

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 30/07/2021

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Ξενοδοχείων, Καζίνων και Θέρετρων (4 έτη
συν ένα προπαρασκευαστικό έτος, 240 ECTS,
Bachelor of Arts)

In English:

Hotel, Casino and Resort Management (4 years, plus
an optional foundation year, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of
Arts)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):** n/a

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 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 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.*
- *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 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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings reported by EEC

1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

“The College has clear procedures for quality assurance, and these are laid out on the public-facing College website. Moreover, and in collaboration with QUALISYS CONSULTANTS LTD the College has developed, implemented and is in the final certification stages of a quality management system based on the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015. The regulations are appropriate and show what is required of staff and students in terms of behaviour and commitment. There is a clear organisational structure that supports quality assurance through Committees with specific remits and prescribed processes., e.g., the process to ensure assessment quality, from confirmation, by review, of exam questions through to ratification of marks achieved.

A disciplinary process is in place to cover a range of disciplinary offences, including plagiarism. The nature and forms of plagiarism are laid out clearly in the regulations, and the students seem to be aware of them (although interestingly none of the students that the EEC met seemed to know the word ‘plagiarism’ per se). Currently, plagiarism is detected manually by module leaders using Plagiarism Checker X software. Students are also encouraged to use free plagiarism detection software to check their work prior to submission. This process, however, may prove cumbersome and therefore the EEC suggests that the College should somehow integrate its plagiarism detecting tool into Edu4Schools, its online learning platform, that should be used by students to submit their assignments, among others.”

1.2 Design, Approval, On-Going Monitoring and Review

“The programme objectives align with the strategy of the College. Moreover, the programme has clearly articulated learning outcomes, at an appropriate level for the target qualification and in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The College has established relationships with industry partners (including the Melco Group that runs Cyprus Casinos) to provide work opportunities, industry visits and inputs from the external stakeholders into the programme. The programme learning outcomes are validly linked to the management of hotel, casinos, and resorts. The EEC noted that while the College infrastructure seems to be satisfactory, there is a lack of casino-related simulator facilities (e.g., gambling tables). The College responded that such facilities are not required as the programme has a focus on management and not on operations. The EEC does acknowledge this point but suggests that the College should further clarify this in the learning objectives of the programme; moreover, the College should ensure that its students will somehow get an exposure into a real casino environment via its partnership with Cyprus Casinos.

Student workloads are clear and allow students to work if they wish/need to. Requirements for progressions are clearly stated in public-facing regulations and there is a mechanism to recognize prior learning and/or work experience, which may prove of value added especially to mature students.

Based on the information provided for existing programmes in the College, it is evident that students are involved in College Committees, including those approving modifications to modules. The procedure for change is through a formal Committee, which is appropriate to ensure the

integrity of the programme of study. Modules are reviewed annually in-light of student feedback and advances in the discipline.

Students can undertake an internship. This is not compulsory as for overseas students securing a placement can be difficult. Nonetheless, as the College aims at predominantly attracting Cypriot and EU students into this new programme, turning the internship compulsory at some stage may add to the credibility of the programme in the marketplace. The placement does include an assessment of performance.

The College is strongly encouraged to add an introductory module on Resorts and Casinos in Semester 1 or 2. Given that the words 'resort' and 'casino' appear in the title of the programme, waiting to be taught relevant topics until semester 7 and 8 respectively (as is currently the case) may disappoint some of the students. Likewise, the College is advised to add new modules such as Economics, Revenue Management, and Intercultural Communications appropriately contextualized. Existing modules may also have a service management orientation. Moreover, the College should consider extending the number of elective modules as the present structure is characterized by a very heavy imbalance between compulsory (228 ECTS) and elective (12 ECTS) modules. To accommodate all the above requirements, the College may consider merging some of the existing modules (such as Business Ethics in Semester 1 and Corporate Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry in Semester 4); or dropping some modules that can run as seminars instead (such as Business Computing or English for Academic Writing in Semester 2). More radically, perhaps, the College may rethink its policy of assigning ECTS into its modules based on the actual workload: at present all modules carry the same number of ECTS (i.e., six), although in practice the workload per module may differ across the curriculum."

1.3 Public Information

"The College website provides comprehensive information about the programmes, admissions criteria, programme learning outcomes and aims. No information is provided, however, on this new programme as its accreditation is still pending. The management team of the College ensured the EEC that they have already prepared a detailed plan to advertise the programme and provide related information to the public as soon as the programme is accredited."

1.4 Information Management

"The College is in the process of establishing Key Performance Indicators in accordance also with its ISO certification. The composition of the student population is well-known but is likely to change because of legal changes in Cyprus. This has been considered in marketing activities that are now targeting an increase in European students. Our impression is that many students are eager to go on exchange, and currently there are several student mobility agreements, especially with Polish institutions. Success and progression rates in other programmes are known and monitored, and students complete an end of module questionnaire for each module taken. The information from this is used to inform changes to modules; moreover, students use informal routes of feedback throughout their modules. The College may like to think about an end-of programme evaluation to determine overall satisfaction at a programme-level.

