

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 27/05/2025

## Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
KES College

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

**In Greek:**

Κηποτεχνία και Σχεδιασμός Κήπου (3 Ακαδημαϊκά Έτη, 180 ECTS, Ανώτερο Δίπλωμα)

**In English:**

Gardening and Landscaping (3 Academic Years, 180 ECTS, Higher Diploma)

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in \*.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The Internal Quality Assurance procedure suffers from poor student participation. Questionnaires are not turned-in by most students and, when they are, they seem prepared without much attention to questions and answers. The College is encouraged to seek more active participation of students in the IQA procedure through questionnaires, potentially through incentives. For example, the EEC suggests that the students complete the questionnaire during a time period specially allocated to this (the last 10 minutes of a lecture) and, if all of them submit the questionnaire, a small bonus to their final grade will be awarded to everyone.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their recommendation regarding the enhancement of student participation in the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process. The College acknowledges the importance of gathering meaningful student feedback to continuously improve our programmes and overall academic experience of the students.</p> <p>Following careful consideration of the EEA's suggestions, the College decided to allocate class time (the last 10 minutes of a lecture) for questionnaire completion, thus enhancing student participation in our Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes. This practice will be implemented with immediate effect, starting with the first distribution of student evaluation questionnaires for the academic year 2025–2026. Additionally, we will work on raising awareness among students about the importance of their feedback by clearly demonstrating how their input leads to real changes within the institution.</p> <p>In regards to the rest of the recommendations (i.e. a small bonus to their final grade to be awarded to everyone), the College maintains that tying participation directly to grading could compromise the objectivity of academic assessment. We believe that grades should reflect students' academic performance and not be influenced by their participation in administrative procedures.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The list of academic staff on the website of the study programme needs to be updated with all instructors of the programme.</p>	<p>We would like to clarify that the website currently displays the academic staff teaching in the currently approved and accredited programme of study.</p> <p>As the proposed programme of study is still undergoing the accreditation process, any changes to the teaching staff structure are not yet in effect. Once the proposed programme is accredited and officially implemented, the College will update its website accordingly to reflect the revised</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	list of academic staff teaching in the newly accredited programme.	
The course interacts with stakeholders in event organization; there are no periodic meetings. It is suggested that meetings be scheduled at least once a year.	<p>While the course currently engages stakeholders primarily through event collaborations, we recognise the importance of establishing a structured and regular communication framework.</p> <p>To enhance stakeholder involvement and ensure ongoing dialogue, the College is in the process of organising formal stakeholder meetings at least once a year. These meetings will serve as a platform for exchanging insights, gathering feedback, and strengthening partnerships to improve the programme's alignment with industry needs. Additionally, we will explore alternative methods of engagement, such as digital forums or surveys, to maintain continuous interaction throughout the academic year.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
Stakeholders that interact with the course also teach in it or other classes in KES College. The EEC recommends increasing the number of stakeholders, preferably including stakeholders without direct teaching interactions with the Gardening and Landscaping Programme.	<p>We acknowledge the EEC's recommendation to broaden stakeholder engagement by including professionals who do not have direct teaching interactions with the Gardening and Landscaping Programme. While the current involvement of stakeholders—many of whom also contribute as instructors—ensures practical knowledge transfer, we recognise the value of diversifying external input.</p> <p>To address this, KES College will actively seek to expand its network of industry professionals, businesses, and organisations relevant to gardening and landscaping. This will include inviting external stakeholders to participate in guest lectures, workshops, advisory panels, and networking events. Additionally, we will explore collaborations with industry associations, municipalities, and private enterprises to strengthen the real-world relevance of our programme.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
The course has international collaborations, and the number of Erasmus agreements should be enhanced to offer students exchange with international institutions.	<p>As an institution approved by the <b>European Commission</b> to participate in the <b>Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021–2027</b>, KES College actively engages in European actions such as student mobility, multilateral projects, and networks. These initiatives aim to improve the quality of education and drive innovative practices in tertiary education and training.</p> <p>In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, KES College took proactive steps to strengthen and expand</p>	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>mobility opportunities for students and faculty through the Erasmus+ programme. Beginning in 2022, this initiative has enabled participants to gain valuable international experience while enhancing their academic and professional skills.</p> <p>The pandemic disrupted international mobility significantly, with various restrictions and cross-border collaborations brought to a near standstill. However, as activities resumed, KES College redefined its approach to mobility programmes. Leveraging the renowned Erasmus+ framework, which fosters collaboration between higher education institutions across Europe, the College prioritised boosting participation in international exchanges. A major milestone in this effort has been the increase in Erasmus+ funding allocated to KES College. This achievement reflects the programme's recognised impact on participants' educational and professional growth. With increased financial resources, the College has expanded participation opportunities, extended its network of destination countries, and provided access to diverse academic and cultural experiences for students and faculty alike.</p> <p>At the heart of this initiative lies a commitment to building robust partnerships with institutions across Europe and beyond. These collaborations encourage students to study or undertake internships abroad, while offering faculty the chance to engage in educational seminars and exchange ideas with international peers. Such experiences not only contribute to academic excellence but also foster intercultural understanding, stimulate innovation, and cultivate a global network of professionals and academics.</p> <p>For students, Erasmus+ mobilities provide a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in new environments, develop cross-cultural competencies, and gain practical skills that enhance their employability. Faculty participants benefit from exposure to innovative teaching practices and collaborative projects, equipping them with the tools to enrich their educational methodologies.</p> <p>Recognising mobility as a catalyst for academic and personal growth, KES</p>	
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	<p>College is dedicated to expanding the scope and impact of Erasmus+ opportunities. With increased funding and the continuous development of partnerships, the College is committed to offering even more transformative experiences for its students and faculty. This vision underscores the institution's dedication to fostering a dynamic, internationally oriented education that prepares participants for future success.</p> <p>By continuing to invest in international mobility, KES College reaffirms its mission to provide a comprehensive and globally relevant educational experience—one that empowers its community to excel academically, professionally, and personally.</p>	
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## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
In each course, the assessment should be better detailed with the duration and the type of questions such as open questions or multichoice questions. The evaluation of each course takes into consideration different aspects such as attendance and participation, etc. For each term of evaluation there is the weight, but it is not reported the range of scores. This information should be included.	<p>We acknowledge the EEC's observation regarding the need for greater clarity and transparency in the assessment components of each course. In response, we have updated the course syllabi to include the type of assessment (clearly distinguishing between the evaluation of theoretical and practical components), the format of each assessment (e.g., multiple-choice, open-ended questions, project reports, or practical exercises), and the duration of the examination or task where applicable.</p> <p>Additionally, we have now incorporated information on the range of scores, which is 0–100, with a passing grade set at 60/100(*). The weighting of each evaluation element (such as attendance, participation, written exams, practical assessments, and individual assignments) has also been retained and clearly specified for each course. These additions aim to enhance transparency, improve student understanding of performance expectations, and ensure alignment with quality assurance standards. Please find updated course syllabi in Appendix A.</p> <p>(*) Please note that the courses Practical Training I (PRCT100) and II (PRCT226) are assessed on a Pass or Fail basis.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
The comparison of syllabi of the individual course shows that there are some overlaps with the study programme. Therefore, it is suggested to have a meeting with teachers and better define the programme of each course	<p>We appreciate the committee's suggestion regarding potential overlaps within the study programme. Following a thorough review, a meeting was held to evaluate the scope and objectives of each course. Below are the changes made to the individual syllabi:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107) and Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)</b> cover essential plant biology and cultivation topics. However, after reviewing their syllabi, we identified some areas of overlap, particularly in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both courses introduce plant classification and organ structure.</li> <li>Topics such as photosynthesis, respiration, and osmosis appear in</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Choose level of compliance:



	<p>both courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both courses discuss plant reproduction and growth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Steps Taken:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core biological processes (photosynthesis, respiration, plant cell structure) are covered in <b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)</b> and are no longer included in <b>Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)</b>.</li> <li>Focus shifted to hands-on application of floriculture techniques rather than theoretical plant physiology.</li> <li>Ensured a clear distinction from <b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)</b> by centering on applied horticultural methods, plant selection, and landscape maintenance.</li> </ul> <p>The revised syllabus of the course <b>Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)</b> ensures that Gardening - Floriculture builds on the foundational knowledge acquired in <b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)</b> while offering distinct, practical learning experiences.</p> <p>2. After reviewing the <b>Urban Gardening (GRLN119)</b> syllabus alongside the courses <b>Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)</b> and <b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)</b>, we have identified some areas of overlap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floriculture &amp; Indoor Plant Care (Weeks 1-2): Covered extensively in Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117), particularly plant selection, indoor plant maintenance, and fertilization techniques.</li> <li>Aromatic Plants &amp; Seed Germination (Weeks 3-4, 5-7): General plant propagation and cultivation techniques are included in Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117) and Introduction to Botany (GRLN107).</li> <li>Pruning and Shrub Care (Weeks 8-9): These skills are introduced in Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117).</li> </ul> <p><b>Steps taken:</b></p> <p>Considering the above, the focus of the course <b>Urban Gardening (GRLN119)</b> has been shifted to plant selection specifically</p>	
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for urban settings (e.g., compact growth habits, pollution tolerance) and introduces alternative methods like container gardening and soil-less cultivation. Furthermore, Urban Gardening now emphasises small-scale urban applications such as balcony herb gardens, rooftop planters, and space-saving hydroponic methods. The course has also been modified to focus on urban-specific pruning techniques, such as maintaining trees and shrubs in limited spaces (e.g., columnar pruning, espalier) and the **environmental and sustainability aspects** of urban gardening has been enhanced. Given the overlaps identified with **Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)** and **Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)**, KES College team also proceeded with updating the course goal to enhance its uniqueness and ensure it complements rather than duplicates other courses.

3. After examining **Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and Bushes (GRLN201)** against **Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)**, KES College team proceeded to the following refinements:

- **Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and Bushes (GRLN201)** has been refined to emphasise woody ornamental plants (trees & shrubs).
- Removed "Tropical Plants" from the course **Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and Bushes (GRLN201)** and are now covered in **Gardening - Floriculture (GRLN117)**.
- Reinforced the focus of **Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and Bushes (GRLN201)** on large-scale landscaping with ornamental trees and shrubs for parks, public spaces, and urban designs.

