ARE PROUD TO MENTION THAT THREE OF THE LECTURERS ARE GRADUATES OF OUR COLLEGE. THESE ARE THE FOLLOWING.

1. DR SOTIRIS JADJIGEORGIOU,
2. ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI, ACADEMIC DIRECTOR,
3. ANNA KOKHANETS. SENIOR LECTURER.

WE AGREE THAT A GOOD NUMBER OF LECTURERS HAVE BEEN RECRUITED IN 2019. THIS IS MAINLY BECAUSE WE HAVE STARTED THE TWO YEARS DIPLOMA IN HOTEL ADMINISTRATION NEW PROGRAM WHERE WE DIRECTED SOME LECTURERS.

THE LEVEL OF THE STUDENTS IS NOT HIGH. BUT THE RECRUITMENT IS DONE IN ACCORDANCE TO THE DIRECTIONS GIVEN BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. ALL RECRUITED STUDENTS MEET THE CRITERIA SET UP BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

LECTURERS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAM AND THEY CERTAINLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE PREPARATION OF THE MODULES FOR WHICH WE THANK THEM. WE ADMIT THAT THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF THE LECTURERS IS VERY LIMITED SOMETHING WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL CHANGE SOON.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR OF DR ROXANA MICHAELIDES MORE LECTURERS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO BE ACTIVE IN RESEARCH PROJECTS. THE COLLEGE OFFERS A REDUCTION OF THREE TEACHING HOURS TO THE LECTURERS WHO ARE INVOLVED IN RESEARCH.

OUR LECTURERS PARTICIPATE IN THE ERASMUS + PROGRAM WHERE THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT UNIVERSITIES IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH THEIR METHODS OF TEACHING.

## 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 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.

ANSWER.

WE THANK THE EEC MEMBERS FOR THEIR GOOD WORDS. THE COLLEGE HAS SIGNED A GOOD NUMBER OF AGREEMENTS WITH EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES WHICH GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OUR LECTURERS TO VISIT THEM AND TO GAIN EXPERIENCE. TO EXCHANGE METHODS OF TEACHING, PRESENTATION AND MARKING. AT THE SAME TIME LECTURERS FROM EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES VISIT OUR COLLEGE

## Areas of improvement and recommendations

Even though it is not a requirement for a 2-year Diploma, all staff should become more actively involved in research and scholarly activities to understand the evolving requirements of the travel and tourism industry and contextualise their teaching accordingly. Moreover, the EEC encourages the College to invite recognised visiting teaching staff from HEIs in Cyprus and abroad to participate in the study programme. The administrative structure of the College suggests a post for a Research Director however this post is currently covered by the owner of the College on a transitory basis. The EEC recommends the identification by the College of a senior academic to act as research mentor to staff until the Research Director's post is filled again.

ANSWER:

THE IQA COMMITTEE AND THE DIRECTOR, FOLLOWING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE EEC HAS APPOINTED DR.ROXANA MICHAELIDES AS RESEARCH DIRECTOR.

DR ROXANA TOGETHER WITH THE ACADEMIC DIRECTOR ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI HAVE STARTED A RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED " CONTINUING EDUCATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY". ATTACHMENT NO 12

FURTHERMORE DR.PANTELIS MITSIS IS CURRENTLY RUNNING A RESEARCH PROJECT NAMED " DO DIFFERENCES IN HOTEL ROOM'S PRICES REFLECT THE DIFFERENCES IN QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS RECORDED IN TRAVEL WEBSITES?"

ATTACHMENT NO.13

DR ANDREAS SIAMAROS HAS PROPOSED TO THE COLLEGE TO START A RESEARCH PROJECT FOR THE EFFECT OF 5G TO THE COMMUNITY FOR WHICH THERE IS DISCUSSION WITH THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE.

FURTHERMORE WE MUST MENTION HERE THAT A NUMBER OF OUR STAFF NAMELY ANDREAS CHRISTOFOROU AND ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI ARE MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL TOURISM TODAY WHICH IS ISSUED BY THE COLLEGE TOGETHER WITH THE BALL STATE UNIVERSITY OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS. YOU CAN FIND DETAILS OF THE JOURNAL AT THE WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL [WWW.TOURISMTODAY.COM](http://WWW.TOURISMTODAY.COM)

A GOOD NUMBER OF LECTURERS FROM EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES VISIT THE COLLEGE THROUGH THE ERASMUS+.

