

# The Limassol College

## Strategy and Feasibility Plan for the BSc. in Dietetics and Nutrition

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**THE EXPERTS ALLIANCE**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TLC has been a pioneer in specialized higher education degrees for decades. Its long-term survival and the constant growth of the quality of education offered are a result of constant alignment with the market, the academia and the students' capabilities and priorities.

The market has had substantial changes over the last years, some of which is the growth of international students' number and the general preference for courses taught in the English language, the need to add entrepreneurial and marketing topics at all levels of education as well as the shifts in the international scene that are demanding different services related to nutrition and dietetics.

As presented and analysed in the present study, the market conditions are very favourable for the experts of nutrition and dietetics, both in the domestic (EU) as well as the international market and the job prospects are growing at an ascending rate per annum.

The feasibility of the college depends on the volume of domestic as well as international students, something that has been proactively tackled and the results during the last two academic years have been extremely positive.

The projections are very promising, with an average increase of the student base of 16% per annum, with lower management costs due to optimization and synergies creation.

The future is positive and feasible. The college must continue to evolve continuously in order to be perfectly aligned with academia and the market.

## CHAPTER 1: Development Strategy

### 1.1 MARKET DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITIES

TLC has been a pioneer over the last decades in the segment of higher education, since it was the first college to tackle dietetics and nutrition as focal points of expertise.

The most important element of the college's competition angle is that it stays ahead of market changes by embracing the future and forecasting the next steps in its areas of specialization.

The big change in the education market in Cyprus that has been observed is that the market has a certain degree of internationalization. Following Brexit as well as different changes in the market, there is an important increase of inbound international students, who require to be taught in English. This new development and market need has pushed the TLC management team to establish the BSc. Dietetics and Nutrition in the English language, which has become rapidly its flagship programme with 110 students currently enrolled for 2023-2024.

The need for hosting international students most of which are non-EU citizens is a widespread phenomenon on the island's educational industry and as a result it was recently fortified with the establishment of foundation courses taught in the English language. Not only TLC, but the majority of higher education institutions in Cyprus established for the first time this year (2024) a foundation course in the English language.

A second change that has been observed and formally showcased in industry reports, shows that in a few years the majority of professionals will no longer be under the umbrella of employment, but they shall operate at their own account as freelancers offering their services to different organisations. This important change requires for students to possess additional skillset summarized under two categories of classes of special interest:

- a. Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- b. Digital Marketing

Having in mind the two main developments of the market, TLC has prepared a detailed strategic plan for achieving its goals.

## 1.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING

In an effort to respond to the challenges mentioned above ('1.2') and to turn uncertainty into opportunity, TLC has already established its core BSc. Dietetics and Nutrition in modules taught exclusively in English. In order to enhance the development of this course and attract a maximum of students while providing them with excellent educational and knowledge accumulation opportunities, TLC shall proceed with:

- a. Establishing more contracts with international agents from different countries in the world.
- b. Collaborate with agents in order to participate in more exhibitions related to higher education abroad, while continuing its presence in the local events.
- c. Strengthen relationships with international medical centres in Cyprus and abroad in order to facilitate international internships for its students, allowing them to be introduced as future professionals in different countries in the region.
- d. Create a specialized placement test in the English language (above the minimum requirements in IELTS and IGCSE) so as to be able to invite Greek speaking students into the BSc. taught in English in an effort to maximise operational optimization guaranteeing feasibility and profitability.

The BSc. taught in the Greek language will remain intact for the time being, but it is envisaged that if the situation presents an opportunity, in the future it could be absorbed by the BSc. taught in English, creating extremely important savings in terms of resources and adding value on the international networking opportunities amongst students.

The attention that is currently placed in developing the international segment of the BSc. is a response to apparent market changes. Many Universities and Colleges in Cyprus have decided and implemented exclusively entire degrees taught in English. This is something that TLC has in its plans for the next five years.

The content of the BSc. in Dietetics and Nutrition is extremely complete in terms of scientific knowledge and in topics related to human health. It has been observed internally as well as via the evaluations that the course must be enriched with different modules that are offering specialized non-human health knowledge:

The two courses that are introduced and their content (brief analysis) are presented below:

1. Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- Definitions and Practical Examples
- Points of Convergence
- How to guidance...
- Business Models
- Business Planning
- Risk Management
- Financial Planning
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Implementation
- Management

2. Digital Marketing

- Definitions and Practical Examples
- Tools for Digital Marketing
- Platform choice criteria
- Budgeting
- Marketing Management
- Follow-up

- Leads to Sales
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Following these changes, it is certain that the students shall finish their degrees with more variety of knowledge and practical skills that will be enhancing for their future career, job interviews and management of their problem-solving tasks while at work.

