

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 22/07/2019

Higher Education Institution's response

- Higher education institution:

Intercollege

- Town: **Nicosia**

- Program of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)

In Greek: **Επισιτιστικές Τέχνες (2 Έτη, 120 ECTS/Δίπλωμα)**

In English: **Culinary Arts (2 Years, 120 ECTS/Diploma)**

- Language of instruction: **Greek**

- Program's status

New program:

Currently operating: **X**

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 and N. 47(I)/2016].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution based on the External Evaluation Committee’s evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the program of study in each assessment area.*

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

1.5.1. The academic calendar was presented to the staff, however the student portal did not include this information. Students seemed unaware when questioned during the meeting.

The academic calendar is provided every September as part of the updated Student handbook and is always available on the College's website and the Intranet web platform.

1.5.2. The program curricula could be structure with specific learning outcomes as way that the skills and competences develop during the semester.

The curricula maintains a set of specific learning outcomes for each course and has been revised to reflect the comments of the EEC (annex 1). The students have full access to all course outlines via the website and are provided at the beginning of each course the curricula of the course and the contents of each teaching week.

1.5.4. The practical training should be formally assessed during year one, such as in pastry 1 and 2. Specific skills related to the subject should be tested rather than giving the freedom to make their own creations, as at this level the students should develop their fundamental culinary skills.

The College adopts the EEC's comment and incorporates it into the demonstration assessment component of the programs first year practical courses.

1.5.6. The students have the opportunity to give their feedback to the staff and challenges faced, however the actions that the College take on their feedback has not been acknowledged or fed back to them.

The students reserve the right to be represented in the Program Review Committees (PRC) and indicate any problems that they may be facing. All actions are recorded in the *action data sheet* of the PRCs and upon completion/rectification the students are informed via the Intranet web platform. Apart from the above activities, the students may submit any issues/complaints they have at any time at the Student Affairs Office; which in turn will inform the respective Faculty and Administration.

1.8.3. The fundamental culinary skills should be tested in a practical environment. The multiple choice questions could further challenge the students and stretch their knowledge and understanding of the subject. It is recommended to introduce other forms of assessment, such as presentations and assignments.

The majority of the courses incorporate completion of assignments, presentations and demonstrations, depending on the needs of each course. For theoretical courses the students are always expected to complete assignments and proceed to presentations, as is also derived from the course outlines. For practical courses, a demonstration is taking place in order to evaluate the

students performance. The College strongly enforces such a policy, which is also clearly indicated throughout the spectrum of its course outlines. (Annex 1)

1.8.4. The EEC committee accessed the student portal and could not locate the teaching material. Upon questioning, the faculty reported that the students could buy the material at low cost from the internal bookshop. The teaching material could be shared on the student portal (Moodle). The recommended reading list is outdated and does not match the course document.

The course outlines have been revised to reflect an updated reading list and are included in annex 1. The students are able to purchase the lecture notes, which are updated every semester, at a very low price (€5-€7) from the bookshop. The Intranet web portal carries the ability to fully allow upload/download of all lecture notes and each lecturer is responsible to act upon this direction. The utilization of the web portal has recently been brought under monitoring by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee and all notes were uploaded and made available to the students. The reading list has been updated and included in the revised course outlines. (Annex 1)

1.9. The students appeared unaware that the material was accessible on the College website. The access of the material could be further emphasized at the student induction day.

The College holds an induction week for all the programs, during the last week of September. During this week the students are being introduced to the various departments, services that the College has to offer them and all students receive training as to the usage of the Intranet web platform as well as the online library resources. The Intranet training course also takes place, in class, once per semester since we need to ensure that the proper usage of the portal is well understood. The IT department maintains a 24h/7 day open line in terms any technical challenges that the students may face.

1.10. The learning outcomes (LO) should be revised and summarized. A maximum of five LO should be achieved in any particular module. An emphasis should be made to stipulate an in-depth knowledge of allergens and current food related issues.

The College adopts the EEC's comment and all course outlines have been revised to reflect the above comment and each incorporate 5 learning outcomes. (Annex 1)

1.13-14. The content of the program should include extra information on allergens (discussed above) and acrylamide. The fundamental aspects of food science and processing should also be included at the curriculum.

The College adopts the EEC's comment and the course outline of the course ICATR-214 – "Food and Nutrition Science", has been updated to incorporate the above comment.

1.20 The faculty staff represent the College at SEKAP and are founders of the professional body. The students also participate in international events such as the Culinary Olympics and World Cup.

We would like to thank the EEC for its positive comments. A list of the most recent achievements is included in annex 2. The College remains strongly dedicated in providing its students with the best academic and practical experience not only at a local level but also the ability to compete at an international level.

