

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: Date.

- **Higher Education Institution:**
KES College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Διεύθυνση Ξενοδοχείων (3 Έτη/180 ECTS, συν ένα Προαιρετικό Προπαρασκευαστικό Έτος, Ανώτερο Δίπλωμα)

In English:

Hotel Management (3 Years/180 ECTS plus an Optional Foundation Year, Higher Diploma)

- **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)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

Design, approval, ongoing monitoring and review

- 1.1 *...The programme's aims are to prepare students to develop a career in hospitality and tourism at the local or international market by providing them with the necessary academic and technical skills. Having said that, it appears somehow strange that the College, which aspires to become a leader in hotel management vocational education, sends such a general message which does not emphasise their major competitive advantage (USP) over the main competitors. The curriculum is not streamlined towards tourism, but as is it should be – towards hotel management.*
- 1.2 *The programme design is up-to date and corporate needs are taken into account. However, the learning outcomes of the programme are too broad and do not specifically focus on Hotel Management but rather on the entire hospitality and tourism sector which does not correspond to the offered courses that actually support Hotel Management programme.*
- 1.3 *The College runs also a programme in Hospitality and Tourism Management and with such set of LOs for the Hotel Management programme it actually cannibalises its other programme (please, see p. 10 of the Application for accreditation Report). Although the learning outcomes of the courses are specified, in some cases LOs are misleading or are not in line with the course content (for ex. Global Tourism and Leisure - one of the LOs states that the students will be able to apply concepts of sustainable tourism, but in the course content principles of sustainable tourism development are not mentioned at all. Actually, they are covered in another course).*
- 1.4 *Some courses have a longer list of LOs than the specification of the entire course content. This implies to conclusion that the course coordinators/teaching faculty is not familiar with conceptualisation of the learning outcomes. Most of them do not understand how to formulate learning outcomes and therefore some of them mix learning outcomes with course objectives. However, in the most cases the course content corresponds to course objectives.*
- 1.5 *Majority of courses do not include ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) which is crucial in a contemporary hotel management programme.*
- 1.6 *The corresponding literature for each particular course should be divided into two parts: compulsory reading and additional reading. None of instructors has listed any academic articles in their fields as a compulsory or suggested literature. In several cases instructors do not use contemporary literature.*
- 1.7 *In courses "Food and Beverage Operations and "Food and Beverage Cost Control" there are parts of repetition in the content. The course Business Ethics covers mostly environmental responsibility.*
- 1.8 *The students should become aware of all aspects of ERS.*

- 1.9 *Furthermore, the course title Eco-tourism does not correspond to the course content. It seems that the title Eco-tourism in rural areas would be more suitable title since it covers mainly eco-tourism in rural areas. Does eco-tourism relate only to rural areas? LOs of the course should be substantially corrected.*
- 1.10 *The student cohort is predominantly Indian with a low number of domestic students. The College should pay more attention to a better distribution of nationalities within the programme for the benefit of necessary multicultural learning and networking environment.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

- 1.11 *Raise the programme's profile more strongly on domestic and international scene to improve the programme positioning.*
- 1.12 *Develop additional promotion and recruitment strategy of the programme to foster a multicultural learning environment.*
- 1.13 *Introduce clear guidelines on syllabi writing and enforce them, as well as improving assessment of LOs.*
- 1.14 *Revise the learning objectives. LOs must be institutionalised, anchored in the College, and developed and implemented with broad teaching staff involvement. This is an area which requires significant additional work at course level in order to make a necessary explicit link between programme LOs, course syllabi and assessment. The EEC is therefore of the opinion that the LOs need to be presented in a more consistent, compact and coherent manner and they should be institutionalised by involvement of all stakeholders.*
- 1.15 *Create an Industry Advisory Board just for the programme and formalise and implement a systematic approach for inclusion of external stakeholders' feedback.*
- 1.16 *Ensure more explicit inclusion of ERS within course outline where appropriate.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Study programme and study programme's design and development:

- 1.1 The EEC admits that *"The curriculum is not streamlined towards tourism, but as is it should be – towards hotel management"*. Therefore, in fact no essential changes were necessary regarding the programme as such. We have rewritten the Programme's Purpose and Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes in order to be more streamlined towards Hotel Management.
The updated Programme's Purpose and Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes appear in Annex "1".
- 1.2 The EEC admits, *"The programme design is up-to date and corporate needs are taken into account"*. Therefore, in fact no essential changes were necessary regarding the programme as such. We have rewritten the Programme's Purpose and Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes in order to be more streamlined towards Hotel Management.
The updated Programme's Purpose and Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes appear in Annex "1".