4. **Garden Constructions I (GRLN203)** has been redefined in terms of its purpose and learning outcomes to clearly distinguish it from design-focused courses while maintaining its core focus on construction techniques, materials, and implementation. The revised course clearly defines **Garden Constructions I (GRLN203)** as a practical, hands-on course centered

	<p>on materials, structures, and construction techniques. It complements but does not duplicate garden design courses.</p> <p>5. The KES College team proceeded to the refinement of the course <b>Management of Golf Courses, Sports Facilities and Parks (GRLN208)</b> to reduce overlaps with the courses <b>Garden Constructions I &amp; II (GRLN203 &amp; GRLN206)</b>, <b>Smart Agriculture and Automatic Irrigation Systems (GRLN204)</b>, and <b>Management of Enemies, Diseases, and Weeds (GRLN202)</b>. The team removed general pest and disease management details (covered in <b>Management of Enemies, Diseases, and Weeds (GRLN202)</b>), ultimately having <b>Management of Golf Courses, Sports Facilities and Parks (GRLN208)</b> focusing on pest control specific to sports turf. KES College team refined course content on irrigation to focus on golf courses and sports fields, avoiding duplication with <b>Smart Agriculture and Automatic Irrigation Systems (GRLN204)</b>, and clarified differentiation from <b>Garden Constructions I &amp; II (GRLN203 &amp; GRLN206)</b>, with <b>Management of Golf Courses, Sports Facilities and Parks (GRLN208)</b> now focusing on grass surfaces, maintenance, and compliance with sports facility standards, rather than general landscaping.</p> <p>6. To avoid overlaps with the course <b>Management of Golf Courses, Sports Facilities and Parks (GRLN208)</b>, KES College team refined <b>Grasses, Turfs and Mosaic Plants (GRLN300)</b> to focus on aesthetic, sustainable, and ecological applications, whereas <b>Management of Golf Courses, Sports Facilities and Parks (GRLN208)</b> deals with sports turf and high-performance maintenance. There is now a stronger emphasis on mosaic plants, low-water demanding species, and sustainable alternatives. The course now also includes non-plant ground covers such as permeable pavements, recycled materials, and</p>	
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	<p>synthetic turf for landscape applications.</p> <p>7. The courses <b>Grasses, Turfs, and Mosaic Plants (GRLN300)</b> and <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b> were written to complement each other to build comprehensive skills in plant identification, care, propagation and landscape functionality. KES College team proceeded with the refinement of the course <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b> so to clarify its distinct yet complementary role. While <b>Grasses, Turfs, and Mosaic Plants (GRLN300)</b> focuses on ground-level planting, mosaic arrangements, and turf management in urban and recreational landscapes, <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b> expands vertical plant diversity by focusing on tree crops and perennials. Together, the two courses form a cohesive understanding of layered plant design and management — from soil level (turf, grasses, and groundcovers) to mid- and upper-canopy (fruit trees, palms, and flowering perennials) — equipping students for holistic landscape planning and management in Mediterranean and subtropical environments.</p> <p>8. <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301), Grasses, Turfs, and Mosaic Plants (GRLN300)</b> and <b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303)</b> have a unique application domain—agriculture, landscaping, or phytochemistry—so they serve different learning outcomes. <b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303)</b>, in particular, focuses on plants used for essential oils, herbs, medicinal use, with processing and distillation components. Each course applies principles to distinct plant types, ecosystems, and end-uses. Therefore, the courses are complementary rather than duplicative. KES College team refined <b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303)</b> to enhance clarity, deepen learning, and improve coherence with the other plant-related courses. The refinements include more frequent, structured practicals tied to theoretical content, added focus on sustainability and local</p>	
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	<p>context in Weeks 11–12.</p> <p>9. The courses <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b>, <b>Grasses, Turfs, and Mosaic Plants (GRLN300)</b> and <b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303)</b> are complementary to <b>Urban Forestry (GRLN306)</b> as it relates to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Courses like <b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b> and <b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303)</b> build species-specific and horticultural knowledge. <b>Urban Forestry (GRLN306)</b> synthesises this knowledge into systems thinking, applying plant science in complex urban environments.</li> <li>- Skills in propagation, pest management, and climate adaptation learned in earlier courses are reinforced and applied in <b>Urban Forestry (GRLN306)</b> through urban case studies.</li> </ul> <p>Together, these courses prepare students to contribute to multifunctional landscapes. To avoid redundancy with the said and related courses, KES College team proceeded with certain refinements to the course <b>Urban Forestry (GRLN306)</b> to emphasise the distinct value and application of urban forestry. In particular, the course was adjusted to emphasise tree management specifically within urban and peri-urban environments, greater focus was placed on ecosystem services, public health, and urban microclimates. Emphasis was also placed on policy, legislation, and management frameworks unique to cities. The final sessions introduce smart forestry tech, green space retrofitting, and redevelopment of degraded zones, aligned with urban development priorities.</p> <p>Please find the above refinements in <b>Appendix A</b>, following the revisions made to the programme's curricula.</p>	
In the course Olericulture and introduction to hydroponics a brief introduction on vertical farming or indoor farming should be reported. Ornamental plant stability and destructive or non-destructive methods for evaluation should be included in the plant protection	Following a careful review of the programme's purpose and objectives, the College decided to remove said course from the programme structure. As the programme is specifically oriented towards gardening and landscaping, the inclusion of courses more closely related to agriculture, including said course and the course	Choose level of compliance:

<p>courses.</p>	<p>Arboriculture (GRLN200), was reconsidered. This decision was made to ensure that the programme's structure remains focused and aligned with the intended direction of the programme, avoiding any potential misunderstanding regarding its scope and professional orientation. The course Olericulture and Introduction to Hydroponics (GRLN118) has been removed from the programme structure, and the course <b>Tree Surgery and Basic Pruning Techniques (GRLN120)</b> transferred in its place. Early exposure to pruning techniques can enhance student understanding when they encounter later modules, like <b>Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and Bushes (GRLN201)</b>.</p> <p>Many of the learning objectives and teaching content of the course <b>Arboriculture (GRLN200)</b> were assigned to the related courses <b>Urban Gardening (GRLN119)</b> and <b>Urban Forestry (GRLN306)</b>. This action allowed the KES College team to add a new course to the programme structure that focused specifically on enabling the students to get hands on experience in various gardening tools and machines along with their safety use and maintenance. The course titled <b>Garden Machinery (GRLN209)</b> is found in semester three (3). The addition of the <b>Garden Machinery (GRLN209)</b> course significantly enhances the programme by providing students with specialised knowledge and practical skills focused on the machinery and tools pertinent to gardening and landscaping.</p> <p>Please find the original structure of the proposed programme of study in <b>Appendix B</b> and the revised programme structure in <b>Appendix C</b>.</p>	
<p>The autonomy of the learners seems to be different between the course theoretical part and laboratories. In the theoretical part, students seem to have reduced autonomy on specific courses while the autonomy is enhanced in courses that demand inspiration, initiatives and self-motivations such as the Garden Design courses. Even though this is understandable and expected, faculty should promote further the autonomy of the students in the theoretical part of the courses by</p>	<p>KES College welcomes this recommendation as the balance between lectures and laboratory or field work is considered to be important. We would like to clarify that individual written assignments were already in place. Following the adjustments made to the content of the course syllabi, the assessment methods of each course have been clarified, providing further information on the content and purpose of individual written assignments.</p> <p>In response to the committee's recommendation regarding the group</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

assigning personal homework tasks as well as group projects to the students. The assignments should be followed by guidance, supervision, and justified suggestions and corrections towards the fulfilment of the projects.

assignments, KES College team proceeded with proposing such group projects during the third year of study, considering the students' readiness to prepare and submit group work. KES College team identified specific courses where autonomy can be effectively integrated in the form of group assignments.

1. **Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301):** The course involves plant identification, climate adaptation strategies, and crop-specific care, allowing room for applied tasks and analysis. KES College team proceeded with adding a group project as one of the means of assessment to assess the acquisition of the theoretical aspects of the course.
2. **Nursery and Floriculture Production and Management (GRLN302).** KES College team refined the assessment criteria of the course to include the preparation on part of the students of a group assignment that is meant to promote student autonomy while focusing on different aspects of nursery-florist management.
3. **Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (GRLN303).** As per the committee's recommendation to exhibit a balance of autonomy between the theoretical and practical components of the various courses, KES College team refined the assessment methods of said course to include a group project. The assignment will encourage students to explore the challenges and opportunities of growing aromatic plants in Cyprus, integrating both theoretical and practical knowledge gained during the course.

Please find the above additions in **Appendix A**, following the refinements made to the programme's curricula. KES College has already established mechanisms for the provision of the necessary guidance, supervision and provision of corrective and structured feedback to assist its students with the delivery of the assignments or projects. The



	same mechanisms will be applied for the delivery of this proposed programme of study.	
It was noted that students participating in the programme have various backgrounds. Faculty makes efforts to support those students that seem to have a handicap compared to the remaining ones. Efforts are focused on explaining further the subjects of the course whenever needed to the whole class. In this way, students are encouraged to individual development though collaborative work of the class. However, using this approach the remaining students might feel bored and lose their interest in the coursework. Faculty should consider another option for explaining and encouraging students who confront learning difficulties, by using extra teaching time whenever needed. In this way, students with learning difficulties will keep up with the coursework and advanced students would not lose their rhythm and interest.	The course material is uploaded to the College's LMS platform (MOODLE), allowing students to access content at their own pace and review key concepts independently. This approach encourages individual development and supports diverse learning styles within the classroom. In cases where additional teaching time is needed, students who face learning difficulties are provided with targeted support to help them keep up with the coursework. At the same time, this ensures that more advanced students maintain their rhythm and remain engaged, without experiencing unnecessary repetition during core teaching sessions.	Choose level of compliance:
In the laboratory part of the courses teaching methods, infrastructure and equipment is considered inadequate. The lack of an open space near the College campus for executing experiential laboratory sessions combined with the absence of modern gardening equipment is a disadvantage to the whole programme which is obviously oriented towards the practical application of agricultural and gardening knowledge in the field. Students are acquainted with only the basic (non-motorized) equipment and receive no practical experience of several gardening equipment. As an example, students do not get hands-on experience in tractors, rototillers, chainsaws, telescopic chainsaws, blowers, trimmers, walk-behind and riding rotary and reel mowers, triplex mowers, hedge trimmers, hand and tractor boom sprayers and many other gardening and landscaping equipment. In addition, there is limited hands-on experience on using scientific equipment in the field such as soil compaction penetrometer, soil	<p>KES College acknowledges the importance of enhancing practical training in the field of Gardening and Landscaping. The College has already included a significant number of tools and devices in its equipment list, as already provided to the CYQAA (please find in <b>Appendix D</b> for your ease of reference), such as rototillers, chainsaws (including telescopic models), trimmers, state of the art soil moisture meters, as well as portable pH and EC meters.</p> <p>For heavier machinery, such as tractors, walk-behind and riding rotary and reel mowers, triplex mowers, and tractor boom sprayers, the College has initiated collaborations with external partners—particularly with the Christos Stelios Ioannou Foundation. Please find a catalogue of available tools and equipment in <b>Appendix E</b>.</p> <p>At the same time, in the context of restructuring the programme and with the aim of clearly defining its focus on Gardening and Landscaping, the College has decided to remove courses of a purely agricultural nature or to assign their learning objectives to other related course, see as mentioned above regarding the courses</p>	



