

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: *Date.*

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Cyprus**
- **Town: Nicosia**
- **School/Faculty: School of Economics and Management**
- **Department/Sector: Department of Business and Public Administration**
- **Programme of Study**
Duration and ECTS: 1.5 years, 90 ECTS
In Greek:
Μάστερ στη Διοίκηση Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού
In English:
Master in Human Resource Management
- **Language(s) of instruction: 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 300.1.1/2 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)

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's strengths in relation to its design and development. In this category, the EEC noted that the Program is fully compliant with the standards, except for the sub-area "Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review", where it is assessed as partially compliant.

We also thank the EEC for their constructive recommendations for further improving the Program. We quote below all recommendations made by the EEC and provide our responses.

1. Split the methods course into three separate courses (namely statistics and quantitative methods, qualitative methods and research methods), and leverage students' quantitative expertise to infuse a strong analytics component into the relevant HR content courses.
 - a. The statistics and quantitative methods course should be given in the first semester.
 - b. The other methods courses, more aligned with students' thesis research, could remain later in the course sequence.

The opportunity of learning and practicing research methods is provided throughout the program and in all courses. This practice begins during the first week of classes, where HRM 530, "Principles of Management and Work," introduces incoming students to the research methods area. The main course in research methods, HRM 540, "Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods," delves deeper into "research methods" and then covers quantitative and qualitative methods as well as statistics.

Given the EEC recommendations, the course HRM 540 will be taught earlier, and more specifically during the period of November – December, as shown in the New Program Curriculum (Annex A). In this respect, we agree with the EEC that quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as statistics, is key knowledge for all subsequent courses of the Program.

2. Consider adding a workshop in accounting and finance as HR executives desire and are expected to be able to participate in broader management discussions ("have a seat at the table").

The absence of an accounting and finance course is also present in similar degrees of esteemed universities around the globe. However, given the diverse background of the Program's students, they would benefit from being exposed to such issues. As such, we will initially incorporate a more detailed discussion of the need for HR managers to understand and speak the language of the CFO in HRM 532.

3. Ensure that the current course framework provides sufficient coverage of such emerging HR issues as "gig employment" and human-machine (AI) interface, as well as more traditional employment relations issues as labour law and collective bargaining.

We cover these issues up front with HRM 530, "Principles of Management and Work", while employment relations issues, like labour law and collective bargaining, are covered in courses HRM 561, "The Regulatory Framework of HRM" and HRM 577, "Workshop on Negotiations and

Conflict Resolution”. Following the EEC’s suggestion, the Program will make sure that current and legal issues are always covered to the extent necessary to help prepare students for their careers.

4. Streamline the program and address course overlaps by reducing the number of courses offered and expanding the breadth and depth of key courses.
 - a. For example, given that specific courses in each of the HR domains such as staffing, performance management and compensation are offered, consider dropping the introductory HR course and expanding the strategic HR course to include an overview of these domains.
 - b. Additionally, the program includes a number of courses in organizational behaviour (e.g., OB, leadership, creativity), organizational theory (management principles, ethics, change) and strategic/international management (strategy, entrepreneurship). While these courses undoubtedly offer students a good foundation for understanding the broader management context, it is likely that much of this material can be covered more efficiently in fewer courses, thus enabling the program to enrich and expand the HR-oriented courses.
 - c. Overall, we encourage the program director to develop a curriculum map in order to make more efficient use of the teaching resources available.

The new proposed Program Curriculum (Annex A), includes changes from the above proposals. More specifically, the HR introductory course (HRM 532) will be renamed “Human Resource Management and Strategic HR”, focusing mainly on the strategic aspects of HR and how they relate to each major HR functional area, and be relieved from information included in other, more specialized courses. In addition, the Program will ask all instructors to provide a matrix with ILOs connecting the learning outcomes of their courses to the goals and principles of the Program, as stated in the Instructors Manual. The result will be what is considered a curriculum map.

5. Attention should be paid to the compensation course. Given the centrality of this topic in HR, this course would likely benefit from an expansion in the number of hours allocated to it.

The new proposed Program Curriculum (Annex A), includes the above proposal. More specifically, HRM 537, “Compensation and Rewards Management” will be extended to a full course (6 ECTS, 28 contact hours).

6. Students voiced a desire to incorporate a broader range of applied analytics skills in the program.

HRM 575, “Workshop on HR Analytics and Evidence-Based HRM” has been extended to 12h, to include an HR oriented special training of analytic tools.

7. As a research-oriented program, students should have more opportunities to study papers published in scholarly journals, and to apply the insights that they glean from these papers to practical workplace issues.