1.28.3. The methodology could be further improved as it appears basic and repetitive.

The College is dedicated into a continued circle of improvement towards enhancing the students' academic experience. The current methodology incorporates mid terms, assignments, demonstrations, quizzes and presentations. The College remains committed in continually updating and enhancing the aforementioned methodology, in reflection to the level of the Diploma Program and adopts the EEC's comment.

1.28.8. Student retention requires careful monitoring.

The College maintains an annual monitoring cycle for all its programs. The Annual Monitoring Reports incorporates the necessary statistical data reflecting retention/attrition rates and these are submitted to the Internal Quality Assurance Auditor for monitoring. The retention rate is monitored via the annual monitoring report. A copy of the Annual Monitoring Report was provided to the EEC during their visit. The page reflecting the statistical data is provided in annex 3.

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

2.3. The student representative role could be further emphasized to the students and its importance. The strategies of the policies should be implemented as good practice and communicated with the students.

The students are made aware from the beginning of each semester that they will need to elect at least two representatives for participation in the various committees. The scope of each committee and its usefulness are always stressed and are also indicated on the student handbook that is provided to each student. Furthermore, the internal regulations of the College governing student rights and privileges as well as the Internal Quality Assurance framework are available on the official web site for public viewing. The College ensures that the students are part of its continued development cycle and adopts the EEC's comment.

2.5. The course offers the opportunity for student feedback, however the communication was not provided

The College provides student feedback, reflecting academic courses (examinations, assignments, quizzes etc) in a prompt manner within a designated period of time (2 weeks maximum). The process is monitored by the program coordinator for each faculty member and is subject to auditing by the Internal Auditor. Students receive personalized feedback in terms of their assessment and reserve the right to question their grades by following the designated procedure as this is indicated in the internal regulations. Furthermore, the students are assigned an academic advisor, which is a full time faculty member.

2.6. The information about the assessment is provided, however the criteria regarding the student performance are not clear, neither is the marking criteria of the assignment. The details of the assessment are not presented.

Criteria of the various assessments falls under the responsibility of each lecturer reflecting the specific learning outcomes for reach course and its type (theoretical/practical). For each course a set of grading criteria is maintained, by the faculty member, reflecting the satisfaction of the course's learning outcomes and made aware to the students. Furthermore, the College maintains a "moderation process", under which all examinations and assignments are randomly checked for proper marking by another faculty member.

2.8. The newly developed lab uses advanced electronic devices to enhance student experience and learning, however the electronic student platform is underutilised. Learning material should be also provided using the platform.

The College is committed in expanding all its facilities in order to incorporate cutting edge technologies in its programs. Reply provided in 1.8.4, 1.9 reflecting the utilization of the intranet web platform, where a continued effort is being made to ensure that students are aware of its potential and the learning materials are monitored for uploading and are made digitally available.

2.9. The teaching material and books are not up-to-date and do not match what was described in the course documents i.e. dated editions appeared at the library.

The College adopts the EEC's comment and an updated reading list in included in the revised course outlines. (Annex 2)

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

3.1. *There are four faculty members of staff and five members that are employed on a part-time basis. Culinary staff are employed full time where as the rest of the staff are part-time. The ratio is approximately 55:45 (PT:FT), according to the submission document. The part time staff are highly specialist in their fields.*

The College has proceeded in hiring an additional Full Time faculty member as of the 15th of July, for the upcoming academic year and the CV is included in annex 4. The updated table including the course distribution is included in annex 5. The updated allocation reflects 6 Full Time faculty and 5 Part Time faculty members.

3.3. *The College engage with professionals from the industry.*

The College would like to thank the EEC for the positive comment and reiterates that it remains dedicated in maintaining strong links with the Culinary & Hospitality Industry.

3.6. *The education level of the specialist staff is very high, however most of the staff are not working full time at the College.*

The College would like to thank the EEC for the positive comment and indicates that currently the program has 6 Full Time faculty and 5 Part Time faculty members. (Annex 5)

3.9. *The EEC commends the engagement with the type 2 diabetes society.*

The College would like to thank the EEC for the positive comment and indicate that the faculty remains strongly dedicated in supporting additional parts of society that need the specialized knowledge of the Culinary Arts faculty, as part of its Social Responsibility policy.

3.13. *Electronic resources could be used for the students and make a full use of the student digital platform.*

The College adopted the EEC's comment and has expanded the intranet web platform to accommodate additional features for the best digital experience of the students.

3.14. *The processes and feedback with regard to the evaluation of the teaching work could be made more transparent to the students.*

The College maintains a peer evaluation procedure, under which all faculty members are evaluated by at least two other faculty members of higher rank and a student evaluation procedure where each faculty member (irrespective of rank or experience) is evaluated. All findings are submitted to the Academic Affairs Office and the faculty members are informed of their performance. Any performance that is deemed as inadequate, results in a warning and close monitoring for Full Time faculty and dismissal for Part Time faculty. Transparency is always maintained as to the procedure followed as the students are made aware of the critical nature that the faculty evaluation entails.