- 1.3 Following the EEC's recommendation, there have been corrections of the LO in some programme's syllabi. For example, see the syllabus of the course "TOUR307 Global Tourism and Leisure" in Annex "4", where principles of sustainable tourism development have been added in the course content.
- 1.4 Irrespectively from the current programme, an in-service training about learning outcomes, EQF levels and syllabi writing has already been planned for the course coordinators and the teaching staff in May 2021.
- 1.5 We have added ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) in 14 courses which appear in Annex "2". The syllabi of all courses are in Annex "4".
- 1.6 The corresponding literature in each particular course have been divided in two parts: Compulsory and Additional. This can be seen in the updated syllabi of all courses in Annex "4".
In some courses, academic articles were added. The list of these courses appear in Annex "3", while their syllabi appear in Annex "4".
- 1.7 Any content repetitions between the courses "CBPA220 Food and Beverage Operations and "CBPA304 Food and Beverage Cost Control" have been removed. The course "MGMT320 Business Ethics" has been slightly modified and it covers equally the various aspects of business ethics including environmental responsibility.
- 1.8 As stated in 1.5 above, ERS have been added in 14 courses and this will help students become aware of all aspects of ERS.
- 1.9 The course "TOUR311 Eco-Tourism" has been modified so that it covers not only rural areas. Please see course updated syllabus in Annex "4".
- 1.10 We agree with the recommendation. The College makes serious efforts to attract both students from other countries as well as Cypriots in the Programme.
- 1.11 As mentioned above, serious efforts are in place to promote this programme both internationally as well as locally.
- 1.12 Please see 1.10 and 1.11 above.
- 1.13 As mentioned in 1.4 above, irrespectively from the current programme, an in-service training about learning outcomes, EQF levels and syllabi writing has already been planned for the course coordinators and the teaching staff in May 2021.
- 1.14 Learning Outcomes are developed with teaching staff involvement, under the coordinators' guidance. Since the LO approach has been accepted by European Higher Education systems, we understand that LOs should be prepared very carefully in a consistent, compact and coherent manner. KES College has organized an in-service training on LOs some time ago and we going to repeat it next May.
- 1.15 We have come in contact with the Hotel Owners' Association and the two leading trade union hotel employees, the Cyprus Chef's Association and the Cyprus Housekeepers Association. These organisations agreed to be members of KES College Hospitality Industry Advisory Board.



The main objective of this Body is to systematically give external feedback to the school regarding the updating of its curriculum and the new needs and trends in the Hospitality Sector. Furthermore, providing quest lecturers on specific topics and give students the chance to see the real word of Hospitality by helping them be placed for practical training.

- 1.16 As mentioned in 1.5 above, ERS has been added in 14 courses, which appear in Annex “2”, while their syllabi appear in Annex “4”.

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

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

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Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered:

- 2.1 practical training offered is rather inadequately recognised in the curriculum (8 out of 180 ECTS for a period of eight months) compared to the professional “nature” of the program and the college. Internship should be a credit-bearing module (with ECTS offering) in order to encourage actual students’ participation*
- 2.2. a compulsory assignment during the students’ internship could be associated with more ECTS offering for the practical training*
- 2.3 the research culture of the program needs further development - empowerment, in order to enhance synergies between research and teaching, thus benefiting the students*
- 2.4 the college should invest further on simulation programs relevant to Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. Amadeus GDS) to enhance teaching and student experience*
- 2.5 the establishment of a new mechanism, ensuring consistency in marking across the program will be in favour of the students and the program as well*
- 2.6 double grading could be useful towards a fairer and more comprehensive grade procedure for the students*
- 2.7 the international profile of the students requires more and better-defined actions and mainly procedures on encouraging a vibrant and multicultural learning space*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Student – centred learning and assessment:

- 2.1 Following the EEC recommendations, there have been minor changes in the Programme structure, which resulted in the increase of the total ECTS for Practical Training from 8 to 14. The Practical Training I course of the 2nd semester bears now 8 ECTS instead of 6 and the Practical Training II course of the 4th semester bears now 8 ECTS instead of 4. These changes can be seen in Annex “5”, where the programme’s slightly modified structure appears, while in Annex “6” there is the programme structure as submitted in the application.
- 2.2 The syllabus of the course PRCT222 Practical Training II has been modified so that students have to submit a compulsory assignment at the end of their practical training. The programme’s syllabi with any possible changes after the EEC’s recommendations appear in Annex “4”.
- 2.3 The College has further developed its policies for the recruitment of new teachers regarding their research activities. According to the College’s new policies, active involvement in research is necessary in order for someone to be recruited as a teacher in the College. Furthermore, no one can supervise a student’s Final Project, unless he or she is research active with publications.

- 2.4 We use the Sabre GDS for the needs of the Programme, having the right for web access for up to 30 users. This programme enhances student experience and enriches the learning process.
- 2.5 We feel that the consistency in marking across the programme is largely guaranteed by the assessment method and the College actions. The assessment method in each course follows College's specific instructions and they are precisely described in the syllabi, while there is continuous teachers' training on the preparation of the examination papers. Furthermore, the coordinator and the head of academic affairs approve all examination papers.
- 2.6 Double grading applies final examinations, in cases that a student applies for it.
- 2.7 KES College has long tradition in organising student multicultural activities, which are very important for the creation of a multicultural learning environment. Unfortunately, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the activities with the students' physical presence are not possible.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

3. Teaching staff

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

- 3.1 *Only 3 members of the staff publish. Two of them have publications outside tourism and hospitality management, and one publishes in the area on food and culinary management.*
- 3.2 *It is not clear how the link between research and teaching is established, a situation that has to be sorted out in the future.*
- 3.3 *The EEC has also found that the College subscribes to some databases. However, none of them covers indexed sources on hotel management and tourism. The EEC recommends that indexed databases covering the subjects of the programme be acquired.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

- 3.4 *The school should purchase indexed databases in hotel management and tourism*
- 3.5 *The research centre should create a scientific plan containing details about objectives, outputs, and allocation of resources.*
- 3.6 *The College should also set up a plan explaining how tourism research may be linked to improve the quality of the taught programme.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Teaching Staff:

- 3.1 Additionally to the findings of EEC on staff publications, the following information is quite relevant: At the beginning of the current academic semester (1st semester 2020 – 2021), KES College has recruited Dr Demos Parapanos who is a young PhD holder in in the Hospitality context. Dr Parapanos teaches already Hotel Management courses in our College.

His PhD is from the University of Derby, UK and it is about "Understanding hotel visitors' motives to use hotel gamified applications". Dr Parapanos holds a MA in International Hospitality Management (distinction), from the University of Derby, a BA in Professional Culinary Arts (first class degree), University of Derby, UK and a Diploma in Culinary Arts from the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus.

Dr Parapanos publishes in his field. Some examples are the following:

- Parapanos, D., and Michopoulou, E. (2020) 'Value co-creation in Hospitality through Gamification' Tourism, Hospitality and Events International Conference (THEINC), Netherlands
- Parapanos, D., and Michopoulou, E. (2019). "Understanding Key Motivations for Using a Hotel Gamified Application". Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism. ENTER 2019. Proceedings of the 26th International Conference in Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Parapanos, D. & Michopoulou, E. (2014) "Gamification in Tourism and Hospitality". Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Conference of Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) Buxton, UK.

His CV appears in Annex "8"

- 3.2 The link between teaching and research is primarily made within the curriculum through Final Project I and Final Project II. The aim of these modules is to train students on how to analyse, diagnose and structure hospitality and tourism managerial problems using valid theory on the issues involved, explain in depth contemporary issues of tourism and hospitality by demonstrating a critical stand and problem solving skills, demonstrate analytical and research skills as well as effective presentation techniques, and demonstrate holistic problem solving and decision making skills in tourism and hospitality business situations that involve the organization as a whole. The students must analysis at least ten relevant academic articles and/or books, submit a research proposal and produce a final research paper in accordance with the supervising instructor's guidance.
- The two modules will be under the supervision of the program's Coordinator P. Hadjisymeou and Dr. D. Sarris as the modules instructor, both having experience in academic research.
- 3.3 Please see our response in 5.1 below
- 3.4 Please see our response in 5.1 below
- 3.5 KES Research Centre is an independent non-profit research institute, collaborating with KES College based on a memorandum of understanding. More information can be found at <http://kesrc.org.cy/>
- 3.6 Kindly see responses to points 2.3 and 3.2. It is within the further priorities of KES College to recruit teaching staff with research experience in the field of Hospitality and Tourism in further strengthening the link between teaching and research within the courses of the programme.