ON MONDAY 29TH JANUARY 2019 THE STUDENTS AND LECTURERS OF THE COLLEGE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE AT A SEMINAR, AT THE COLLEGE'S PREMISES, PRESENTED BY CRAIG WEBSTER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE BALL STATE UNIVERSITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND STANISLAV IVANOF, VICE-RECTOR OF THE VARNA UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT, BULGARIA.

THE TOPIC OF PRESENTATION WAS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN TOURISM.

MOREOVER THE COLLEGE HAS ORGANIZED IN JANUARY 2020 A SEMINAR NAMED "THE MEDITERRANEAN FOOD, THE CYPRUS CUISINE AND TOURISM". A GOOD NUMBER OF DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS FROM CYPRUS AND FROM THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF GREECE, HAVE OFFERED THEIR KNOWLEDGE TO THE PUBLIC. ONE OF THE SPEAKERS WAS THE UNDER SECRETARY OF TOURISM MR SAVVAS PERDIOS. ATTACHMENT NO.14

THE POST OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR HAS BEEN FILLED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF DR ROXANA MICHAELIDES, AS MENTIONED ABOVE.

THE COLLEGE OFFERS TO LECTURERS A REDUCTION OF THREE HOURS OF THEIR TEACHING TIME TO INDUCE LECTURERS TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES WITH RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.

## 4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

### 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 College has a long history of course delivery and as such draws from experience. The College recruits financially sustainable cohorts which allow for cohort identity in the programme under evaluation. Regulations regarding student admission are clear and published. Progression and certification policies and procedures are clearly in place. The implementation of student related policies appears transparent and is implemented in a consistent manner. Student key performance indicators including student satisfaction are monitored and analysed with some recent improvement in the analysis. There is evidence of an appeals procedure in the student handbook but this reads rather vague with no clarity as to when a student has a valid appeal case and no clarity of how the appeal can be escalated. This flexibility may facilitate an effective approach due to the size of the College but it does require attention. Special needs (in terms of student learning and mobility difficulties) are considered but this currently seems to be done on an ad hoc basis with no specific mention of the existing mechanisms in the student handbook.

### ANSWER:

THE APPEALS PROCEDURE HAS BEEN AMENDED TO GIVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE, TO GIVE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE PROCEDURE THE STUDENT WILL FOLLOW INCORPORATING AT THE SAME TIME DETAILS OF THE ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN CASE THE STUDENT IS OF SPECIAL NEEDS.

WE HAVE ADDED TWO PARAGRAPHS IN THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, TO MAKE IT MORE CLEAR. SEE PAGE 54 OF THE ATTACHED STUDENT HANDBOOK..

### APPEALS PROCEDURE

#### Terms of Reference:

To consider cases of serious misconduct by students or associates and report any actions taken to the Academic Committee

To hear formal complaints and grievances brought forth by students or associates

To hear academic appeals from students, weigh supporting evidence and determine the appeal's validity

The Appeals Committee hears and decides on grievances of faculty or staff members and students against decisions taken by the College and measures taken against faculty, staff or students.

In the case where a student believes that the grade received is different from what was expected, he/she must exhaust all possibilities of resolving the problem with the pertinent instructor first. If the problem is not solved the student has the right to ask for a meeting with the course coordinator. In the case where the instructor and the



course coordinator is, the same person the meeting the student has is considered to have it with the course coordinator. If still the problem is not solved the student has the right to ask for a meeting with the Academic director. If this does not lead to a resolution, the student may appeal against the grade by filing a petition with the Registrar's Office.

In the case where the petition of appeal has been initiated by a student with special needs such as dyslexia or psychological problem the relevant special advisor must be informed to be present at the meeting.

The Registrar will inform the Appeals Committee of the petition and the Appeals Committee will exhaust all possibilities to resolve it individually with the student and the faculty member in question, and will reach a decision.

Changes of grades resulting from an appeal require the endorsement of the Course Coordinator and the Academic Director, and a grade petition fee is required.

For a petition to be reviewed, a student must appeal within four (4) weeks from the date the results are announced.

#### Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

1. Students with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties are assessed on their academic ability and the expectation that they can fulfil the requirements of the programme.
2. Applicants are encouraged to disclose any disabilities or learning difficulties and to seek advice from the Institute's staff.
3. Students with dyslexia must report it at the registration desk. This will help the college to inform the advisor to advise the instructor in the design of the learning of the module.
4. If a student suffers from psychological problems the doctor advisor will help us to design the lectures in the proper way and to put a plan for the observation of the student during the academic year.
5. Offers are based solely on a student's academic ability.
6. Special arrangements can be made for applicants with other disabilities .

#### Strengths

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

The College appears to have a friendly and student focused atmosphere thanks to its size.

The College has extensive experience in managing different academic and professional programmes.

There is a good number of staff that have remained with the College for a number of years to carry forward past expertise.

The admission requirements for the study programme are clearly communicated to potential applicants.

The students' prior preparation/education background is assessed.

The College provides students with personalized counselling and other services, especially in the case of international students.

The College organizes professional meetings, workshops, seminars and career fairs to strengthen both the academic exposure and the employability prospects of its students

ANSWER:

THE COLLEGE EXPRESS ITS GRADITUDE FOR THE GOOD WORDS OF THE EEC MEMBERS.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. The EEC notes some recent improvement in the analysis of student satisfaction, however an area of possible improvement would be the analysis and comparison of data from one cohort to the next at both module and programme level. This would allow the members of teaching staff to better understand if they are improving from one year to the next. It was not clear how student satisfaction evaluation results are communicated to teaching staff. It seemed that communication only happens when issues arise but it is important that teaching staff have a view of student satisfaction in a more consistent and formal manner.
2. The appeals procedure in the student handbook needs to make it clear what type of appeals would be considered and what happens if there is a conflict with a module where the module leader is also the Programme Coordinator.
3. A student support and Special needs section should be more clearly communicated in the student handbook.
4. The student evaluation form can be simplified in its current sections (there are 11 questions about the lecturer which could easily be merged into 3-4 questions) and an extra section can be added to measure student satisfaction with the resources (library/teaching rooms/F&B lab).
5. As the College seems to be attracting predominantly international students, it is recommended to consider alternative programmes beyond the Erasmus mobility (such as the US Study Abroad). This should provide opportunities for international (i.e. non-EU) students as well.

ANSWER:

1. THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN ADDED IN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK TO SHOW THE WAY THE RESULTS OF HE STUDENTS EVALUATION ARE COMMUNICATED TO THE LECTURERS. SEE ATTACHED THE REVISED QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK PAGE 84. IT IS ALSO INCLUDED IN THE STUDENT HANDBOOK AT PAGE 60.

Furthermore, every semester the academic department organizes the student evaluation procedure, where the students get to evaluate their lecturers, the administration services, the student resources and their courses. The results regarding the teaching staff are examined and analysed by the academic department and they are communicated to the lecturers through personal email.

THE FORM HAS BEEN REDESIGNED TO SHOW THE COMPARISON OF RESUSTS FROM ONE SEMESTER TO THE NEXT ONE. SEE ATTACHMENT NO. 17.

2. WE REPEAT THE ANSWER GIVEN ABOVE FOR THE APPEALS.

Terms of Reference:

To consider cases of serious misconduct by students or associates and report any actions taken to the Academic Committee

To hear formal complaints and grievances brought forth by students or associates

To hear academic appeals from students, weigh supporting evidence and determine the appeal's validity

THE APPEALS PROCEDURE HAS BEEN AMENDED TO GIVE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE PROCEDURE THE STUDENT WILL FOLLOW INCORPORATING AT THE SAME TIME DETAILS OF THE ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN CASE THE STUDENT IS OF SPECIAL NEEDS.

WE HAVE ADDED TWO PARAGRAPHS IN THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, TO MAKE IT MORE CLEAR.

#### APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Appeals Committee hears and decides on grievances of faculty or staff members and students against decisions taken by the College and measures taken against faculty, staff or students.