It is important to mention that the additional courses taught by leading experts in their respective area of expertise with a strong experiential angle (practitioners) will also offer networking opportunities for the students through their own business network.

Based on the different market findings, the internal strengths and the various changes in the student demand and trends, the TLC management team is certain that its strategy is consistent and presents more opportunities than ever before.

## CHAPTER 2: MARKET ANALYSIS

### 2.1 MARKET FACTS

Dietetics is increasingly becoming a very highly demanded expertise for several reasons as shown below:

- a. Growth of population health concerns
- b. Extension of life expectancy of the population
- c. Apparition of new food consumption trends that require the support of professionals
- d. Qualification of nutrition as a capital element of a generalized well-being
- e. Legal enforcement of nutritional analysis on pre-packed food and restaurant menus

As we can see from a very pertinent study made by and for the Australian government (figure 1 below), the number of the nutrition professionals has seen an unstable trend but with a clear growth.

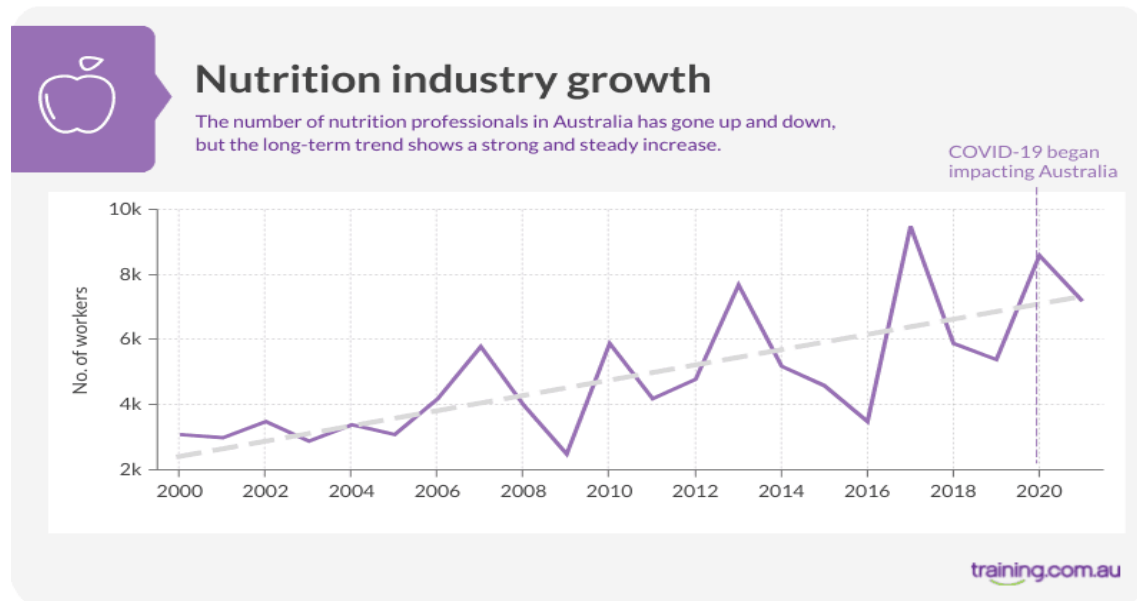


Figure 1: Nutrition professionals' growth from 2000 to 2020 (source: training.com.cy)

Over the last 20 years, the 3,000 registered nutrition professionals surpassed 8,000 by 2020, seeing a clear demand growth for their services. Covid-19 has impacted slightly this demand, because of the fact that many people used their home time to do their own research about special diets and specialized eating habits, something that is now fading. The demand for nutrition experts and dietetics is following a strong ascending trend.

This tendency is not irrelevant with the fact that the world's population is increasingly in worst health condition than previously recorded.



Based on the World Health Organisation (WHO), most of deaths are directly or indirectly linked to various conditions that can be prevented through a balanced and healthy nutrition, such as cardiovascular diseases.