The College is currently considering the introduction of an Alumni Office, which, given the projected rise in student numbers, could be extended to become a Careers and Alumni Office."

Areas of improvement and recommendations reported by EEC

1. Instigation of a programme-level assessment of satisfaction;
2. Completion of development and implementation of KPIs;
3. Integration of the plagiarism detection software into the learning platform that should be used by students to submit their assignments;
4. Modest restructuring of the curriculum to add new modules and merge or eliminate others;
5. Rethinking of ECTS allocation based on actual workload in practice; and
6. Better highlighting of the job prospects that students can realistically expect.

Action/Response

1. We agree with the EEC's recommendation to start a program-level evaluation for students since this will help us identify any weaknesses and/or areas for improvement and take necessary actions aiming the students' satisfaction and the improvement of the quality of the programs and deliver even better student-centered learning environment and services. For this reason, we created a questionnaire for Student Evaluation of the Program of Study (see Annex I). The goal of the Student Evaluation of the Program of Study is to assist in improving its structure, organization, faculty and administrative staff, administrative processes, course content and material, as well as support services that enhance student learning experience.
2. The college completed the KPIs for the Hotel, Casino & Resort Management program (see Annex II).
3. The learning portal we use (Edu4Schools) cannot accommodate the plagiarism software. Therefore, we uploaded in our website guidelines for students to download and activate the plagiarism software (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/plagiarism-checker-avoid-plagiarism>). This way students can check their paper for plagiarism before submitting their assignments.
4. We welcome EEC's suggestion to restructure our curriculum and thus, we added new modules, we modified some modules (i.e. title, learning outcomes and content) so as to include casino topics as well (see Annex III).

New modules:

- HOS401 - Hospitality Revenue Management (required)
- ECO201 - Hospitality and Tourism Economics I (required)
- ECO202 - Hospitality and Tourism Economics II (required)
- SOC210 - Intercultural Communications (elective)

Modified modules:

- **Initial:** HOS100 - Introduction to Hospitality Industry -> **New:** HOS105 - Introduction to Hotel, Casino and Resort Operations
- **Initial:** HOS304 - Strategic Hospitality Management -> **New:** HOS311 - Strategic Hospitality and Casino Management
- **Initial:** MKT401 - Strategic Marketing -> **New:** MKT405 - Strategic Hospitality and Casino Marketing
- **Initial:** LAW300 - Business Law -> **New:** LAW310 - Hospitality and Casino Legislation

Additionally, we would like to inform you that, in order to add new compulsory modules we changed the following modules from required to elective:

- COM201 - E-Commerce
- SOC401 - European Union Challenges
- HOS201 - Wines and Spirits
- HOS309 - Service Management
- HOS310 - Principles of Hospitality Real Estate

Finally, the following elective modules changed to required:

- HOS205 - Sanitation and Safety
- HOS210 - Internship

We also attach the new structure of our curriculum ([see Annex IV](#)).

5. The workload of each course is allocated based on the assigned ECTS. Please find below the breakdown of ECTS:

- 30 ECTS per semester
- 6 ECTS per course
 - 39 class hours
 - 2 hours final exam
 - 1 hour midterm exam
 - 39 hours private study
 - 42 hours coursework (i.e. homework, assignments, projects, case studies, etc.)
 - 9 hours midterm exam preparation
 - 18 hours final exam preparation