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

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Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered:

- 4.1 *the College's site should offer more info on students' recognition issues*
- 4.2 *the students' participation in Erasmus+ projects is an opportunity for them and must be further developed in the future*
- 4.3 *the teachers could participate in the admission - selection of the students and according to their comment "they would love to"*
- 4.4 *the mentoring procedures offered must be official and not rely only on the good will and the good cooperation between individual teachers and students.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

- 4.1 We have made arrangements and amended the current page that covers info on the Hotel Management programme. These changes include the recognition of prior studies and the way in which students could transfer ECTS credits to the programme as well as their obligations under the course in the event that they decide to transfer. This applies to students transferring in or transferring out of the programme. We have also added information on how graduates of the programme will have a recognized qualification that will allow them to seamlessly continue and further their education options with more advance degree options and placements.
- 4.2 As explained to the EEC, students from Cyprus and from other European countries can use opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ Programme to travel to other EU countries and benefit from their engagement with other institutions. Unfortunately, there are limitations for students from third countries and this is beyond the College's capabilities.
- 4.3 Teachers can for sure participate in the students' admission – selection process and this is very welcome.
- 4.4 Mentoring procedures offered by the College are indeed official: Students know who their mentor is and mentors are usually available to students for much more time than officially announced.

5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

Physical resources

5.1 *The library also offers good conditions, but it is recommended that more books on hospitality & tourism should be acquired by the college. Also, KES should buy databases where students could find indexed publications (e.g. SCOPUS and Web of Science), and tourism documents (UNWTO database). Such information will also be important to support the expansion and qualification of the research centre.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

5.2 *More international exchange mobility programmes should be offered by the College*

5.3 *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, should be utilised more frequently in the future*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Resources

5.1 As a result of the recommendations in the EEC report, more books were acquired for the Programme. In Annex “7” there is a list of new books, together with the corresponding courses.

Regarding databases, KES College has proceeded as follows:

- We have subscribed to UNWTO database (publications) which is now available to our Hotel Management Students
- As stated in the application for the evaluation of the current Programme of Study, we have subscribed to the EBSCO electronic library, offering access to more than 192,000 books in electronic form. We have decided to revise our policy regarding our electronic library resources, in order to furthermore acquire access to academic articles and publications.
Therefore, at this time, we are in touch with the Cyprus Libraries Consortium (CLC), which is being used by Cyprus Universities and other Higher Education Institutions. We are investigating the cost and other the terms, in order to acquire access to SCOPUS and other databases for our programmes of study.
- In any case, KES College is committed to acquire access to the SCOPUS database during the year 2021. This can be followed by the Follow-up Report (CYQAA Document 300.1.4).
- We have made the necessary arrangements in order that beginning January 2021, KES College will have access to the following databases for the year 2021, which include publications on Hotel Management issues:
 - SpringerLink
 - Wiley Online Library

5.2 Please see our response in 4.2 above.



- 5.3 KES College considers the instruction and learning methodology as extremely important. For this reason, it permanently employs an Education Officer with PhD qualifications in Education, who is responsible for the use of the proper methodology in the teaching – learning process. The Education Officer organises teachers’ in-service seminars twice a year while she visits teachers in classrooms during instruction and gives them support and feedback.



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

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Conclusions and final remarks

The KES College submitted a document and made several presentations during the virtual visit of the EEC, that, overall, answered all areas of analysis concerning the infrastructure, facilities, teaching programme, students, teaching staff and research.

The EEC is of the opinion that the Programme should be approved.

Nevertheless, the EEC report contains a number of observations and recommendations that should be followed by the management directors. It is strongly recommended that those suggestions are implemented by the institution.

B. Actions taken by KES College

It is with great pleasure that we can declare that we have followed all recommendations and suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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