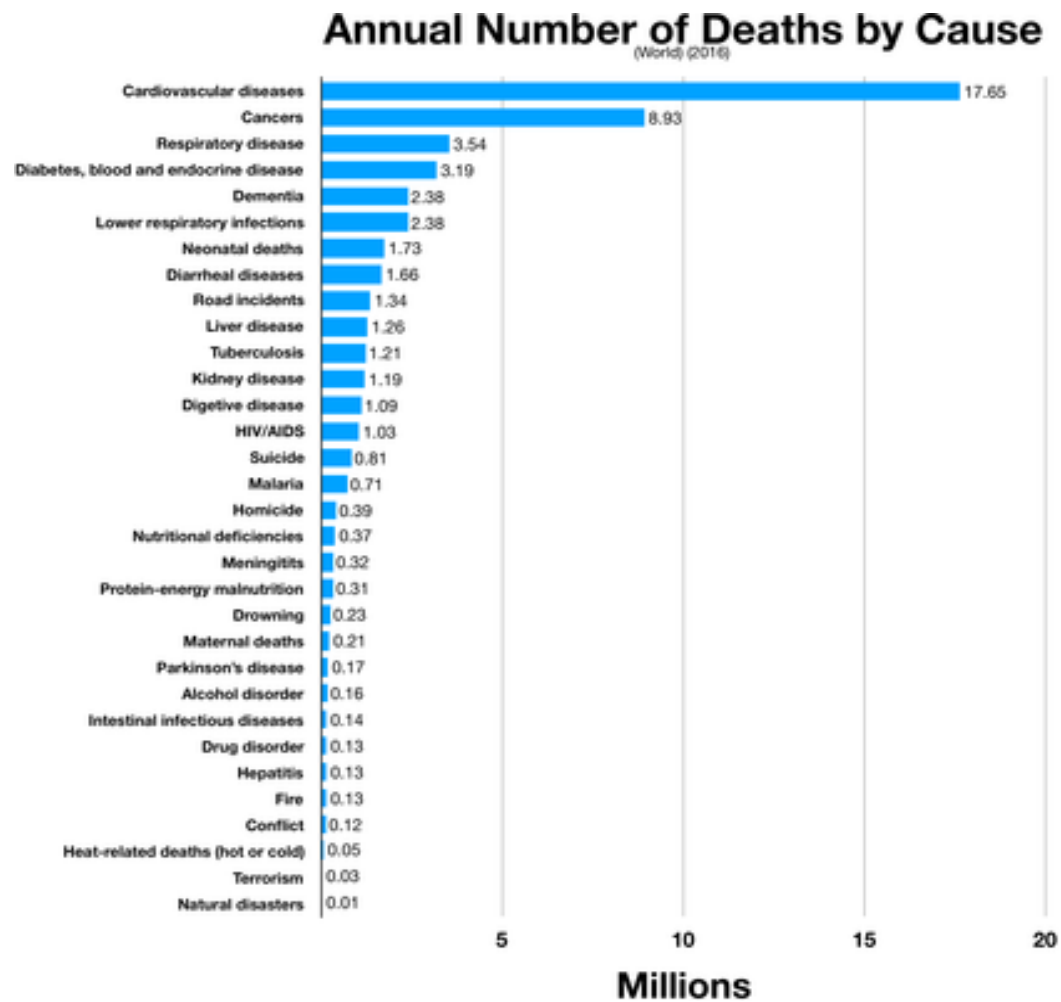


Figure 2: Cause of deaths in 2016 in Millions (Source: WHO study published on Wikipedia)

As we can see from the figure above, the first main categories of causes of death (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes etc.) linked to nutrition, amount for over 30 million deaths, meaning more than double than the rest of the causes. A balanced nutrition can prevent and/or contain this category of deaths and for this reason, the demand for services offered by dieticians and nutrition experts is growing at a strong pace.

Life expectancy growth, requires special attention to eating habits, that can preserve the health of the general population over time.