6. Taking into consideration the EEC's recommendation, we highlight below the job prospects that student should expect:

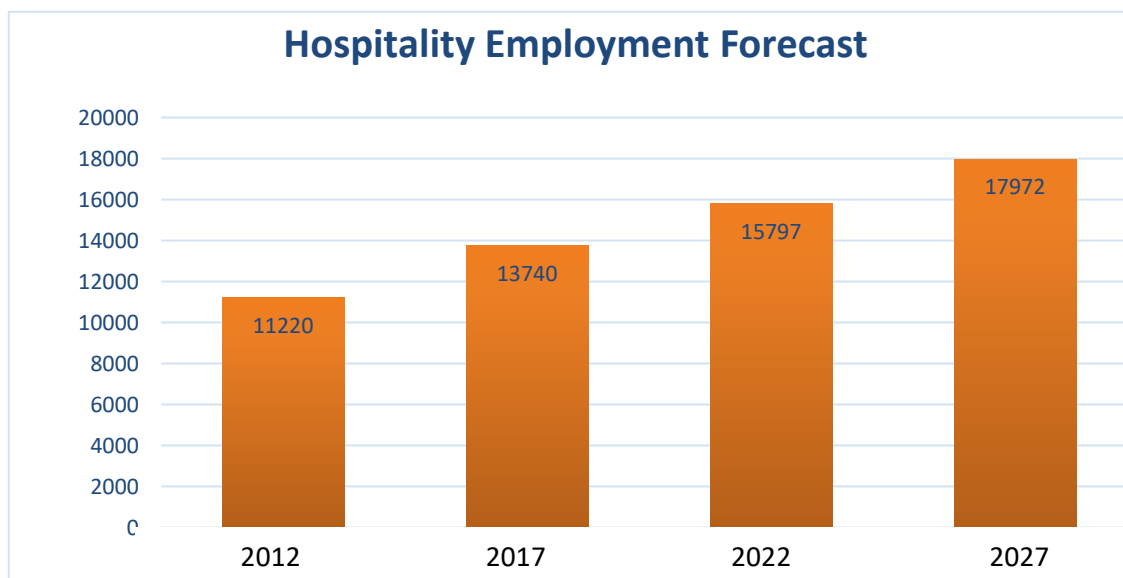
After graduation the students will be ready to face the reality of the hospitality industry which is asking more and more the best professionals with the best education background. The official Labour Office of Cyprus is asking for positions of middle and upper management positions. The same time the market of the hospitality industry shows a lack of quality service in some departments (based on the ratings in booking.com and trip advisor) and that is because there is a lack of good professionals in the industry. That is why Mesoyios College obtained MoU agreements with the best hotels (including among others the Four Seasons Hotel, St. Raphael Resort & Marina and Amathus Beach Hotel) and the City of Dreams Casino & Resort in Limassol.

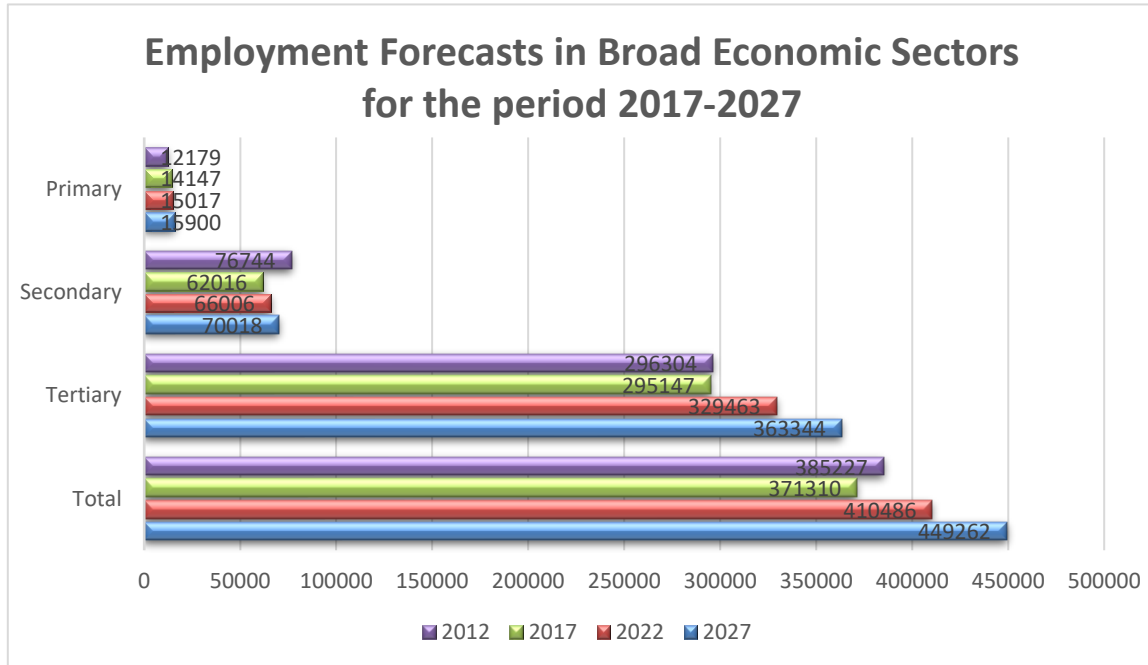
The hotel industry according to the Human Recourses Development Authority which is the government body with the only aim to accommodate all professions by announcing more and more the need for Hospitality Professionals.

The same happens with the hotel union and professional bodies and the requirements are for the following middle and upper management positions.

- General Managers
- Assistant Managers
- Rooms Division Managers
- Front office Managers
- Restaurant Managers
- Maître d'hôtel
- Head waiters

Please find here attached charts from Human Recourses Authorities of Cyprus:





(Source Human Resources Development Authority of Cyprus 2017)

Second most employed persons will continue to be in the hospitality industry showing a significant increase. It is forecasted that during the decade 2017-2027 employment will reach 2.470 persons or 6,1% per year (Source Human Resources Development Authority of Cyprus 2017).

