

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 14.07.2020

Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution: Global College**
- **Town: Nicosia**
- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**
90 ECTS | 18 months
In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων
In English: Master in Business Administration
- **Language of instruction: English**
- **Programme's status**
New programme: YES
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 and 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

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, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The application as well as presentations and dialogues at the (remote) site visit provided us with a very clear understanding of the proposed study programme. The programme is clearly designed with an industry focus and an intention to integrate theory and practice. The aim to stay close to actual business practice and to enhance expectation alignment with students and potential employers is effectuated by offering the programme with the following specializations: MBA in Management, MBA in Marketing, MBA in Human Resource Management and MBA in Public Administration. The participants in the (remote) site visit demonstrated very good understanding of the target groups of the various specializations as well as of the market situation for MBA graduates. The programme has been developed with inputs from a number of sources, incl. experience from e.g. a previous MBA programme, faculty, students and graduated of other programmes, an internal committee and industry contacts, and the newest trends within various professional fields, e.g. digital marketing within the field of marketing have been incorporated into the curriculum. All participants in the (remote) site visit showed great and convincing enthusiasm about the programme.

Strengths

- *Through engagement with stakeholders, Global College has a very good understanding of the market demand for their intended students and the newest trends within various fields*
- *Programme goals and learning outcomes have been thoroughly described.*
- *The fact that Global College puts great effort in assisting the students with their careers as well as aims for 'real-world' teaching methods that include internship, placement and work experience opportunities makes the graduated students very attractive at the job market.*
- *The programme allows students to develop their theoretical and practical skills and knowledge within their chosen specialization, both for the local and the global market.*
- *The modules offered build on newest trends within the various fields.*
- *The teaching faculty has autonomy to choose assessment methods that fit their modules and their personal preferences. Quality assurance is ensured by requirement of a specific syllabus developed by the actual instructor of each module and subject to the academic director's approval.*
- *Global College offers foundation modules to students that do not fulfill the requirements to start on the core modules.*
- *The structure of the programme is very clear, and the modules have a logical sequence, i.e. first semester for core modules, second semester for concentration modules, and third semester for master thesis.*
- *The core modules include a research methods module that (among other things) prepares student for conducting research for their master thesis.*
- *The workload of faculty members is kept in control (and thereby ensuring students sufficient attention and time) by setting limits for the number of teaching hours per week*

(max. 12 hours/week, if the faculty member is active in research, which is required) as well as supervision of master thesis (max. four theses per year).

- *The quality of the programme is monitored by continuous evaluations, incl. student evaluations and 360-degree evaluations by the HR department on a regular basis.*
- *Collaboration and strong ties to the University of Roehampton, UK, provides opportunities for professional development and teaching innovations. In addition, Global College has more partners in relevant industries to draw from.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Each specialization offers a number of elective concentration modules, whereof the students are asked to select four modules. This programme design poses more challenges:

- 1. it does not ensure that the students develop a general knowledge within the specialization, e.g. with the pool of modules offered within Marketing, it is possible for the student to avoid digital marketing and strategic marketing - and instead choose four modules that - though related somewhat to marketing - do not have marketing as their basis. Thereby, there is a risk that an individual graduated from Global College with an MBA in Marketing does not possess core knowledge within modern marketing. This is neither good for the graduated and the coming employers nor for Global College's reputation.*
- 2. Secondly, each module requires at least 8 students. Estimating a student population on 15 students in Year 1 (with one student intake) and 20 new students (in total) in Year 2 (with two student intakes, Fall and Spring), it will be impossible for the students to have the broad palette of modules to choose from as stipulated in the programme proposal. Therefore, there is a risk for disappointment among students and thereby low reputation of the Global College.*
- 3. Thirdly, the high number of modules pose a burden on the faculty members in terms of keeping up-to-date with the knowledge of the field as well as finding time for research.*

With these challenges in mind, we recommend Global College to rethink the specializations - and have at least two specific modules (e.g. Digital Marketing and Strategic Marketing within the MBA in Marketing) if not all four modules mandatory within the specialization.

- *We recommend to lower the number of required students for each module from 8 to 6.*
- *More of the course descriptions included in the application contain textbooks that are not in their newest editions. To ensure that students are offered the newest knowledge within the various fields, we recommend that the policy on updating module content and material includes a requirement of using the most recent textbook editions.*

Higher education institution response

We are happy to see that the EEC finds that the programme is clearly designed with an industry focus and that the different specializations developed, are close to the actual business practice. This was our main objective when developing the programme.

In addition, the strengths identified by the EEC, regarding our extensive experience, our qualified staff, the quality of the programme and the team ethos within the College, highly evidence that the programme is fully compliant with the criteria and standards of the CyQAA.