Study papers published in scholarly journals are already part of many courses, such as HRM 530, “Principles of Management and Work”, HRM 531, “Advanced Organizational Behaviour”, HRM 560, “MNCs Employment Systems and Institutions” and HRM 561, “The Regulatory Framework of HRM”. The Program will further encourage all instructors to promote the study of such papers during their courses.

8. Setting up regular meetings across faculty members to discuss the full curriculum, and the overall coherence and consistency of the program, as well organizing a Board of External Advisors might be solutions for a more systematic focus on quality.

The Program will conduct annual meetings with the instructors, at the end of each academic year. These meetings will have the form of Focus Groups to provide the opportunity to collect and discuss feedback in order to incorporate useful changes to the curriculum and the course syllabi, in line with the learning outcomes and the strategic goals of the Program. Already, at the end of the basic sequence of courses, in May – June of each year, the Program conducts similar Focus Groups with the students.

In addition, the Program and its Director individually, are active members of the Cyprus Human Resource Management Association (CyHRMA), which serves as the professional advisor of the program, thus the Program is actively informed of all new trends emerging in the HRM area, locally and internationally.

9. Related to the information management, it is clear that a lot of data is collected and analysed (over time). It is, however, not yet clear to the external evaluation committee how the resulting information leads to actionable insights, and how faculty members or students are involved in the process of translating the resulting information into concrete actions.

Data collected overtime, helps to develop collaborative schemes with the local industry and the public sector, via the preparation of student individual and group projects. The close collaboration with a private international working-environment assessment organization, serves highly this purpose.

10. There is a webpage related to the program, but we received an error message when clicking through: <https://newdev.ucy.ac.cy/mschrm/en/>. Because of this error message, it is difficult to pronounce upon the standard regarding the extent to which the information that was available to the external evaluation committee is also publicly available.

We are very sorry that the EEC was not able to review our website. The right link is: [MSc Human Resource Management \(ucy.ac.cy\)](https://ucy.ac.cy/mschrm/en/), which was provided in all documentation submitted to the EEC.

11. We neither received nor found information on the yearly pass rates or average time to graduate.

We are sorry that this information was not requested. The Program will gladly provide such information, if necessary.

12. The part on quality assurance on the website of the university could be enhanced, and provide the broader public with the systems in place. There is almost no content on this

webpage which is a pity given the structures, regulations and processes that are in place, see <https://www.ucy.ac.cy/GoverningBodies/en/quality-assurance>.

We appreciate this recommendation. The Program will forward the above comments to the respective party within UCY.

13. The external evaluation committee would suggest to formulate the intended learning outcomes as skills and behavioural competencies students will possess (a) at the end of each course, and (b) at the end of the program so as to make sure they can be assessed properly, and to execute a curriculum mapping (i.e. map all learning outcomes against all courses). That way, overlap can be avoided and the growth in competencies throughout the trajectory will become clearer.

Please see our answers above, in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.8.

14. Related to this, the learning outcomes for the master's thesis as well as the standards for grading were not explicitly mentioned in the assessment document.

We have all relevant information recorded and included in the Program's Thesis Manual.

15. Finally, we suggest a periodic review of all course syllabi with the program faculty in order to identify gaps and overlaps in core knowledge and competency domains.

Every year, all syllabi are revised by the instructors individually and the Director of the Program before the beginning of each course. As noted in 1.8, from now on, we will host group meetings with instructors as well.

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

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's strengths in relation to the learning, teaching and assessment of students. In this category, they noted that we are fully compliant.

We also thank the EEC for their recommendations for further improving the Program. We note each recommendation below and provide our responses.

1. The faculty members acknowledged the diversity in student profile, and mentioned that this can be a challenge.
 - a. One way to move forward might be the introduction of a boot-camp with some preliminary courses to make sure the students are (even more than they are now) on the same page. This might also have a socialization function.
 - b. Also, a self-learning module could be developed. That way students can prepare themselves at their own pace before the start of the official courses. Both options could be combined with a test to make sure that the knowledge and skills are at the same level for each student.
 - c. Alternatively, the program could be more selective at the entrance (e.g. ask for a minimum GMAT/GRE score on quantitative skills).

GMAT/GRE examinations are not currently used in the Cypriot educational culture and they are a prerequisite that could potentially prevent good candidates from applying.

2. Apart from the master's thesis trajectory, we found little evidence of research-based teaching (e.g., leveraging research published in scholarly journals was highlighted in one course, but some faculty voiced problems with this approach). This might be a point for attention for the future, especially given the research-oriented focus in the vision and mission of the university, and the department.

As noted in paragraph 1.7, work published in scholarly journals is already part of many courses. However, the Program will further encourage all instructors to promote the study of such papers during their courses.