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Findings reported by EEC

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

“Mesoyios College facilitates a student-centred learning environment via the provision of support to learners through various means and support services. This includes an academic adviser who is allocated to each student. The College’s Registrar confirmed during a meeting with the EEC that each academic adviser is encouraged to meet with their student advisees twice a semester. While this is not mandatory, the measure would help to ensure that issues ranging from welfare to academics are picked up and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

It was also reiterated by the administrative team during their meeting with the EEC that, while complaints are few and far between, there are processes in place to ensure that these are documented and resolved in a timely fashion. It is also evident that a number of academic staff has relevant experience in their fields of delivery, and some are pursuing a doctorate in the field of tourism and hospitality. This allows the synthesis of theory and practice critical to a vocational and context specific programme.

Course outlines are mostly structured to be generic, indicating teaching and learning methods and concise assessment modes. During the EEC’s meeting with teaching staff, it was evident that teaching sessions were interactive and student-centred, encouraging students to engage. At the EEC’s meeting with students, the latter were expressly complementary of academic staff whom they felt were attentive and ever ready to help and advice.

The College provided the EEC with a short demonstration of the Edu4schools web platform. It was reiterated by the College that the platform was launched in October 2020 to enhance the students’ learning, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; nonetheless, the five students whom the evaluation panel spoke to were not cognisant of the platform. It would appear that Edu4schools is more of a platform for the effective management of the College, from student attendance to communication with parents or teachers’ productivity and has little to do with truly enabling e-learning and facilitating interaction with students online. The college further indicated that online classes were conducted via MS Teams. This was confirmed by the students.

It was noted by the EEC that the module outline for Research Methods module (RSH300) submitted for evaluation, indicated that the ‘course content’ includes ‘the basics of Educational Research’ and the required textbook is about ‘Research in Education’ (ECTS is indicated erroneously as 5 on the course document). The EEC further feels that the module content is overly ambitious as it contains the entire nine parts of the required textbook. Upon inquiring during the panel discussion, the module leader indicated that the course module submitted is outdated, and the new outline (which the evaluation panel do not have sight of) accurately reflects the content of the research methods module.

Similar issues in course content, learning outcomes and assessment were found in Final year project 1 (FYP490) and Final year project 2 (FYP491). An example of one of many misalignments is the required word count for FYP490, 6 ECTS is 3000 words, while FYP491, 6 ECTS is a 20,000-word count requirement (see also earlier comments on ECTS allocation in Section 1 of this report). While the EEC acknowledges that the College may have a process in place for monitoring teaching and assessment methods based on objectives and intended learning outcomes, the EEC would strongly recommend that the College carefully re-examines their course content and

assessment weighting in line with the number of credits and the intended learning outcomes of the programme.”

2.2 Practical Training

“A number of academic staff with industry experience indicated how they incorporate practice into theory for the students. Students also have access to practical labs for rooms division and food and beverage management.

It was revealed to the EEC that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed with a casino hotel which would enable their students to visit and experience the operations of a casino first-hand. This is paramount to the students’ learning experience as the programme’s only ‘Casino Management’ course does not include the introductory and operational aspects of a casino, such as slot operations, table games, race and sports book operations, casino cage operations, surveillance and internal controls.”

2.3 Student Assessment

“Assessments for each module are approved by an internal review prior to use. Students are encouraged to prepare their assessments well in advance of deadlines. They are also aware of assessment requirements prior to submission. Assessment criteria and its requirements are therefore transparent. Students are able to seek formative feedback throughout their programme, via in-class exercises and homework. According to the students, coursework is returned with marks but not written feedback – the College may like to consider the introduction of written feedback on a standardised feedback sheet that includes marks against marking criteria, what the student did well, and how the student can improve in the future. Students were able to contact staff to discuss marks and informal feedback, including of presentations, coursework and exams.

A sample of assessed work is moderated or second marked internally to ensure consistency and fairness. If students feel their mark is unfair, they can contact the course leader to discuss and verify. The evaluation panel recommends that the College considers the moderating a definitive number of assessed work, for example a minimum of 6 for smaller class sized and 20% for the rest.”

Areas of improvement and recommendations reported by EEC

1. The EEC strongly recommends that the College carefully re-examines their course content and assessment weighting in line with the number of credits and the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Specific courses to note are (i) Research Methods - RSH300, (ii) Final Year Project 1 - FYP490, (iii) Final Year Project 2 - FYP491.
2. To consider acquiring an online learning platform for the primary purpose of enabling student e-learning and facilitating streamlined engagement with students.
3. To consider developing a separate ‘Casino Operations’ course (or at least to incorporate related contents in the introductory module suggested in section 1 of this report) that is run alongside visits to casino properties with whom the college has established a memorandum of understanding (MOU). As reiterated in the findings, having a course on ‘Casino Management’ where the students have little or no understanding of slot operations, table games, race and

sports book operations, casino cage operations, surveillance and internal controls, is not fit for purpose.