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

4.3. The students are able to contribute to the evaluation process, however the dissemination of the information/findings is not provided or acted upon in response to the students' participation.

The College, critically evaluates the program through the Program Review Committees, the faculty via student evaluations and the services via a questionnaire. All findings are placed in action tables and disseminated via the Intranet web platform. The College has and is committed in maintaining a quality assurance environment where the student voice is heard and acknowledged as part of its continued development cycle.

4.4. Students are visiting other courses within Europe.

The College maintains an Erasmus+ charter and strongly encourages student and faculty mobility.

4.6. Students seem unaware of the processes. – “Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.”

The students are informed of all the procedures that are followed as well as all the support that is provided to them by the faculty and administration. The mechanism provided for their support are continually revised and updated. All faculty members are available during their office hours, telephones and emails at any given time in order to provide assistance.

4.7. The documentation was not presented to the EEC. – “Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.”

The College monitors student performance and evaluates its effectiveness as follows:

- Implementing the course assessment form (annex 6), maintained by each faculty member and submitted to the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) that takes place at the end of each semester.
- Implementing the moderation procedure (annex 7), where the examination scripts are being evaluated by a second faculty member in order to ensure that marking is within the prescribed parameters.
- At the end of each academic year the Cumulative Point Average (CPA) of the students is checked whether it reflects adequate progression rate.
- Second examination procedure allows the students to be re-examined for subjects they failed during the academic year.

All above procedures are monitored closely by the Academic Affairs Office and the Internal Quality Assurance Auditor.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

5.1.2. Books are out of date.

The College adopted the EEC's comment and the course outlines have been revised to reflect an updated reading list. (Annex 1)

5.4. The student platform was underused. Students were only able to access their marks using the platform, whereas all the learning material (lecture notes) was only available at the internal bookshop. Students reported that they have to pay (for digital access) to be able to see their marks.

Students are granted access to the intranet web platform as long as their financial obligations towards the College are maintained in good standing order. Once the student is not fulfilling his financial obligations for a substantial period of time the access to the web platform is limited. The web platform allows access to student marks/grading, learning material, announcements etc. In reference to the learning material on the web platform this was addressed in the reply to points: 1.8.4 and 2.8.

6. Additional for distance learning programs (ALL ESG)

N/A

7. Additional for doctoral programs (ALL ESG)

N/A

8. Additional for joint programs (ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The College has strong links with the industry and professional bodies, especially as the faculty is very active engaging successfully with international competitions and professional associations.

The EEC committee would like to commend the College on the following points

- *Student success stories*
- *Equipment and facilities*
- *Investment and support for the department*
- *The careers fair, industry links/partnerships and association with industry bodies*
- *Staff experience and profile {e.g. TV demonstrations, co-ordinating the Culinary Competition Team on behalf of Cyprus}*
- *Overseas opportunities – competitions and Erasmus*
- *Ambitions for future development*

The College would like to warmly thank the EEC for its positive comments in relation to the continued development of the Culinary Arts Diploma Program.

The EEC committee would like to suggest areas of improvement:

- *Communicating the student voice to improve transparency*
- *Effective development and use of digital technology (i.e. the student platform)*
- *Shorter timeframes/periods for the delivery of theory lessons*
- *Improved clarity and variety of assessment*
- *Specified assessment of fundamental practical skills.*
- *Update library resources (lack of stock and currency)*
- *Balancing the curriculum (theory and practice).*

The College would like to inform the EEC that all courses have been updated to reflect the most recent reading list. The library is the one shared with the University of Nicosia and offers a substantial amount of online resources that seek to allow the students to search for any document that they wish. In addition, the updated reading list is also available to the students. In regard to the student voice, a number of statutory mechanisms are in place in order to ensure that students maintain their privileges to express their critical opinion and assist the College in improving its services. Our Intranet web platform is continually updated to provide an enhanced

digital experience to the students. Throughout the courses that comprise the Program's structure the theory and practice are maintained in a well balanced ratio in order to allow the students to gain the maximum learning experience. There is a range of assessments that is being utilized by the Program, such as presentations, mid-terms, demonstrations, assignments and quizzes. We would like to submit, for reference, the list of additional documents that were provided to the EEC during the day of their visit in order to provide them with the Internal Quality Assurance framework that the College is currently implementing. (Annex 8)
Overall, the College would like to thank the EEC for its constructive commenting and state that it remains committed towards the recommendations provided.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Charalambos Papadopoulos	Director of Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance	
Nicholas Orphanides	Program Coordinator	

Date: **22/07/2019**