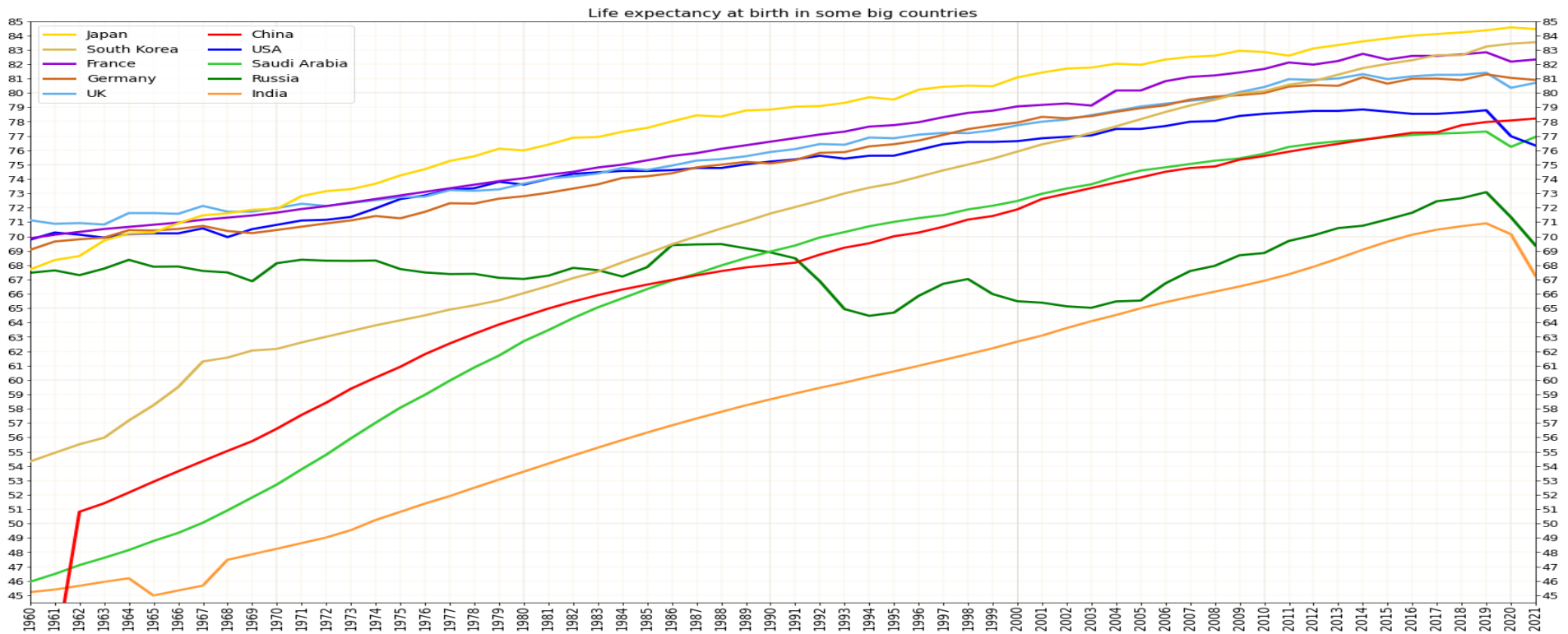


Figure 3: Life expectancy at birth in different countries (1960-2021).

Life expectancy prolongation is a fact in all of the parts of the world. The longer individuals live, the more it requires special diets and nutrition habits. The growth of the demand for special diet services from the general population and the life expectancy are moving within the same trend

It is important to note, that for several of the reasons mentioned above, the Cypriot General Health system (GHS) has decided to include the dieticians (clinical) as part of the services covered by the health system, in order to pave the road for patients to consult nutrition specialists towards health condition amelioration. Given that the GHS has approved the dieticians as part of the global health system covered through social insurance in 2020, a radical growth of the demand for such services is forecasted. The student candidates major concern beside their preference is the possibility of a remunerating career both scientifically as well as financially and for this reason dietetics is expected to have further growth at a GAGR at least 10% higher of what has been realized before the official insertion of dieticians in the GHS.

Dieticians are the only experts in the world that are able to scientifically adapt the eating habits of each individual in order to secure a healthy intake of nutritional elements such as carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and other. The growth of the demand for the services of dieticians and nutritionists is growing also through the need of people to adapt their new diet habits (e.g. veganism, vegetarianism etc.) to a healthier spectrum of food intake. The statistical analysis in the figure below is confirming the growing need for such services.

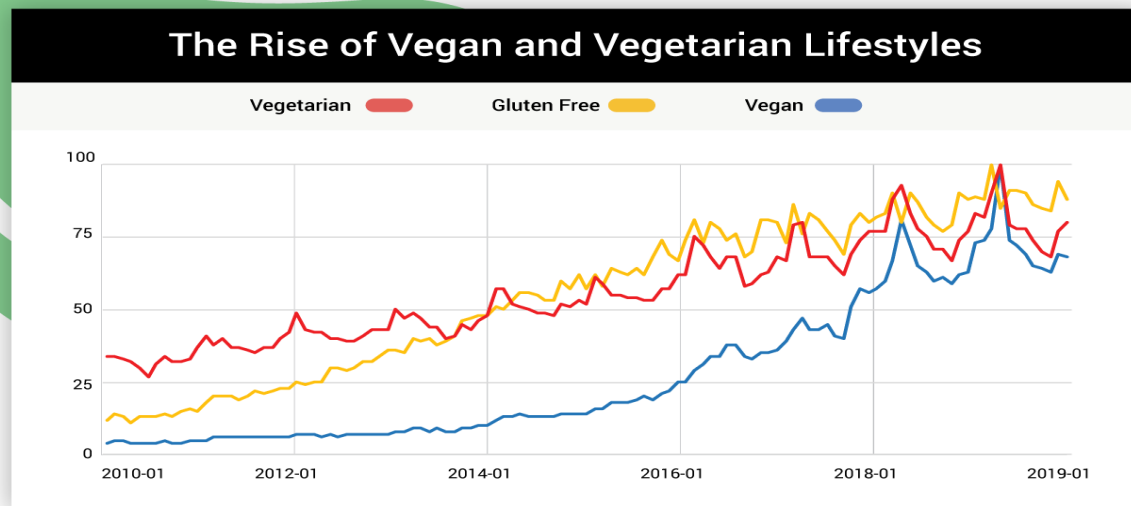


Figure 4: Growth of searches between 2010-2019 (GreenhousePeople, UK).