The recommendations made by the EEC, (for improvement), are seriously taken into consideration. Thus, for each concentration we minimized the specialization elective modules from four (4) to two (2), by classifying two (2) of them as specialization core modules. In addition, the minimum number of required students for each module is reduced from eight (8) to six (6). The new course distribution per semester has changed as follows:

1st Semester

1	Core	Financial performance management	MBA 001	7.5
2	Core	Sustainable business strategy	MBA 002	7.5
3	Core	Research methods	MBA 003	7.5
4	Core	Leadership and change management	MBA 004	7.5

2nd Semester

1	Concentration core module			7.5
2	Concentration core module			7.5
3	Concentration elective module			7.5
4	Concentration elective module			7.5

3rd Semester

1	Core	Final thesis	MBA 010	30
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Specialisation modules

Each specialisation is made up of nine (9) modules, six (6) of which are core, two (2) elective, and the final thesis.

MBA in Management

Core modules

MBA 011 Strategic marketing

MBA 016 Human resource management and organisations development

Students need to select any two (2) of the following concentration elective modules:

MBA 005 Operations and quality management

MBA 006 Global business

MBA 007 Project management

MBA 008 Innovation management

MBA 009 Financial risk management

MBA in Marketing

Core modules

MBA 011 Strategic marketing
MBA 012 Digital marketing

Students need to select any two (2) of the following concentration elective modules:

MBA 008 Innovation management
MBA 013 Global brand management
MBA 014 Global supply chain management
MBA 015 Corporate social responsibility

MBA in Human resource management

Core modules

MBA 016 Human resource management and organisations development
MBA 018 Performance management

Students need to select any two (2) of the following concentration elective modules:

MBA 005 Operations and quality management
MBA 017 Managing diversity in organisations
MBA 019 Employee relations
MBA 020 Coaching and mentoring

MBA in Public administration

Core modules

MBA 021 Public management and governance
MBA 022 Public governance and policy networks

Students need to select any two (2) of the following concentration elective modules:

MBA 009 Financial risk management
MBA 023 Social problems
MBA 024 Strategic planning for public and non-profit organisations
MBA 025 Leadership and organisational behaviour in the public sector

All optional modules are subject to availability of lecturers and student demand. For a module to run, there should be a minimum of six students.

2. Student - centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

There is a comprehensive teaching methodology and mechanisms. From our meetings with staff, it appears the College has given appropriate consideration to the teaching and learning design and there is a comprehensive teaching methodology and mechanisms. There is good consideration of the importance of both theory and practice in line with the objectives of an MBA.

The process of teaching and learning supports students' intellectual and professional development, through the curriculum design and through the pattern of modules and methods of teaching. We heard evidence of appropriate pedagogical methods in relation to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Staff understand students to be active learners with professional experience that can be drawn upon. The College has modern educational technologies, and we heard evidence from staff and students about how useful these had been during the Covid19 challenges.

Strengths

- *The Programme team and the College's committee structure is designed to ensure appropriate delivery of module material and maintain consistent quality standards.*
- *The College has close ties with particular sectors of the public sector and business community, appropriate to the specialisms, and plans to leverage such ties to offer guest lectures to students and site visits.*
- *The students we spoke to indicated that communication with faculty members and the administrative team is open and part of the culture of the staff.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *There is ongoing work to incorporate research into teaching more directly and the Committee welcomes and encourages the efforts to continue to strengthen this aspect of the College's work. It is clear that the faculty are well motivated to carry out research and the work of the College's research center acts as a good hub. Again, it will be important to continue to invest in this.*
- *The proposed teaching team may be relatively small for a Programme of this ambition. We suggest that the College should build its capacity so that the teaching and student supervision can be adequately supported.*
- *It is important that the College supports the professional development of faculty in relation to staying up to date with teaching methods and supports opportunities for staff to pursue research that can later be incorporated into the teaching provision.*

Higher education institution response

Again, this area is proven by the EEC to be very strong and fully compliant with the criteria and standards of the CyQAA. It is obvious that our franchise agreement with the University of Roehampton has been fully utilised, and good pedagogical practices have been embedded by our teaching staff. Our teaching and learning design is well structured and together with the use of technology, we are ready to face any future challenges.

Based on the recommendations made by the EEC, we would like to ensure that we will continue in investing in research and development and motivate our teaching staff to resume incorporating research into teaching. The teaching and student supervision is constantly taken into consideration, based on the numbers and the needs in each semester. The teaching staff involved in this programme, has been released from other teaching duties in order to concentrate on this 'specialized' programme.