<p>moisture determination using TDR or other technologies, portable pH, EC meters etc. Students are unaware of the necessary preparations and maintenance required for each of the above gardening and landscaping equipment.</p>	<p><b>Olericulture and Introduction to Hydroponic Crops (GRLN118) and Arboriculture (GRLN200)</b>, thus refocusing the programme to courses purely related to gardening and landscaping and also allowing for the introduction of the course <b>Garden Machinery (GRLN209)</b>. This course addresses the evaluation committee's recommendation by providing students with both theoretical knowledge and practical training in the use, maintenance, and safe operation of machinery relevant to the field of gardening and landscaping. Please see <b>Appendix A</b> for the syllabus of the new course and <b>Appendix C</b> for the revised programme structure.</p> <p>Lastly, the College has also proceeded to order a <b>soil compaction penetrometer</b>. Please find the purchase order in Appendix F.</p>	
<p>The integration of the laboratory session with the theory of each course is considered as a significant drawback. At the curriculum provided, information refers to the whole course (theory and laboratory) without providing a distinct aim and goals for the laboratory sessions. This is considered as a significant disadvantage since the 3-year programme is mainly oriented towards practical and experiential knowledge acquisition and thus the laboratory owes to be defined as a distinct and autonomous module within each course. In that sense, laboratories must have their own schedule, aims and goals, teaching methods, type of examinations, and of course grading. It is highly suggested that the grade of a course should be determined as the average between the theory and the laboratory grades.</p>	<p>Following the Committee's recommendation regarding the integration of theoretical and laboratory components, KES College has taken comprehensive steps to restructure all course outlines in alignment with the programme's experiential learning focus.</p> <p>Each course has now been revised to present a distinct separation between theoretical and practical (laboratory) instruction where applicable, both in structure and in purpose. This is reflected through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The course breakdown table, as seen in the courses' syllabi, that clearly outline weekly content, distinguishing between theoretical lectures and practical/laboratory activities.</li> <li>2. Dedicated teaching methodology descriptions for both theoretical instruction and laboratory/practical training, reflecting their different pedagogical approaches.</li> <li>3. Diversified learning objectives, where course-level outcomes now include separate and complementary theoretical and practical goals.</li> <li>4. Assessment methods that are clearly defined for each component, including type (e.g., written, practical demonstration), duration, and content scope.</li> <li>5. Grading structure adjustments,</li> </ol>	

	<p>where applicable, to ensure that the final course grade reflects the average of both the theoretical and laboratory evaluations, as suggested.</p> <p>These changes ensure that the laboratory/practical elements are treated as autonomous and equally significant educational components, with their own schedule, instructional methodology, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and grading weight, thus directly addressing the concerns raised by the Committee and reinforcing the practical orientation of the programme. Please find the revised curricula in <b>Appendix A</b>.</p>	
<p>Further, it was realized that laboratories do not have a specific time allocation and depend on weekly arrangement between faculty and students. Laboratories usually take place on weekends, which should be checked for allowance by the Cyprian legislation. A weekly schedule must be established with rigid time allocation for each Laboratory session at the initiation of each semester.</p>	<p>KES College recognises the importance of structured scheduling for laboratory sessions while maintaining the necessary flexibility for effective course delivery. The nature of the programme requires a dynamic balance between theoretical instruction and practical hands-on training. As such, laboratory sessions will be scheduled in alignment with course progression—some weeks focusing on lectures and others on experiential learning, as also seen in the programme structure in the syllabi found in <b>Appendix B</b>. To ensure clarity and planning for all parties involved, a semester schedule indicating the anticipated distribution of theoretical and practical weeks will be shared with students at the beginning of each term. In addition, the College, as a private institution of tertiary education, maintains its right to allocate teaching time in ways that fit our students' needs, as there is currently no law forbidding the arrangements of laboratory sessions during weekends. Any necessary adjustments will be implemented to ensure that delivery methods are pedagogically sound.</p>	
<p>It is expected that through the MoU with the Institution Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation, apart from the disposition of the outdoor spaces, it will provide the acquisition of all necessary gardening and landscaping equipment, and faculty will be able to support with safety the education and hands-on experience of the students.</p>	<p>KES College acknowledges the importance of providing students with access to a comprehensive range of gardening and landscaping equipment to support experiential learning. In this context, the College has already initiated collaborations with external partners, particularly with the Christos Stelios Ioannou Foundation—through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which includes the use of outdoor spaces and access to the necessary professional equipment. All the necessary information is included in <b>Appendix E</b>.</p>	