#### Terms of Reference:

To consider cases of serious misconduct by students or associates and report any actions taken to the Academic Committee

To hear formal complaints and grievances brought forth by students or associates

To hear academic appeals from students, weigh supporting evidence and determine the appeal's validity

In the case where a student believes that the grade received is different from what was expected, he/she must exhaust all possibilities of resolving the problem with the pertinent instructor first. If the problem is not solved the student has the right to ask for a meeting with the course coordinator. In the case where the instructor and the course coordinator is, the same person the meeting the student has is considered to have it with the course coordinator. If still the problem is not solved the student has the right to ask for a meeting with the Academic director. If this does not lead to a resolution, the student may appeal against the grade by filing a petition with the Registrar's Office.

In the case where the petition of appeal has been initiated by a student with special needs such as dyslexia or psychological problem the relevant special advisor must be informed to be present at the meeting.

The Registrar will inform the Appeals Committee of the petition and the Appeals Committee will exhaust all possibilities to resolve it individually with the student and the faculty member in question, and will reach a decision.

Changes of grades resulting from an appeal require the endorsement of the Course Coordinator and the Academic Director, and a grade petition fee is required.

For a petition to be reviewed, a student must appeal within four (4) weeks from the date the results are announced.

The Appeals Committee hears and decides on grievances of faculty or staff members and students against decisions taken by the College and measures taken against faculty, staff or students.

#### 3. STUDENT SUPPORT AND SPECIAL NEEDS.

THE FOLLOWING WERE ADDED IN THE PARAGRAPH AT PAGE 59 OF STUDENT'S HANDBOOK, TO MAKE THE PROCEDURE MORE CLEAR.

If the Counsellor is unable to resolve the issue, then he/she will put the student in contact with the person that will be able to help. If the issue is an academic one the counsellor will bring him/her in contact either with the lecturer or course coordinator or the director of the academic department. If the issue is financial, the counsellor will bring him/her in contact with the accounts department. If the issue is not resolved, the counsellor may consider bringing him/her to the Director.

If the student is one with special needs, the counsellor will contact the special advisor assigned for each case. If it is dyslexia, the counsellor will contact the special advisor and if it is a psychological case will contact the in-house advisor.

SEE THE REVISED STUDENT HANDBOOK ATTACHED.

#### 4. STUDENT EVALUATION FORM.

WE HAVE REDESIGNED THE FORM TO INCLUDE THE COURSE EVALUATION, THE COLLEGE RESOURCES SUCH AS LIBRARY, LECTURE ROOMS AND EQUIPMENT AND THE ADMINISTRATION SERVICES. ATTACHMENT NO15.

#### 5. STUDY ABROAD.

WE HAVE CONTACTED THE US STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME AND WE CAN PARTICIPATE BY ASKING INTERESTED STUDENTS TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS THROUGH THE COLLEGE. ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE IS NOT EASY FOR USA TO ACCEPT STUDENTS FROM ASIAN COUNTRIES

## 5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

### 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 resources for the delivery of the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration programme. The teaching and learning facilities, teaching aids and equipment are adequate and student-friendly and also generally compliant with the requirements of people with reduced mobility. Human resources are also satisfactory from both an academic and administration point of view.

The EEC notes that the College adopted the Edmodo platform for teaching and learning purposes, however it appears that the basic functionality of the platform is inadequate/limited. For example, the online submission of student assignments was not enabled, and the platform's inability to capture the digital footprint of the students engaging with the module on the platform should also be noted.

Based on the discussion with the Programme Coordinator during the onsite visit, the EEC understands that starting from February 2020 the College will train students to use Amadeus, i.e. the dominant Global Distribution System (GDS) in the world but also in Cyprus. Until recently, students were trained to use Sabre, i.e. another GDS.

ANSWER:

THE COLLEGE IS USING TH EDMODO PLATFORM FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING PURPOSES.

AS IT WAS NOTED IN ANOTHER PART OF THE EEC'S REPORT A GOOD NUMBER OF LECTURERS HAVE STARTED WITH THE COLLEGE IN 2019. IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR THE LECTURERS TO LEARN THE SYSTEM ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO DID NOT HAVE SUCH EXPERIENCE BEFORE. DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS SITUATION WE DEVELOPED THE DISTANCE LEARNING LECTURES. WE ARE USING NOW THE WEBEX PLATFORM AND TOGETHER WITH EDMODO PLATFORM WE DELIVER THE LECTURES, KEEPING AT THE SAME TIME COPIES OF THE LECTURES AND STUDENTS ATTENTANCE. WE ARE HAPPY TO SAY THAT THE ANSWER OF THE STUDENTS IS RECEIVED NOW THROUGH EDMODO.