First of all, the potential growth can be registered through the interest of people in novel eating lifestyles and terminology. Using the searching criteria of people around the world, the GreenhousePeople in the UK published a keyword search analysis showing a trend towards new eating habits.

In a study published by GrandView Research, the growth of vegans is bigger than the growth of searches themselves.

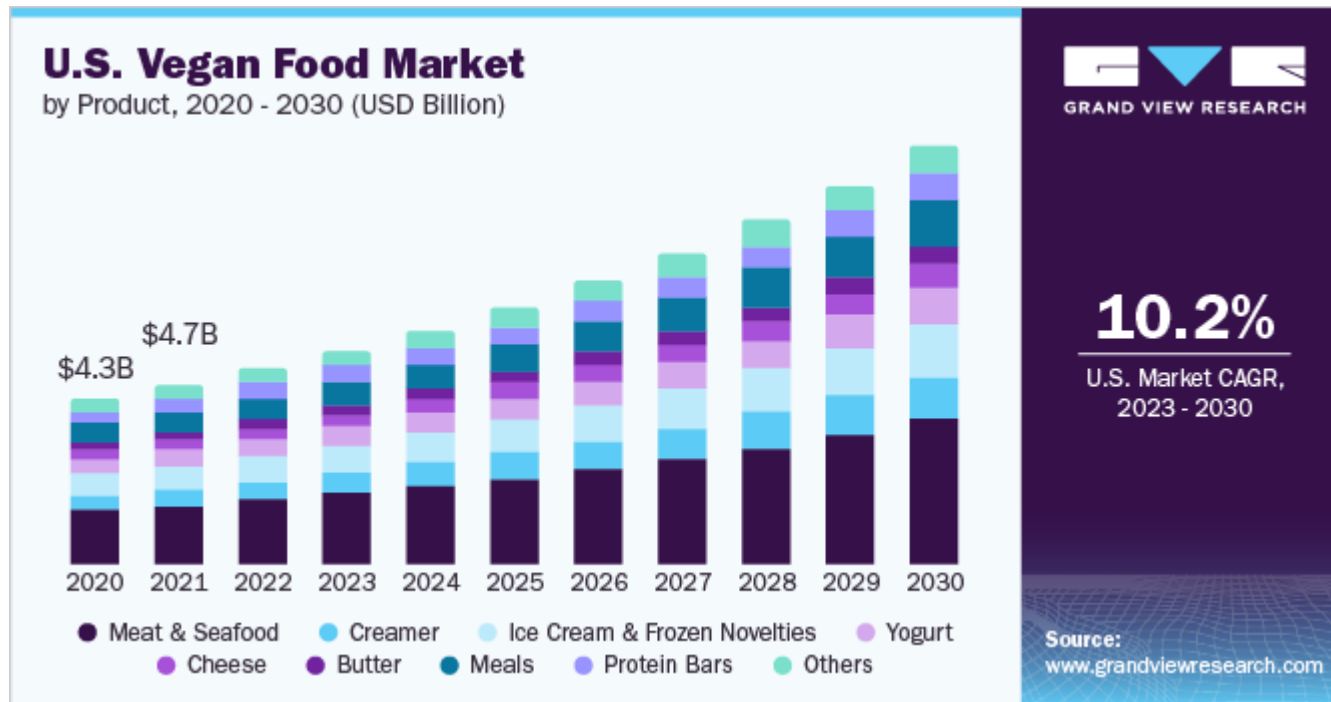


Figure 5: U.S Vegan Food Market 2020-2030 (Source: GrandView Research)

The gluten free market, follows a similar trend in the US as it can be seen from the Figure 6 below.