3. In terms of assessment, it might be good to develop an assessment rubric in which scale anchors for each learning outcome are clearly developed. This might help to make the assessment more transparent and objective. It can also provide opportunities for giving very concrete feedback to students after the exam.

As noted in paragraph 1.4, the Program will request from each instructor to develop a matrix in order to explicitly connect the learning outcomes of each course with the Program's ILOs (core values and aims) and how the assessment (individual and group projects and final exams) adheres to them (the ILOs).

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's strengths in relation to Teaching staff. In this category, they noted that we are fully compliant except in the sub-area of "teaching staff number and status".

We also thank the EEC for their constructive recommendations for further improving the Program. We note each recommendation below and provide our responses.

1. The relative understaffing of HR faculty members is a significant liability for the future development of the program. Efforts should be made to recruit at least two additional faculty members in HR-related domains in order to address the imbalance of resident to part-time/visiting faculty.

This point is beyond the Program's control and relies upon UCY decisions. We will relay this very important suggestion to the University authorities. On this note, a new colleague in the field of Management will be joining our Department in September 2022.

2. Related to the area of faculty recruitment, attention should be paid to the gender diversity of teaching faculty. The committee noticed that there are very few women on the resident teaching faculty, although this is partially compensated by the balanced proportion men and women part-time/visiting faculty. We recommend that efforts be made to hire and develop more female resident faculty to ensure adequate gender representation.

This point is also beyond the Program's control and relies upon UCY decisions. We will relay this very important suggestion to the University authorities. We are glad that the Program at least adheres to this balance.

3. As noted above, rewards for teaching excellence remain under-developed. Steps should be taken to enhance the recognition of and rewards for teaching excellence.

We understand this point from a US/UK perspective. This is not something that is widely used in the Cypriot context. There is a teaching award at the University level, however, we will consider this for the future at the Department Level.

4. The HR program could be leveraged in three ways to further the department's research objectives:
 - a. Practitioner faculty should be encouraged to work with research faculty in pursuing joint research interests, with the former providing access to research sites and samples.
 - b. Visiting faculty should be selected with research synergies and junior faculty development objectives in mind.

The Program concurs and actively promotes such initiatives when possible.

- c. The committee was impressed by the quality of the student theses. Efforts should be made to: (a) ensure that theses are written in a manner more consistent with scientific writing (e.g., theses should not be longer than conventional journal articles), and (b) facilitate collaboration between students and practitioners in thesis research.

Thank you. The Program concurs and actively implements such synergies.

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

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's strengths in relation to the student admission, progression, recognition and certification. In this category, they noted that we are fully compliant.

We also thank the EEC for their recommendations for further improving the Program. We note each recommendation below and provide our responses.

1. One recommendation for improvement in this area will be adding a requirement on quantitative skills through inclusion of GMAT or GRE scores in the admissions criteria. The committee felt that the latter would respond to current and emerging industry-needed skills of HR specialists that will enable selected students to pursue a more analytics-driven curricula that may be particularly important for those with no quantitative background and with limited work experience.

As noted in paragraph 2.1, GMAT/GRE examinations are not currently used in the Cypriot educational culture and they are a prerequisite that could potentially prevent good candidates from applying.

2. The committee felt that the program will largely benefit from establishing systematic processes to collect and analyse information on students' progression (pass rates) and achievement -- overall, and for each course -- and use this information to develop a set of actions related to revising aspects of the program and its courses to address any progression/achievement gaps.

As noted in paragraphs 1.4 and 2.3, the Program will request from each instructor to develop a matrix in order to explicitly connect the learning outcomes of each course with the Program's ILOs (core values and aims) and how the assessment (individual and group projects and final exams) adheres to them (the ILOs). This process will be very helpful in analysing what needs to be revised over time.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's strengths in relation to learning resources and student support. In this category, they noted that we are fully compliant.

We also thank the EEC for their recommendations for further improving the Program. We note each recommendation below and provide our responses.

1. Access to more case studies, particularly related to the local context of Cyprus: This could be achieved also through the encouragement of production of case studies from the Cyprus context by the teaching staff and students, including through collaboration of academics, practitioners, and PhD students.

The Program concurs and is actively in line with this activity. More effort will be directed in order to adopt this proposal even further, when possible.

2. The committee understood from the meetings that it may take significant time for the University to respond to the program's needs and that certain resource-related requests by the program are not addressed in each budget.
 - a. Thus, the committee felt that the competitive positioning of the department and the program would be greatly improved if the University's response to the program's resource needs would be faster, and the University gradually fulfils a higher share of the program's needs in future budgets.