FOR THE RESERVATION SYSTEM THE COLLEGE IS USING FOR THE TRAINING OF THE STUDENTS THE SABRE SYSTEM. WE HAVE A CONTRACT WITH SABRE UNTIL JUNE 2020 AND WE WILL SWITCH TO AMADEUS SYSTEM AS FROM SEPTEMBER 2020.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

At the College, there is a total of 19 computers for the use of students across all of its programmes. The ratio of computers to students at the College can, therefore, be improved.

THE COMPUTER ROOM HAS NOW 19 COMPUTERS. WE HAVE INSTALLED THREE MORE COMPUTERS IN THE COMPUTER ROOM AND WE HAVE TOTAL 22 NOW AND TWO OF THE EXISTING LAP TOPS TO FACILITATE THE USE BY THE STUDENTS. ATTACHMENT NO. 16.



## 6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

N/A

## 7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

N/A



## 8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

N/A

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

In conclusion, the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration programme aims to provide students with an appreciation of issues associated with the administrative and organisational aspects of travel and tourism including running a travel agency. More specifically, the programme aims to help students develop a range of skills and personal attributes to ensure that they are able upon graduation to make an immediate contribution to the travel and tourism sector; to equip graduates with a robust academic, practical, and professional background for academic and/or career advancement; to provide students with a foundation of presentation skills, human resources management, accounting and financial administration, and to help students develop skills in critical thinking and enhance their practical and administrative capacities. The learning outcomes of the individual modules are wellstructured and balanced.

Nonetheless, the content of the teaching material is somewhat outdated and the curriculum needs to be brought up to currency with respect to the latest developments in the travel and tourism research considering inter alia all relevant research advancements. The existing suite of elective language modules could be re-considered to include languages that are widely spoken amongst incoming guests (e.g. Russian, Arabic or Mandarin). Moreover, the EEC recommends that a module in relation to technology use by consumers and businesses should be developed. Further suggestions include the enhancement of the content within the modules 'The technique of writing and language studies I and II'. The modules' list of references/bibliography should include journal articles with contemporary cases, issues and topics.

The College provided enough information for the EEC to attain a comprehensive picture of the assessment strategy. Assessment approaches appear traditional - in most cases, with presentations, practical assessments, tests, attendance and final exams. There is no explicit reference to group work strategy. There is no mention of any formative assessment strategies. The number of credits attached to each module is standard. There is some evidence of relevant research activity among a small number of academic staff, who engage in research activities with modest publication or other related outputs. Publications by members of academic staff in the areas of travel and tourism should be actively encouraged by the College to better inform the curriculum and contextualise teaching. With the above in mind, the EEC concludes that the programme under evaluation is largely compliant with the required standards within each of the pillars discussed in this report. The EEC's recommendations are meant to be constructive and to build on the foundations of the programme to ensure conformity with minor amendments/changes. The EEC is of the opinion that its recommendations are feasible and achievable so as to enhance both the student experience/ employability and the quality of the programme.

### ANSWER:

The College's goal is to offer a quality program with all the latest developments in the sector. Therefore we have taken in serious consideration all the EEC's recommendations. We have updated the modules and we have introduced a new elective "Innovation and Technology in the Tourism Industry". The second year courses have been redesigned to include more research based assessments and the bibliography includes references from academic journals about the latest developments in the tourism fields. All the recommendations were implemented in order to enhance both the student experience/ employability and the quality of the programme.

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL POINTS MENTIONED IN THE CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.

WE THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE EEC FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS AND WE AGREE WITH THEIR COMMENT THAT THEIR SUGGESTIONS WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME AND WILL INCREASE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF THE GRADUATES.

### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
SAVVAS ADAMIDES	DIRECTOR	
SOTEROULA CHRISTODOULOU	COURSE COORDINATOR TTA	
ANDRIA HADJISTYLLI	ACADEMIC DIRECTOR	
ANDREAS CHRISTOFOROU	COURSE COORDINATOR BA	
ROXANA MICHAELIDES	RESEARCH DIRECTOR	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

**Date:** Click to enter date