	<p>Furthermore, as already disclosed above, the KES College team proceeded with updating the programme structure with the inclusion of the course Garden Machinery (<b>GRLN209</b>). The course will specifically address the operation, maintenance, and safe use of both hand tools and mechanised gardening equipment. Through this course, students will be systematically trained in equipment handling protocols, safety measures, and routine maintenance practices, ensuring that practical sessions are not only effective but also conducted in a controlled and safe educational environment.</p>	
<p>It was also noted that Laboratories' thematic sessions were intermingled by pooling several laboratories of each course or even between different courses within a single day. This pooling should be avoided. However, if the administration decides to permit this approach, it should be clear each time, which laboratory material is taught, how it will benefit the students, and how it will be examined. It should also be explicitly clear, the separation between laboratory execution and visiting or exhibition activities.</p>	<p>KES College acknowledges the importance of maintaining thematic clarity and pedagogical coherence within laboratory sessions. In response to the committee's recommendation, the practice of pooling laboratory sessions, either across different weeks or between different courses, will be avoided. Each laboratory session is now clearly defined and scheduled, as seen in the revised syllabi and the course breakdown now included in the syllabi, and students will receive a dedicated laboratory timetable at the beginning of each semester, as outlined in the revised delivery model. Furthermore, all laboratory components are now presented with their own learning outcomes, weekly structure, thematic focus, delivery methodology, and dedicated assessment methods. This ensures that the laboratory experience supports the practical orientation of the programme in a structured and measurable way.</p> <p>KES College would like to clarify that the term "<b>field visits</b>" was previously used in several course descriptions in a way that may have caused confusion regarding the nature of the activity. In many cases, what was described as a field visit was in fact <b>practical field work</b>, involving hands-on student participation and experiential learning directly linked to the course objectives. Following the committee's observations, the terminology has now been revised across the syllabi to accurately reflect the type of activity. The term "<b>field work</b>" is now used for practical, skills-based outdoor learning.</p>	
<p>The College has not established a specific procedure for dealing with students' complaints since the</p>	<p>KES College has developed a formal Student Complaint Policy, which outlines a clear, stepwise process for the submission,</p>	

<p>number of students is not large. Up to date, complaints are dealt with the course instructors, and at a higher level with the coordinator. Further complaints are expressed through the on-line questionnaire provided at the end of each semester. However, the College must establish a complete student complaint procedure, which must be included on all relevant brochures and websites giving extra consideration on anonymity. The procedure should also be hierarchically stepwise, initiating from the instructor for academic issues. For complaints of other nature, the College might consider establishing a procedure of "Student Advocate" having a high degree of confidentiality.</p>	<p>escalation, and resolution of student complaints. The policy distinguishes between academic and non-academic issues and ensures accessibility, fairness, confidentiality, and protection from retaliation.</p> <p>To support the implementation of this procedure, a Student Complaint Form has been created. This form allows students to submit complaints either with full identification or anonymously, and provides space to describe the issue, actions taken, and the desired outcome. Supporting documents can also be attached.</p> <p>The College is committed to enhancing transparency and student engagement and is taking the necessary steps to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Publish the policy and form on the official website;</li> <li>2. Include the procedure in all relevant student brochures and handbooks;</li> <li>3. Ensure staff and students are adequately informed about the complaint mechanism during orientation and through academic advising.</li> </ol> <p>In alignment with the Committee's recommendation, KES College is also considering the establishment of a "Student Advocate" role, or a similar mechanism, to handle sensitive non-academic complaints with a high degree of confidentiality and independence.</p> <p>Please find the student complaint policy and form in <b>Appendix G</b>.</p>	
<p>Students strongly complained about a specific faculty member that denied access to the examination papers of the students. This denial, on behalf of the faculty member, forces students to officially complain to the coordinator of the program who managed to provide the examination papers to the students. However, such attitude should be tolerated by the administration based on student-centred educational system since the coordinator should not be able to justify and explain the correct answers to the students. The right of the students to review their examination papers with the course</p>	<p>KES College acknowledges the Committee's concern regarding a reported incident where a faculty member mishandled a student's request for access to his midterm examination test, after the date that the midterm discussion results were discussed in class. The particular student was absent from class on that occasion. We would like to clarify that this was an isolated case, the result of a misunderstanding, and not reflective of the College's policies or educational philosophy.</p> <p>The College places strong emphasis on transparency, fairness, and student rights as part of its student-centred approach. Students are explicitly informed of their right</p>	