We thank the EEC for bringing up this issue. More specifically, it will be for the maximum benefit of the Program, should the proposed Annual Budget be approved faster in its entirety, and without the need to send additional requests.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

N/A



7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

We thank the EEC for their positive evaluations and for highlighting the Program's high quality and strengths. We also thank the EEC for their overall recommendations for further improving the Program. The summary of the recommendations made by the EEC is shown below:

1. Better position the program as one that is research and evidence-based, thus differentiating the program's graduates from those of other schools in Cyprus.
2. Reconsidering the structure of the program, content of particular courses and the sequencing of courses.
3. Increasing the number of (female) resident faculty actively engaging in HR-oriented research.
4. Developing more systematic ways of involving faculty members, students and external stakeholders in the quality assurance process, both regarding (continuously) evaluating and fine-tuning the program, and developing actions based on figures and analyses.
5. Making learning outcomes more concrete (cf. skills and behavioural competencies) and more tightly linked to the curriculum (via a curriculum mapping) and assessment (via the development of an assessment rubric).
6. Initiatives could be taken before the start of the program (e.g. boot-camp, self-learning module, exam, more selective assessment of applications) to make sure that diversity does not come at the expense of ensuring that all students have the necessary basic competencies to succeed in and contribute to the program.
7. Including quantitative skills requirements in admissions criteria, such as GMAT or GRE scores, to ensure all students have adequate background to pursue a more analytics-driven/quant curriculum, thus facilitating the development of current and emerging highly demanded industry skills.
8. Addressing some administrative deficiencies. The committee felt that the competitive positioning of the department and the program would be greatly improved were the University to more quickly respond the program's needs and requests, and invest greater resources to facilitate the program's growth.

In our previous responses to the comments made by the EEC, every effort has been made to incorporate through actions, the majority of the recommendations made by the EEC. Adopting the principle of continuous improvement and adapting to changes, we will continue to monitor developments in the field of HRM and make any necessary changes and adjustments to the Program accordingly. We believe that with the help of our diverse instructors and students, as well as our close collaborators from the industry and beyond, we will be successful in keeping the Program's high quality and popularity.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor George Hadjinicola	Chair, Department of Business and Public Administration	
Professor Eleni Stavrou	Director, MScHRM	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 26 May 2022

Annex A: MScHRM – Program Curriculum 2022-23

Term	Course Code	Course	ECTS	Contact Hours	Instructors
September-October	HRM 530	Principles of Management and Work	3	14	Daina Nicolaou
	HRM 531	Advanced Organizational Behavior	6	28	Eleni Stavrou
	HRM 532	Human Resource Management and Strategic HR	6	28	Christiana Ierodiakonou
	HRM 563	Strategic Management	3	14	George Kassinis
November-December	HRM 565	Leading People	3	14	Alexia Panayiotou
	HRM 533	International Human Resource Management	3	14	Chris Brewster
	HRM 540	Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods	9	42	Christos Nicolaidis Andria Christophidou
	HRM 538	Managing Change	3	14	Maria Vacola
January-February	HRM 534	Employee Selection and Succession Planning	6	28	Ioannis Nikolaou
	HRM 574	Workshop on Structures, Job Design and Workforce Planning	1	12	Orfeas Stavrou
	HRM 576	Workshop on Psychometric Measurements	1	12	Orfeas Stavrou
	HRM 537	Compensation and Rewards Management	6	28	Andrie Michaelidou
March-April	HRM 573	Workshop on Human Resource Information Systems	1	12	Philippos Philippou
	HRM 575	Workshop on HR Analytics and Evidence-Based HRM	1	12	Philippos Philippou
	HRM 535	Employee Training and Development	6	28	Irene Nicandrou
	HRM 536	Performance Management	3	14	Koen Dewettinck
	HRM 539	Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation	3	14	Marios Katsioloudes
May-June	HRM 560	MNCs Employment Systems and Institutions	3	14	Paul Gooderham
	HRM 561	The Regulatory Framework of HRM	3	14	Richard Croucher
	HRM 562	Managing Workforce Diversity, Theory and Practice	6	28	Christiana Ierodiakonou
	HRM 577	Workshop on Negotiations and Conflict Resolution	1	12	Seraphim Voliotis
July-August	HRM 595	<i>Master Thesis I</i>	5	–	<i>Supervisors</i>
September-October	HRM 564	Business Ethics and CSR	3	14	Nancy Papalexandris
	HRM 578	Workshop on HR Business Partnering	1	8	Angelos Louis
	HRM 596	<i>Master Thesis II</i>	5	–	<i>Supervisors</i>
November-December	HRM 597	<i>Master Thesis III</i>	5	–	<i>Supervisors</i>
		TOTAL	96	418	