4. To ensure that assessment feedback, in particular reports and essays, should have written feedback accompanying the students' marks.
5. To consider moderating a definitive number of assessed work. For example, a minimum of 6 (for smaller classes) and 20% for bigger classes.

Action/Response

1. We welcome the EEC's recommendation to re-examine the course content and assessment weighting, and thus we proceeded and revised the three modules accordingly (see Annex V).
2. We would like to inform you that the College, since October 2020, started using Teacher and Students Portal named Edu4Schools (see Annex VI - samples of a teacher and a student's portal) through which teachers can upload their course material and students are able to download and study. Through Edu4Schools teachers and students can also communicate using messages (individually and massively to the whole class) and emails (individually and massively to the whole class).
3. We incorporated related casino topics in the content in some modules as mentioned in our response above (page 5 / response number 4, see Annex III)
4. Taking into consideration the EEC's recommendation we created a Generic Feedback Sheet for module assessment that includes marks against marking criteria, what the student did well and how the student can improve in the future (see Annex VII).
5. We proceeded with clarification of the size and composition of the sample to be moderated (only for Final Exam) within our regulations as follow:

Moderation Criteria

Choose Exam papers from each course on the following criteria:

Number of Papers Marked	% Size of Sample
Up to 5	100
6-20	40
21-50	30
51-99	20
100-200	15

201-300	10
300+	5

Example: **HOS101 - Food and Beverage Management:**

Total Number of Exam papers: 15

Therefore, size of sample = 40%

Total Number of papers to be moderated: 40% of 15 = 6

[6] papers to be moderated

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings reported by EEC

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development.

“For development of teaching staff the College supports with attending conferences, membership in professional bodies and travel expenses for fieldwork with 2% of academic revenues to be spent annually for such staff development activities. From discussion with teaching staff it has emerged that the College is supportive of those undertaking doctoral degrees, and teaching and administrative tasks are usually planned around the PhD commitments. It is the EEC’s impression that student evaluations do not have a very significant impact on the staff member’s promotion, remuneration and such. To incentivise members of staff the College operates a 2% increase on direct payroll.”

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

“The college employs 15 full time and 4 part time academic and faculty staff, out of which 17 hold a Masters’ degree, 4 are PhD candidates and 3 are also PhD holders. Nonetheless, two full-time members of staff involved in the teaching of the English language hold only a bachelor’s degree, which is an area of concern. The College has recently advertised a lecturer position with the requirement of a PhD degree, but its top management team claimed (in their discussion with the EEC) that the College has not received any interest. The EEC strongly advises that the College should undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree.”

3.3. Synergies between research and teaching

“The College invests an amount of €24,500 with an annual increase of 30% from other funds to be obtained through EU/Cyprus Government and other research funding sources. So far, the College has been able to attract some visiting faculty from other schools and countries such Poland, India and Switzerland. There is a Research Committee in place, but it is the impression of this EEC that this Committee might not be too active or with a set of well-defined portfolio.”

Areas of improvement and recommendations reported by EEC

1. The EEC strongly advises that the College should undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree. In this context, the EEC would welcome an increased visibility of advertised positions in academic for a such as Trinet tourism and hospitality community <https://tim.hawaii.edu/about-valuesvision-mission-accreditation/trinet/>, or internationally or academic job fora such as www.jobs.ac.uk, www.timeshighereducations.com, www.akadeus.com.
2. Increased attention to Affirmative Action policies in staff recruitment and development.
3. Setting up a small research centre to co-ordinate research activities.
4. Make use of a Conference Application form to further encourage staff to attend conference, and to streamline the process.

Action/Response

1. We would like to inform you that the college every year encourages and supports lecturers to enrol into PhD programmes. The college publishes its available job positions through online platforms (i.e. www.ergodotisi.com, www.kariera.com.cy and www.cyprusnet.com) as well as on its website (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/careers>). Also, we thank the EEC for the recommendation to advertise our academic positions and have the chance to find more academic staff with PhD. We already proceeded with creating an account and advertising our available teaching positions in www.jobs.ac.uk and www.akadeus.com (see Annex VIII).
2. Mesoyios College, under its application for ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, already has a Staff and Faculty Development Policy and Procedure (see Annex IX) as well as Faculty Selection Policy and Procedure (see Annex X)
3. We would like to inform you the following:
In 2020, the College composed a Research Committee which is composed of:
 - Research Project Coordinator (Chairperson)
 - Academic Director / Principal
 - Programs Supervisors
 - One (1) Faculty Representative
 - One (1) Students Representative

Objectives

- Promotion of research, innovation and critical studies in connection with the educational mission of Mesoyios College.
- Conduct of surveys and research, seminars, conferences, symposiums, training, publications, partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to promote its objectives.
- Promotion of interdisciplinary research, cooperation among peers and other institutions and academics.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Formulate strategies to assist in meeting its research objectives
- Identify research opportunities
- Monitor and review research performance
- Interact with external research agencies
- Advise the College Council on the allocation of any funds to support research projects

Within the academic year 2020-2021, we developed our Research Policy (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/researchpolicy>), Research Objectives (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/researchobjectives>) and our faculty's research activities are uploaded on our website as well (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/research-activity>).