Our teaching staff has always been one of our most valuable assets. The teaching and student supervision is constantly taken into consideration, based on the numbers and the needs in each semester. The institution is always willing to recruit more staff, so to adequately support its programmes.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

We met with all but two of the teaching staff (the missing members were said to be travelling abroad) which means that we had a comprehensive view of the entire teaching staff of Global College. Most of the faculty members we met had a tenure of many years. They all (except one who is PhD candidate) hold PhD degrees, and many of them hold these and other degrees from foreign institutions. They all seem engaged and professional and have very good English language skills.

In addition, they seem to be pleased with their salaries, working conditions and the overall College working environment. They appear to take teaching seriously and are supportive of the initiatives regarding research (i.e. the younger members seem to be doing some research, attending conferences and the like, and have a good understanding of the value of doing research for an educational institution). There is only a positive consequence (bonus, reduction of teaching load, recognition etc.) for faculty in case of research performance, but apparently not for teaching performance.

Strengths

The faculty seemed to be well integrated and on good working terms. The experienced faculty, in addition, have been with Global College for a long time, which means there seems to be a good work environment that is beneficial to the MBA program.

Furthermore, it seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. There is also a process of “self-evaluation” of the faculty regarding their own courses which was often reported and mentioned during our (remote) field visit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

When we asked the teaching staff about their interactions with outside stakeholders, we noticed that there are not enough touchpoints with practice. Only permanent faculty exists. Visiting faculty was not mentioned. This seems a bit unfortunate since there could be an interaction with other universities and practitioners from outside. They could just invite a practitioner or a professor to come and present for an hour regarding a topic the MBA students discussed in the classroom.

Finally, we believe that the academic staff of Global College has a heavy workload and this does not allow them to do research. Although, it seems there is some interaction, among the young faculty members, regarding the research process, i.e. how to apply and attend a research conference etc., we could suggest to organise actual research seminars in which faculty would present research papers to others in order to discuss these, a practice that may improve the quality of the research.

Higher education institution response

Our teaching staff has always been one of most valuable assets. The EEC recognised not only their skills, commitment and experience, but also the predefined practices and procedures the College has, in order to evaluate and upgrade their quality.

Although we do not have any visiting faculty within the specific programme, we often invite practitioners to present their real-life experience in the form of public seminars, giving the chance to our students to interact and blend their knowledge with practice.

In addition, our franchise agreement with the University of Roehampton, will enable us to structure a number of online and face-to-face lectures with other tutors (teaching in the MBA programme), providing a diverse interaction opportunity to our students.

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

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

Global College has very clear and transparent regulations, policies, processes and criteria for student admission. Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression are in place. Global College ensures that students benefit from their knowledge from practice as well as apply the gain knowledge in practical settings throughout the study. Students are provided with certificates that clearly acknowledge the knowledge they have gained during the studies.

Strengths

- *Global College is doing proper expectation alignment by being transparent about admission procedures and about progress monitoring.*
- *Global College offers students opportunities to achieve supplementary knowledge, experiences and recognition by offering e.g. ERASMUS+ opportunities for going abroad.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *As mentioned in Section 1, student progress could be better enhanced by building more mandatory modules into the specializations, i.e. the concentration modules.*
- *It is recommended that very clear expectation alignment is done prior to the study start, when it comes to opportunities to select among a broader pool of concentration modules as well as across specializations. This may not be possible with a low number of students, as each module requires at least 8 students.*

Higher education institution response

Our students are our main concern and for this we always support their smooth and clear academic progression and provide a strong commitment for a student-centered learning concept.

As mentioned in Section 1, we have fully adopted the recommendations of the EEC and developed a more structured programme. Each specialization has now seven (7) core and two (2) elective modules. For each elective module to run, six (6) students are required.

This format enables students to have a clearer view regarding the programme prior to their study start.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The teaching and learning resources (including materials and reading resources) are provided to students and are broadly appropriate to the objectives of the MBA. There is IT support available, computer labs and a library.

In our meetings with faculty, their commitment to adopting student-centred learning and incorporating flexible modes of learning was evident. There seems to be pride and enthusiasm about the MBA among the teaching staff and programme leadership.

We found a dedicated administrative staff which actively participates in student life and the support of college life. Administrative systems appear to be sound, with clear structures and roles. It is important that the College recognizes the need to maintain capacity in the team especially if the programme is successful in recruiting more students, with the demands and expectations that MBA students in particular can place on administrative staff. This should include investment in pastoral or welfare services for students.

Strengths

The College and its students benefit from partnership with Roehampton including access to additional materials and subscriptions to academic journals and publishers' data bases.