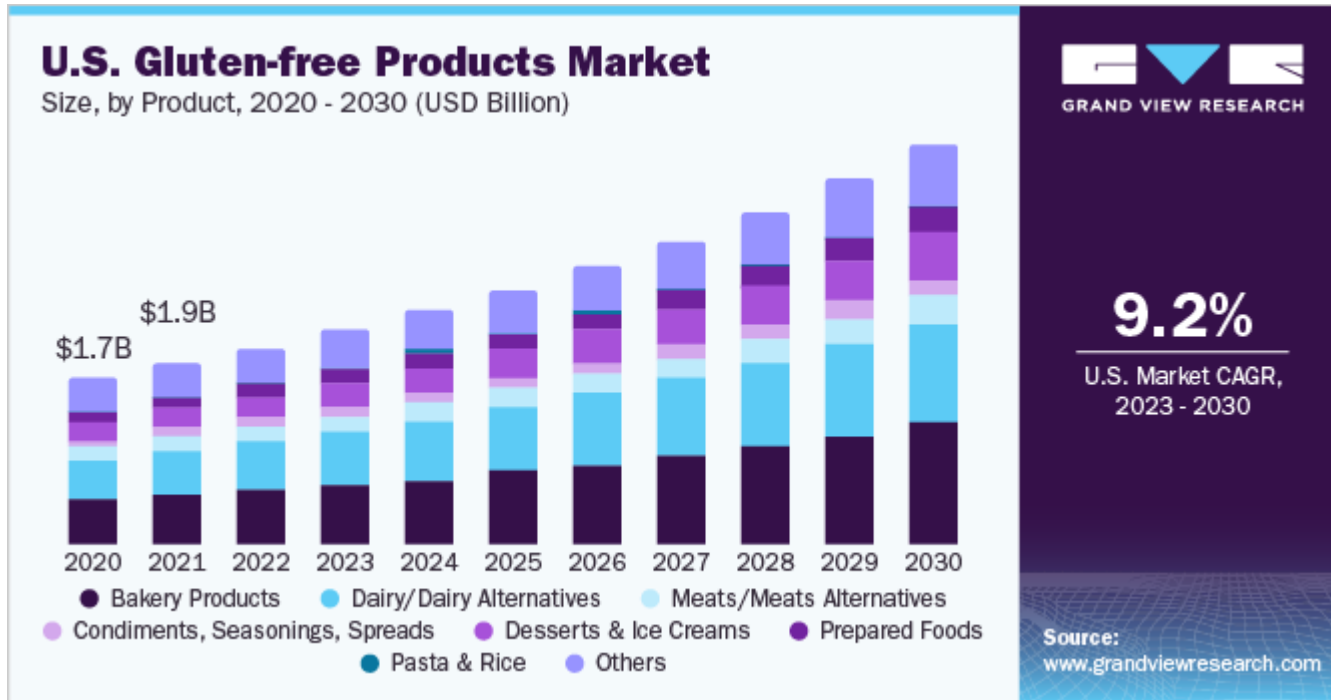


Figure 6: U.S Gluten-free Products Market 2020-2030 (Source: GrandView Research)

All the indicators have been consistently showing that the new eating habits are having their own ‘moment of glory’ in the planet and that dietary habits as well as combinations of food elements has to be done in a professional and consistent manner, giving birth of a new era for nutritionists and dieticians, who have the responsibility to help people make their change in a healthy and nutritionally balanced manner.

In a study published in 2020 at the request of the European Parliament, our firm researched and demonstrated the jobs of the future, with the health-related professions (including dietetics and nutrition) gaining grounds and creating numerous job positions in the next decade.