Upcoming events and activities with the academic year 2021-2022:

- Academic articles
 - Books and book chapters
 - Academic conferences
 - Research Projects
 - Research workshops/trainings
 - Develop research newsletter/journal
4. We thank the EEC for the suggestion and sent us a sample of a Conference Application Form. We prepared the form (see **Annex XI**) and we will include it in our processes for research activities.

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

Findings reported by EEC

4.1 Student Admission, Processes, and Criteria

“The College follows a non-discrimination student admission policy whilst evaluating each candidate regardless of their race, religion, sex, disability, or nationality. This is a great way to introduce a varied range of academic backgrounds and experiences which potential students can share with each other and promote a cultural heritage development in the student community of the College. Related processes are carried out and implemented in a transparent manner and based on students’ previous records and high school grades.

In terms of regulations and admission criteria, the College’s policies are identical to those of other tertiary education establishments in Cyprus; these include a Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate and Proficiency in English language. For non-Higher-Secondary-Certificate holders, candidates may submit an equivalent qualification of Higher Secondary Education from their country of origin which can be evaluated accordingly.

Moreover, potential students are given the opportunity to apply for admission at any time, from the beginning of fall semester to the beginning of spring semester. This is very important for students who may not be able to enroll at the beginning of the academic year which is in fall semester and are instead given the opportunity to be admitted in the spring semester without missing out the whole academic year.”

4.2 Student Progression

“There is adequate monitoring of the students’ progress during their studies, and more specifically their participation in the educational process through daily observation of class attendance. In addition, different forms of evaluations are being carried out throughout the semester to determine student progression in a continuous manner. Teaching staff are always in disposal when it comes to inquiries and are ready to answer any questions in advance as well as provide feedback; this is recognized and appreciated by students as discussed in their meeting with the EEC.

As discussed previously in this report, student services and support teams are provided and include academic advising, student’s affairs office, student welfare, career support, personal support, counselling services, mobility office. The Student Affairs Office is dedicated to assisting students in their personal and academic development as well as progression. Moreover, students are also appointed an academic advisor who is following an open-door policy for students, meaning he or she is to be always available at any time.

As stated in the official website, the Academic Advisor meets each student twice every semester to review and discuss the student’s academic performance and progression.

A Grading Revision Procedure may also take place in case students believe that they may have been unfairly treated. The lecturer then fills out the necessary form of “Change of Grades” which would explain the reason for changing the grade.

Furthermore, Erasmus+ is also implemented and aims to give students a lifetime experience of what is like to be working or studying abroad. Erasmus is designed especially for academic institutions and students and provides beneficial support to all of them.”

4.3 Student recognition

“An assessment of evaluation is carried out regarding ECTS credits where students arriving at the College with prior qualifications may be exempted from attending certain modules. This a task undertaken by the Academic Committee and the Module Leader who are responsible in evaluating and ensuring comparability. The recognition process is always performed in transparency by examining and comparing the module in regards with ECTS, content and level.

Academic credits that have been earned in one programme may be possibly transferred into another programme in the same or another College. This transfer is only possible if credits from other sources are acknowledged and the process follows the accumulation of ECTS Key Documents which include course catalogue, student application form, learning agreement and transcript of records.

In addition, potential students may earn credits from life or work experience, business or industrial training programs and other achievements. This is conducted with a submission of a portfolio documenting the learning outcomes achieved outside the formal university courses. Hence, the learning or accomplishments that result from work experience are therefore credited.”

4.4 Student certification

“The criteria that must be met upon graduation include the completion of the programme requirements as indicated in the study guide, completion of all credits in each programme as specified in the study guide, a CPA of > 2.0 and a settlement of all financial obligations to the College. Then, the application for the issuance is laid out at the Office of the Registrar.

The process of final grading is thoroughly and carefully assessed through moderation by the relevant department and the Academic Committee as well. Marks are then authorized and approved by the Registrar with complete transparency.”