<p>instructor should be added to the Departmental regulating bylaws.</p>	<p>to review examination scripts during:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The orientation sessions at the beginning of their studies,</li> <li>2. The Student Handbook, which outlines academic rights and procedures,</li> <li>3. Ongoing communication with faculty and programme coordinators throughout the academic year.</li> </ol> <p>Following the incident, the matter was resolved by the programme coordinator upon receiving information of the event. This is proof that KES College has firm procedures in place to safeguard the students' right to receive access to their examination scripts.</p>	
<p>The faculty should add examination methods including electronic tests which would save significant time to the faculty members and pop-up tests (either in paper or electronically) to evaluate the continuation and normality of studying and training between the major examinations (mid-term and final exams). Oral exams might also become extremely handy especially for the laboratory session of the courses. Time allocation for each assessment is not provided in the course outlines. In some cases, it could collectively be deducted from the declared grade percentage.</p>	<p>KES College acknowledges the committee's suggestions regarding the enrichment of assessment methods. While the CYQAA framework does not explicitly mandate or elaborate on the use of electronic testing in conventional (face-to-face) programmes, the College recognises the value of summative assessment methods to monitor knowledge acquisition and student progress. Faculty members are encouraged to incorporate short, low-stakes assessments—such as quizzes, reflection activities, and group or individual assignments—between major examinations. These serve as effective tools for evaluating learning continuity and offering timely support. Regarding oral examinations, while their potential value is understood—this remains an area for future consideration. As for time allocation, it is understood this refers to the duration of formal assessments, such as mid-term and final written exams. These durations are now clearly specified in the revised course curricula (as per the committee's recommendation in <b>Section 1</b>, ensuring transparency for both students and evaluators.</p>	

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The KES College can be more specific on open positions in the "career opportunities" tab of the website. Specific job descriptions could be advertised to cover specific courses or groups of related courses, along with desired skills (degrees, professional background, languages, etc). More professionals from the Gardening and Landscape market should be sought as instructors.	<p>We thank the committee for the valuable feedback regarding the "career opportunities" tab on our website. We understand the importance of providing specific job descriptions to better attract qualified professionals and enhance the clarity of opportunities available at KES College. We are committed to improving this area and will take the necessary steps to make sure that future job listings are more specific, targeting particular courses or groups of related courses. This will include outlining the desired skills, qualifications, and experience required for each position, such as relevant degrees, professional background, and language proficiency.</p> <p>Furthermore, we recognise that professionals from the Gardening and Landscape market as instructors can bring practical expertise and real-world experience to the classroom, benefiting both students and the college community. In response, we will actively seek out and engage with professionals in this field to enhance our teaching team. This effort will include reaching out to industry contacts, exploring partnerships with industry associations, and posting targeted advertisements for positions requiring specialised knowledge.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
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#### 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The number of students enrolled per year is low and strategies to increase them should be taken into consideration. KES College should organise at least one open-day per year and invite students from Higher secondary school to visit the collage, participate to national fairs dedicated to gardening and ornamental plants for presenting the course.	<p>KES College acknowledges the importance of enhancing student enrolment and strengthening outreach strategies. We are pleased to share that several initiatives are already in place to address this recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open Day Events:</b> KES College organises at least one Open Day annually, with the most recent taking place on <b>Thursday, 24 April 2025</b>. This event offers prospective students and the wider public the opportunity to explore our programs, participate in interactive workshops, engage with academic staff, and benefit from exclusive tuition offers.</li> <li>• <b>School Outreach and Collaborations:</b> The School of Environmental Studies, along with the proposed programme of study, is actively involved in <b>community engagement and educational collaborations</b>, such as the <b>informative event on Regenerative Agriculture</b> (September 2024) and <b>tree-planting activities</b> in collaboration with the LIFE-AgrOassis project.</li> <li>• <b>Participation in Environmental and Agricultural Fairs:</b> The College actively engages in <b>national initiatives and environmental sustainability projects</b>, such as its <b>collaboration with the Department of Forests and KES Research Centre</b> for the production of deep-rooted plants and the planting of over <b>7,000 trees and shrubs</b> as part of Cyprus' climate adaptation efforts.</li> <li>• <b>Active Involvement of Students:</b> Our students participate in <b>hands-on, high-</b></li> </ul>	Choose level of compliance:

	<p><b>impact activities</b>, reinforcing both their practical learning and their role as ambassadors of the programmes. Their involvement in these projects strengthens the visibility and attractiveness of the programs to new applicants.</p> <p>Moving forward, KES College remains committed to further strengthening its student recruitment efforts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding its presence at <b>national and sector-specific fairs</b>.</li> <li>Enhancing its digital marketing campaigns targeted at secondary education institutions.</li> <li>Continuing to host and support <b>thematic events and public engagement</b> activities throughout the academic year.</li> </ul> <p>These actions collectively support our mission to offer academically rigorous and professionally relevant programmes while increasing enrolment and community involvement.</p>	
During the interview with students, it came up that a teacher does not satisfactorily explain the evaluation of final written test, even after specific request. The committee suggests defining a specific day after the exam for a meeting between the teacher and students, where students can observe their mistakes, and teacher can explain the correct expected answers and the reason of the final score attributed.	As noted above, KES College has indeed such a process in place, together with backup procedures for students that happen to be absent from such meetings. These procedures safeguard student rights in line with the Colleges' educational philosophy. Please refer to KES College response above.	Choose level of compliance:
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## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
During the interview with students, it is reported that the practical experience in microscopy laboratory was limited to botany. The committee suggests using the microscopy for plant pathogen and insect identification as practical exercises. Moreover, practical gardening activities should be also planned such as the use of sprays or the application of fertilizers, etc., as previously recommended in Section 2 of this report.	<p>While microscopy is currently utilised in Semester 1, primarily for plant tissue and cellular structure observation in the course <b>Introduction to Botany (GRLN107)</b>, we agree that there is valuable potential in extending its application to plant pathogen and insect identification, particularly in courses such as:</p> <p><b>Management of Enemies, Diseases and Weeds (GRLN202)</b> – See weeks 2 and 5</p> <p><b>Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (Semester 6)</b> – See weeks 1-2 and 6-7</p> <p><b>Tropical and Subtropical Plants and Trees (GRLN301)</b> – See weeks 3, 6 and 12.</p> <p>Please find the revised programme syllabi in <b>Appendix A</b>.</p> <p>In response to the second part of the recommendation, we underline that hands-on gardening activities are included in the revised syllabi of the following courses:</p> <p><b>Introduction to Pedology and Fertilizers (CHEM114)</b> and <b>Urban Gardening (GRLN119)</b> cover fertilizer application.</p> <p><b>Health and Safety in Gardening (HESF100)</b> and <b>Plant Pest Management (GRLN202)</b> cover the safe use of sprays and pest control equipment</p> <p><b>Tree Surgery and Basic Pruning Techniques (GRLN120)</b> covers pruning and tree care.</p> <p>These practical components, along with related practical components that are covered in the courses Practical Training I &amp; II, ensure that the students engage with both scientific techniques and field-based gardening skills consistently throughout the programme.</p>	Choose level of compliance:



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

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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## B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Students need to get significantly more hands-on training on a range of tools and equipment regularly used in the Gardening sector: soil tillers, chain saw, lawn mowers, tractors, sprayers for pesticides and fertilizers, etc. They will need to know how to operate these, right from their first day of employment.	Please see KES College response in section 2.	Choose level of compliance:
Students need to get significantly more training in the recognition of pests and pathogens with the microscope and magnifying lenses. This will improve their ability to use the correct plant protection products, following recommendations from agronomists.	Please see KES College response in section 5	Choose level of compliance:
The EEC received comments that the complexity and difficulty of the study programme has decreased over the last 5 years, perhaps as a result of student high school background and learning ability. This is not desired. The College should maintain a good level of scientific information in terms of volume and quality that a vocational study programme should have.	<p>Although KES College, does agree with the EEC on the need to constantly improve the level of scientific information, in terms of volume and quality, it does not agree with unsubstantiated comments made to the EEC that educational quality has decreased over recent years. To the contrary, the programme has improved the training offered over the past years focusing on Gardening Design and Landscaping as proven by the final design projects of its students that reach professional quality standards and have been used to create real-life gardens (e.g. 1st Engomi Primary School Garden, or the Ora Village Park designed by our 2021-22 or 2023-24 students).</p> <p>These works have been supported by our recently upgraded computer labs and were provided to the EEC as proof of the quality of the training offered. They fully meet academic expectations of student engagement with 3D modelling, photorealistic design software, and bioclimatic landscape planning—all requiring synthesis of theoretical and technical knowledge.</p> <p>Moreover, the programme, due to its high reputation, has attracted more than 15 visiting Erasmus students and trainers only last year (DIEK Amarousiou) with very positive comments on the training provided.</p> <p>Furthermore, its current students are offered paid participation opportunities to</p>	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>work on state-of-the-art European research projects (e.g. Life AgrOassis or DUT-Feed4Food) or landscaping works (Greentech LTD Nicosia GSP Roof Garden Park) and are of high demand for employment by the industry.</p> <p>We believe that the constructive comments made by the EEC will further improve the quality of the teaching offered, and the College has proceeded to make revisions and refinements to the curriculum.</p> <p>The refinements include:</p> <p>Separation of theoretical and practical components across all courses (and where applicable), with dedicated learning outcomes, instructional methodologies, and assessment schemes for each. This ensures that theoretical instruction maintains scientific depth while practical sessions are aligned with applied learning objectives.</p> <p>Expanded laboratory content, including the integration of microscopy sessions in both plant pathology and botanical identification courses, to promote deeper scientific engagement with plant anatomy, physiology, and pathology.</p> <p>Reinforced evaluation criteria that incorporate both formative and summative assessment methods, including individual assignments, case-based tasks, final written exams, and practical evaluations with clearly defined scoring ranges and passing criteria (60/100).</p> <p>Updated course content and weekly structures, especially in subjects such as Urban Forestry, Chemistry, Aromatic and Medicinal Plants, and Plant Protection, to reflect current industry standards, environmental concerns, and sustainability principles.</p> <p>These adjustments aim not only to uphold, but to elevate the scientific and academic quality of the programme, ensuring graduates are well-equipped for professional and technical challenges in the field of gardening and landscape design. The College remains committed to maintaining academic integrity while</p>	
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	offering appropriate support to diverse student profiles.	
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### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr Vassias Vassiliades	Director of Academic Affairs	
Dr Dimitrios Sarris	Programme Coordinator	
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Date: 27/05/2025