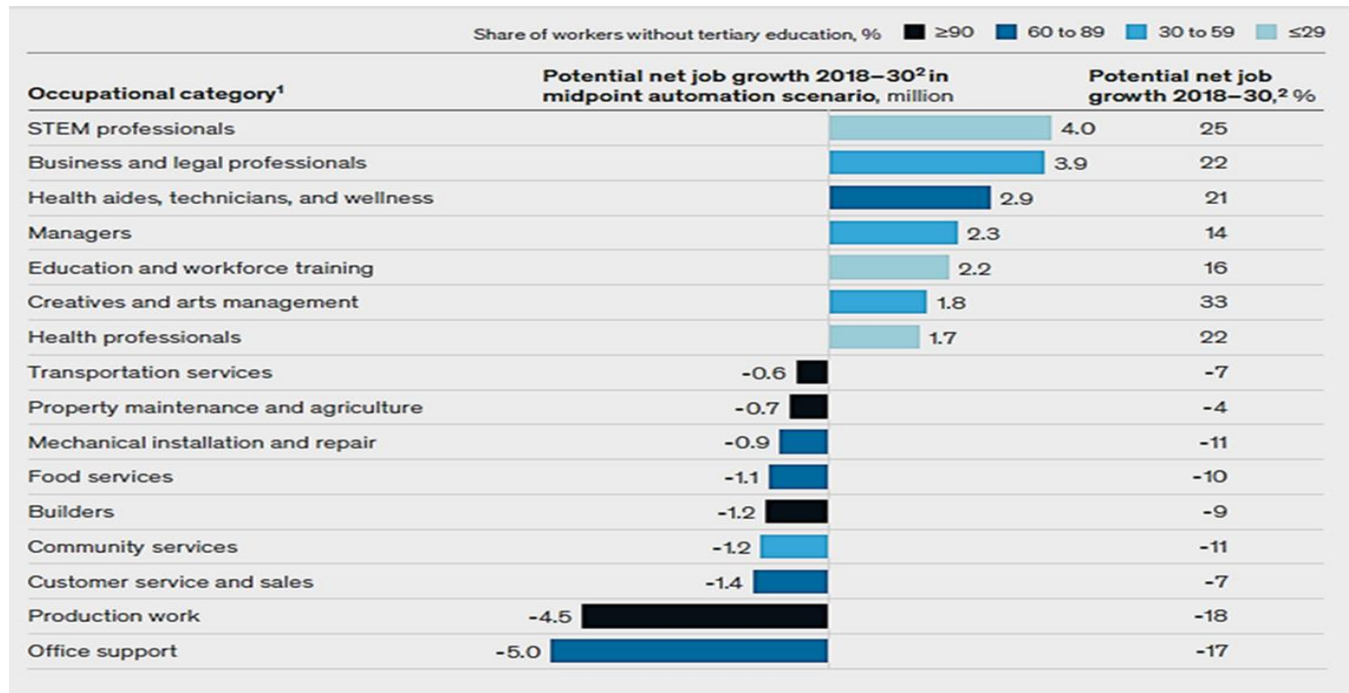


Figure 7: Labour Market development Analysis with forecasts (McKinsey Global Institute Analysis)

As we can see, the health professionals’ benefit of a forecast for 1.7 million new job positions in EU by 2030 and this represents a growth of 22% when compared to 2018. This shows that the initial demand trend is not only confirmed but certainly reinforced. Until 2030, the Cypriot market shall create additionally 500 new positions for Dietitians and Nutritionists working in Cyprus both in the health sector as well as in industry. TLC with its long-standing brand name and having a position in a natural oligopoly in Cyprus expects to have a large share from this segment. In addition to that, international students (not working in Cyprus) have to be taken into account. The target market until 2030 for TLC is equal to 4,000 Students.

## 2.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT ANALYSIS is a method of strategic planning used to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a business.

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A modern and well-targeted Undergraduate and Postgraduate Program, which has been designed according to internationally recognized criteria and is systematically subject to internal evaluation and updating (upgrading).</li> <li>➤ Excellent communication and collaboration of the academic staff of the Institution with bachelor and master degree students.</li> <li>➤ Establishment of a Student Welfare Office and a Counselling Office to promote and support student support actions.</li> <li>➤ Predetermined and at the same time flexible student evaluation procedures.</li> <li>➤ Specialized criteria for admission of students depending on the study program (Degree, Master).</li> <li>➤ High level of Academic staff for research with international recognition.</li> <li>➤ High employment rate (approximately 90%) of the graduates of all the Courses (Undergraduate, Postgraduate) without exception, in subjects related to their studies.</li> <li>➤ Comprehensive and inclusive internship program.</li> <li>➤ Implementation of the Moodle E-Learning Management platform for the distribution of student's educational material, research material, books, etc.</li> <li>➤ Uniqueness of Dietetics and Nutrition program in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The library is not lending.</li> <li>➤ Small biochemistry and food laboratories (dealt with small groups of students).</li> <li>➤ Limited capacity of student recreation areas (sufficient space in proportion to the number of students).</li> <li>➤ The financial resources are based only on the tuition fees of the students and the owner of the Institution</li> </ul>



provinces of Limassol, Paphos and Larnaca	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improving the visibility of the Institution (site upgrade, presence on social media, organization / participation of events, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Development of effective collaborations with the local community and its institutions</li> <li>➤ Enriching the BSc. in English. Attracting more foreign students</li> <li>➤ Distant or hybrid education and learning</li> <li>➤ Securing resources through external funding of research projects</li> <li>➤ Eligibility of students for State Student Sponsorship for each year of study</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Competition from other private and public universities (Threat of Entry)</li> <li>➤ The appointment of members of the academic staff with high experience and skills in the public sector</li> <li>➤ The decline of the purchasing power of families, due to the financial crisis, which results in the untimely payment of tuition fees</li> <li>➤ The constant changes in the institutional framework</li> <li>➤ Excessive bureaucracy</li> </ul>
<b>EXTERNAL FACTORS</b>	

Based on the above analysis, we conclude that TLC, based on its activities, core offering and additions in its strategy, has more competitive advantages than disadvantages.

Based on the current data of the Cypriot market and the sector in which the college operates, great growth and mainly stability in its overall revenues are expected.