Areas of improvement and recommendations reported by EEC

1. For candidates who may lack of Proficiency in English language, a summer course language programme may be implemented prior to the start of the academic year and admission into the formal College programme. This will help candidates bring their skills up to date, improve their communication skills and engage successfully in the programme as well.
2. Whether a career placement is to be mandatory throughout the 4-year bachelor's degree and take form of a semester instead of offering classes, internships offer students the opportunity to acquire direct working experience in a business organization. The implementation of a 6-month or a summer internship should be considered as students owe to get a full orientation of both theoretical, practical but working classes as well.
3. Regarding absences, it is important that a monitoring plan be performed to keep a track record of absences as well as justify why those absences and non-engagement occur and therefore aim to eliminate them.
4. A suggestion may be whether it should be mandatory for students to participate in obligatory training schemes that may take place during summer. If these training schemes are credited upon completion, then the students will be more motivated to work, gain experience and improve their interpersonal skills as well. The industry is in great need of graduates who can

demonstrate a balance between both theory and practice and the best way to achieve this is within work experience which should be gained alongside the 4-year bachelor's degree.

Action/Response

1. We welcome EEC's recommendation for a preparatory English course for students who may lack of Proficiency in English language and thus, we prepared a 1-month Intensive English Summer Course (see Annex XII).
2. Taking into consideration the EEC's reference on the importance of the internship for students being able to acquire direct working experience in a business organization, as well as to get a full orientation of both theory and practice, we welcomed the suggestion and we changed the course "HOS210 - Internship" from elective to required.
3. We would like to inform you that we use an excel tool to keep a track record of absences for each students which is reviewed regularly by the Program Coordinator as well as by the Academic Committee at the end of every semester (see Annex XIII).
4. Taking into consideration the EEC's recommendation for students' participation in training schemes during summer period, we would like to inform you that our students will participate in one of the following courses every summer so as to improve their knowledge and skills and be more competent upon completion of their studies.

For example:

SEMINARS

- Teamwork and team building in a hotel and casino environment
- How to deal with difficult clients (gamblers) in a casino
- Up selling, cross selling and suggestive selling in a hotel and casino resort

WORKSHOPS

- Anti-money laundering and casinos - Legislation and rules
- Legislation and the strategic planning of the government for hotel and casino operation in Cyprus
- Basics of the gambling games (Introduction to Gaming) - using the facilities of the City of Dreams Casino & Resort
- Flaming and lamp cookery

Additionally, our students have the opportunity to participate in training courses abroad via Erasmus+.

All seminars, workshops and training courses will lead to certificate of attendance/participation.



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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These training schemes will not be credited. However, students will start developing a portfolio which will be a value added and competitive advantage to start their career in the industry.

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Findings reported by EEC

5.1 Teaching and Learning Resources

“Based on the video tour of the College premises, the teaching and learning environment appears to be adequate and readily accessible for students. While the mock-up of guest rooms and a dining facility are adequate to support the achievement of the programme’s objectives, the evaluation panel encouraged the College to consider the use of relevant online simulation software to augment the teaching of contemporary management issues specific to hotel and resort management, for example ‘Revenue Management’ (see also related comment in Section 1 of this report).

The College provides students and staff with infrastructure and facilities suitably adjusted to the functioning of the programme. The College relies on the Microsoft Teams platform to deal with both asynchronous and synchronous learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The College also remained open during the pandemic enabling students to use its IT facilities and library. As discussed in section 2 of this report, the College should consider investing in another online learning platform for the students. While Edu4schools may serve as an effective education management platform for running the school, it does not appear to augment the students’ learning experience.

The College claims to subscribe to Plagiarism CheckerX, although the free version was presented to the EEC. The EEC would strongly encourage the College to consider acquiring a plagiarism software that provides the marker/academic with an efficient measure of plagiarism detection. This software should ideally be integrated to the students’ online learning platform, so as to enable the students’ to check their work for plagiarism prior to submission (see also related comment in Section 1 of this report).

The college subscription to EBSCOhost was terminated, but the management team reassured the EEC that the subscription will be reinstated for 2021/2022.”

5.2 Physical Resources

“Based on the video tour of the college premises, the physical resources, i.e, premises, library, classrooms, study facilities and availability of computers appear to be adequate in the support of the study programme.

Available resources appear to be fit for purpose and students are aware of the services available.”

5.3 Human Support Resources

“The College operates a mentoring system where each student is allocated an academic member of staff as an academic advisor. The EEC observed that the administrative staff are enthusiastic and motivated, as they regaled the panel with examples of how they ensure that students receive the support required. These include counselling services that are outsourced to a professional external provider. The College also assured the EEC that provisions are in place for students with learning needs. In accordance to CYQAA regulations, the College has also ensured compliance in accommodating students with physical disabilities. Students appear to be aware of the range of services provided and provided.”

5.4 Student Support

“The College has a process for the Recognition of Prior Learning enabling student mobility across different tertiary education institutions. The five (5) international students who met with the EEC confirmed that the College provided highly satisfactory student support services.