Because the site visit was not possible, we rely on the materials and presentations of physical resources made to us by the College. These seem to be modern and adequate, and incorporate a mix of dedicated teaching spaces, study areas, and social areas. We note that there are plans for architectural expansion and to create additional building resources.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The College will need to ensure that the adequacy of resources is maintained and updated in light of changing student numbers (especially if the year on year increases are realized) and in light of ongoing advances in academic knowledge, and developments in professional practice.

The uncertainty about 'face to face' teaching post-Covid19 faced by all education institutions means that the College will need to ensure that it has 'fail safe' contingencies in place to ensure that students can access materials and learning remotely at any times when this is necessary.

Higher education institution response

During the recent and unfortunate circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, our institution had to quickly adapt, and adopt a number of procedures in order to continue delivering its programmes. We successfully managed to fully operate and integrate our resources, to provide to all our students the chance to efficiently continue their studies. Any measures taken, as part of our contingency plan, should be fully compliant with the QAA regulations. The Ministry of Education evaluated and accredited our procedures.

This enabled us not only to test our capabilities but also upgrade our contingency plans to better cope with any future challenges. Therefore, we are ready to provide and support the blended learning to our students, or in the worst-case scenario to fully deliver the programme online, using our distance learning tools.

As you may know, in 2019, we have established a distance learning department offering accredited programmes online. We use Moodle as our educational platform, for all our programmes (conventional or distance). This ensures that our students have access to the necessary resources.

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC

The College prepared a thorough submission and prepared well for the Evaluation process. Staff made themselves available to the Committee and engaged flexibly during the remote visit. They were always open and considerate in their responses.

Strengths

Global College has a very good understanding of the market demand for prospective students.

The Programme goals and learning outcomes have been thoroughly described.

Global College puts great effort in assisting the students with their careers as well as aims for 'real-world' teaching methods that include internship, placement and work experience opportunities. The College has close ties with particular sectors of the public sector and business community, appropriate to the specialisms, and plans to leverage such ties to offer guest lectures to students and site visits.

The programme allows students to develop their theoretical and practical skills and knowledge within their chosen specialization, both for the local and the global market.

We heard evidence of appropriate pedagogical methods in relation to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Staff understand students to be active learners with professional experience that can be drawn upon.

We acknowledge and welcome the work already underway in these respects, and it is important that the College supports the professional development of faculty in relation to staying up to date with teaching methods, and supports opportunities for staff to pursue research that can later be incorporated into the teaching provision.

Areas of improvement

As detailed in Section 1 of this Report, we recommend Global College to rethink the design of the specializations - and have at least two specific modules (e.g. Digital Marketing and Strategic Marketing within the MBA in Marketing) mandatory within the specialization. We also recommend to lower the number of required students for each module from 8 to 6.

The proposed teaching team may be relatively small for a Programme of this ambition. We suggest that the College should build its capacity so that the teaching and student supervision can be adequately supported.

Higher education institution response

First, we would like to welcome the fact that the External Evaluation Committee recognises the fact that the programme is well designed with a clear and coherent business structure and developed in a thoughtful and inclusive fashion with the involvement of the faculty members and various external stakeholders. We also agree that the well qualified and experienced teaching staff and the strong links with the industry, give a great value to our programme.

We assure, that since this program is part of our multilevel long-term strategic plan, we will invest in numerous aspects in order to fulfill our goals. The success of the programme is based on our three-pillar concept, which includes the appropriate structure, consistency and content of the program, the adequacy of our academic staff and the direct link with the industry.

Summarising the main actions already taken by our institution in respect to the minor recommendations of the EEC, we have:

- redesigned the specializations and now we have two (2) elective modules for each one of them. Each specialization is now designed to have seven (7) core modules and two (2) elective modules. Also, the number of required students for each elective module is now six (6).
- Our teaching staff has always been one of our most valuable assets. The teaching and student supervision is constantly taken into consideration, based on the numbers and the needs in each semester. Our institution is always willing to recruit more staff, so to adequately support its programmes. The teaching staff involved in this programme, has been released from other teaching duties in order to concentrate on this 'specialized' programme.

It can be evidenced from the above-mentioned points, that we have responded positively to all recommendations raised by the EEC, something that clearly strengthens our programme.

At this point, we would like to send our regards to the EEC for their exceptional, thorough, fruitful and valuable input and for the productive discussions we had during the online review.

Looking forward for the final approval.

Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr George Kriticos	General Manager	
Mr Makis Sepos	Academic Advisor	
Mr Andreas Kriticos	Director of Administration and Finance	
Dr Leandros Savvides	Head of Research and Development Department	
Mr Neophytos Karkotis	Senior Lecturer	
Mrs Alexia Yiannaki	Students' Representative	
Mr Marios Michael	Students' Representative	

Date: 14.07.2020