## CHAPTER 3: STUDENT INTAKE ANALYSIS AND FEASIBILITY

### 3.1 STUDENT TOTAL – HISTORICAL DATA

The following table shows the number of students of TLC for the BSc. Dietetics and Nutrition as well as the Foundation course (future students for 2024-2025):

<b>BSc. in Greek</b>	<b>YEAR</b>							
ACADEMIC YEAR	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
STUDENTS NUMB.	71	57	48	45	37	29	24	27
ANNUAL CHANGE	N/A	-19.7%	-15.8%	-6.25%	-17.8%	-21.6%	-17.2%	+12.5%
<b>BSc. in English</b>								
STUDENTS NUMB.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	45	110
ANNUAL CHANGE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	+66.7%	+144.4%
<b>Foundation</b>								
STUDENTS. NUMB.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>21</b>

Table 1: Historic Data of Active Students (2016-2024). Source: TLC internal records

Based on the historical data, even though the BSc. taught in Greek has an important growth during the current year, and the projection is to have an important increase in the next few years (table 2), the English version of the BSc. in combination (additional inflow) with the Foundation course, has a projection that is triple than the Greek one. The Brexit, the internationalization of Cypriot higher education via foundation courses and the fact that healthcare related studies are in full growth globally, the BSc. in English shall become extremely successful.

### 3.2 PROJECTED STUDENT TOTALS FOR 5 YEARS

<b>BSc. in Greek</b>	<b>YEAR</b>					
ACADEMIC YEAR	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
STUDENTS NUMB.	27	36	40	44	48	53
ANNUAL CHANGE	+12.5%	+33.3%	+10%	+10%	+10%	+10%
<b>BSc. in English</b>						
STUDENTS NUMB.	110	121	133	146	161	170
ANNUAL CHANGE	+144.4%	+10%	+10%	+10%	+10%	+5.6%
<b>Foundation</b>						
STUDENTS. NUMB.	21	26	33	41	51	64
ANNUAL CHANGE	N/A	+25%	+25%	+25%	+25%	+25%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>ANNUAL CHANGE</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>15,98</b>	<b>12,15</b>	<b>12,39</b>	<b>12,66</b>	<b>10,21</b>

Table 2: Current (2023-2024) and Projected Student Totals (2024-2029).

As it can be seen from the analysis above, TLC is projecting on a conservative scenario an average growth of 16% per annum, fuelled mainly through the foundation course as well as the strong demand originating from international students that are taught in English.

The projections are based on historical data, market facts, planning and promotional efforts (strategy plan).

## **CHAPTER 4: STUDENT PROSPECTS**

### **4.1 CONNECTIONS WITH THE LABOUR MARKET**

TLC, has been closely related to the job market since the beginning of its foundation, since it is provenly important that the students value the institutions that help them to be introduced in the market.

The curriculum was designed in order to offer a high level of practical training to its students, but also the opportunity for the latter to introduce themselves to the market and start building their personal scientific brand name.

All students of the programme are required to pursue a formal internship programme of 26 weeks, with a minimum on-site engagement of 208 hours (2 days x 4 hours per week). The internships, with the supervision of the academic staff and the support of long-term TLC collaborators, are taking place in medical centres (Clinics, public and private hospitals, catering businesses, food manufacturing units, kindergartens, schools, nursing homes and in licensed dieticians offices).

The TLC staff and programme director are constantly in contact with industry professionals as well as the TLC's alumni in order to provide various access points and options to the labour market for its 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The majority of students pursuing their required internships,

are pursuing a career in the establishment or expertise they chose during their practical training, usually because they establish a contact and showcase their skills and knowledge during the internships.

#### 4.2 STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY PROSPECTS

Based on a study published in 2019 by McKinsey presented in Figure 7 above, it is clear that any profession related to healthcare will benefit of an extremely interesting growth within the EU over the next decade.

In Cyprus there is a projection for 500 additional positions for nutritionists and dieticians by 2030, out of which an important market share will be acquired by TLC.

The typical areas of expertise that the students of the current programme follow are:

- a. Clinics and Hospitals
- b. Other healthcare centres
- c. Education (all levels including higher education)
- d. Sports centres, gyms and spas
- e. Professional sports organisations / teams (consulting-based missions with execution oversight)
- f. Hospitality business (mainly for menu development and control – freelancers and/or consulting capacity mainly)
- g. Manufacturing units (food processing)
- h. Retirement homes (in-house, full-time)

Food labelling is an important career spin-off for dieticians and nutritionists. The (EU) regulation 1169/2011 of the European parliament requires since December 2016, the vast majority of pre-packed foods to bear a nutrition declaration and to be in full compliance with the regulations.

This creates an additional professional prospect for the students of TLC and is over and above the missions and employment contracts referred in the EU study for health professionals.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the facts and analysis presented in the Strategy and Feasibility Study, it is certain that TLC has a strong potential in developing further its activities and grow its student base.

The fact that the messages coming from the market were understood and the college reacted proactively to the changes and challenges, helped in adapting the curriculum and programmes to the market realities.

With the current facts as well as the future changes that will be implemented, TLC shall grow its number of students substantially, something that will guarantee its viability and profitability. The college is gradually becoming internationally competitive something visible through its development of the overseas student base.

If required, we will be happy to provide clarifications or additional levels of analysis for the different elements presented in the study.