The College operates a Student Affairs office with a dedicated student affairs officer. The following services are provided by the student affairs office:

- Personal development
- Student welfare services
- Erasmus+ advice
- Academic/ personal counselling services
- Career placement

The College has established articulation arrangements with various overseas institutions. Students expressed their satisfaction from their internship experience in Poland, which was arranged by the College. Students who had financial difficulties were permitted to pay their tuition fees over a number of instalments. Scholarships are also offered based on academic merit. Students’ mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.”

Areas of improvement and recommendations reported by EEC

1. To consider acquiring a plagiarism software that provides the marker/academic with an efficient measure of plagiarism detection. This software should ideally be integrated to the students’ online learning platform, so as to enable the students’ to check their work for plagiarism prior to submission (see related comment in section 1 of this report).
2. To consider acquiring suitable online simulation software to augment the teaching of contemporary issues specific to hotel and resort management, for example ‘Revenue Management’.

Action/Response

1. The plagiarism software being used at our college is Plagiarism Checker X for which we pay for licenses for the professional version (see Annex XIV), and **NOT** the free version. The learning portal we use (Edu4Schools) cannot accommodate the plagiarism software. Therefore, we uploaded in our website guidelines for students to download and activate the plagiarism software (link: <http://www.mesoyios.ac.cy/plagiarism-checker-avoid-plagiarism>). This way students can check their paper for plagiarism before submitting their assignments.
2. The College is using the HOTEL CRM SYSTEM simulation software (see Annex XV) for the courses: HOS101 - Food and Beverage Management, COM200 - Hospitality Information Systems, HOS401 - Hospitality Revenue Management and HOS202 - Restaurant Operations Management.



6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

N/A



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Constructive conclusions and final remarks reported by EEC

“There is clear enthusiasm, appetite, and determination to make this proposed programme in Hotel Casino and Resort Management work, and with it to grow the educational provisions of Mesoyios College. There is a clear organisational structure that supports proper provision of courses and the development of their provision through several committees on quality assurance, academic matters, disciplinary procedures, student affairs, as well as health and safety.

The College has demonstrated their clear procedures for quality assurance in the material presented to the EEC and also a on the public-facing College website. Moreover, and in collaboration with QUALISYS CONSULTANTS LTD the College has developed, implemented and is in the final certification stages of a quality management system based on the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015. The regulations are appropriate and show what is required of staff and students in terms of behaviour and commitment.

The titles, outlines and approaches in some courses could be further refined so as to make clear links with hotel casino and resort management topic. The EEC encourages the College to add an introductory module on Resorts and Casinos in Semester 1 or 2. Given that the words ‘resort’ and ‘casino’ appear in the title of the programme, waiting to be taught relevant topics until semester 7 and 8 respectively (as is currently the case) may disappoint some of the students. Likewise, the College is advised to add new modules such as Economics, Revenue Management, and Intercultural Communications appropriately contextualized. Existing modules may also have a service management orientation.

For this planned programme the College plans to increase the number of students to 45 in 2022, and 80 in 2023 targeting mostly international students. Given that the programme is taught in English, all incoming students are given an English placement test upon their entry which is crucial in identifying any English language weakness, regarding their proficiency level. For IELTS and IGCSE certificate holders the test may not be mandatory, and candidates will be able to follow the usual program requirements.

To ensure quality control among students’ submitted work, the College uses Plagiarism CheckerX, but only a free version, rather than a subscription, was presented to the EEC. The EEC would strongly encourage the College to consider acquiring a plagiarism software which should be integrated into the students’ online learning platform, so as to enable the students to check their own work for plagiarism prior to submission. There could be provisions for delivery of Library workshop around plagiarism and correct referencing.

The college subscription to EBSCOhost was terminated, but the management team reassured the EEC that the subscription will be reinstated for 2021/2022.

Regarding teaching personnel. the College actively supports development of staff with attending conferences, membership in professional bodies and travel expenses for fieldwork, and has committed 2% of academic revenues to be spent annually for such staff development activities. It is the EEC’s impression that student evaluations do not have a very significant impact on the staff member’s promotion, remuneration and such. To incentivise members of staff the College operates a 2% increase on direct payroll.”

Final Remarks by Mesoyios College



Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the EEC's time and constructive feedback in the evaluation of our Hotel, Casino and Resort Management program. The EEC's report is very positive and all assessment sub-areas (18 out of 18) were marked as "Compliant". With a persistence for academic success and excellence, we are taking full consideration of the EEC's invaluable suggestions so as to continue improving and innovating our services in our student-centered learning environment.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Theofilos Antoniou	Principal	
Fani Efthymiadou	Hospitality Operations Management & Hotel Management Program Coordinator	
Akis Ioannides	HR & Quality Assurance Manager	
Georgia Mouzoura	Internal Quality Committee Member	

Date: 30/07/2021

