

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, PhD)

In English:

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, PhD)

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

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

We thank the Committee for their kind and encouraging words, for highlighting our strengths in this area, and for their constructive suggestions and recommendations. For easy reference, we highlight the Committee's **Findings** and **Strengths** below (*in italics*). We insert **Areas of improvement and recommendations** and our **Responses** in the Table below.

Findings for PhD Business Administration

The committee members were provided with structured documentation, clear presentations, and opportunities for Q&A during their site visit, which enabled them to form a comprehensive understanding of the PhD program. The program attracts a limited number of high-quality PhD candidates, mostly from Cyprus (only a small portion – ca. 10% - of prospective candidates are accepted). Faculty members are motivated to supervise PhD candidates, at times also leading to publications in high-quality journals. The dropout rate is relatively limited: especially limited in the early stages of the PhD, in the view of the committee this is testament to the rigorous selection of high-quality candidates, while it is higher at later stages, in the view of the committee this points to the usefulness of considering some revisions to the structure of the program, (see sections “Recommendations”). The Department possesses a solid supportive infrastructure to help PhD candidates to pursue their PhD projects and get acquainted with the academic community by, for instance, taking part in academic conferences. Ultimately, these conditions are conducive to favourable PhD project outcomes. The Quality Assurance procedures are robust and well- embedded in the PhD program structure and within the Department and surrounding institutional context. The PhD program is solid and comprehensive. Given the small scale, considering higher levels of collaboration at the school level to benefit from economies of scale is desirable.

Strengths for PhD Business Administration

The high profile and stellar research performance of the faculty members creates an enabling and fruitful environment for PhD candidates to pursue the projects to excel in terms of research attainments and research publications.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
First, the attraction of more PhD candidates is desirable and highly recommended.	We will strengthen our efforts to attract more PhD students – as a step in this direction, the Department decided to use a substantial proportion of its funds to financially support in full one PhD student per year, as well as cover the tuition fees for another two PhD students. We are also in close contact with the University's Central Communications Office to launch a campaign on social media, the	Choose level of compliance:

	internet, and other communication channels to promote our PhD program and the benefits offered, as well as making announcements at local and international conferences and other fora.	
Second, the small scale of the program should be reconsidered by considering collaboration at the school level (or at the university level), thereby benefiting from larger economies of scale recommended.	Thank you for this suggestion. We have already raised the issue of potential collaboration between our PhD program and those of the other departments of our Business School in a recent Faculty meeting, and the idea of specific courses to be jointly attended by students of all departments was well received (acknowledging the benefits derived from economies of scale and cross-fertilization of research ideas). In addition, we have identified certain PhD courses provided by other university departments (e.g., Department of Economics, Department of Education, Department of Psychology) which could be attended by our students, while also informing other departments about PhD courses that our Department could offer them. Through these initiatives, we expect to increase the number of students in classes and make the student base more diverse. This will also help our faculty members to provide high-quality educational and research services on a higher scale.	Choose level of compliance:
Third, more balance between the exams and the actual execution of the PhD research project is recommended, by tilting the scales much more into the direction of the pursuit of the research project by the PhD student/candidate, thereby rethinking the purpose of the exams with more emphasis on opportunities to learn than a focus on assessing knowledge and competences.	Please note that we have already realized the need to have a more balanced approach between exams and the actual execution of PhD research. For this reason, our PhD program has been revised by reducing the number of taught courses required to be taken by students from eight (8) to six (6). We have also introduced a policy for exempting students from up to two courses already taken during their master's degree (which is a prerequisite to enter our PhD	Choose level of compliance:

	program). We believe that these two actions will tilt the scale more in the direction of the research project, as you correctly recommended. Please also note that the Department designed the preparation for the comprehensive exams, which PhD students must complete per University of Cyprus rules, in such a way as to help students critically analyze and review the literature(s) relevant to their research project and strengthen the methodological tools they will need (and use) in their research. In practice, what they do while preparing for and taking this exam is an integral part of their PhD project. Having said that we will continue to encourage, enable and support students, who possess the necessary preparation and readiness, to engage faster with the “actual execution of the PhD research”, per your recommendation.	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

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Findings for PhD Business Administration

The committee learnt from discussions with staff and the selected PhD student and PhD graduate that the program is solid, comprehensive, and well-structured with a balance of mandatory and elective courses. PhD candidates get the opportunity to have a say in defining their PhD proposal in collaboration with supervisor(s). The number of exams and assessment time that students have to undergo may constrain the actual amount of time to work on the actual PhD project.

Strengths for PhD Business Administration

The quality of the selected candidates is undisputably high, leading to low occurrence of early dropouts. The faculty are both exceptionally merited and display sustained drive to get the best out of their PhD candidates, also resulting in high-quality publications.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
We recommend more balance between the exams and the actual execution of the PhD research, to favour the latter and hence leveraging more on the student's own interests and inclination for pursuing a PhD, thereby rethinking the purpose of the exams with more emphasis on communicating courses as opportunities to learn rather than a focus on course exam and sec assessing knowledge and competences.	As already mentioned, we have reduced the taught courses in our PhD program from eight (8) to six (6). We have also introduced a policy for exempting students from up to two courses already taken during their master's degree (which is a prerequisite to enter our PhD program). We believe that these two actions will tilt the scale more in the direction of the research project, as you correctly recommended. Please also note that the Department designed the preparation for the comprehensive exams, which PhD students must complete per University of Cyprus rules, in such a way as to help students critically analyze and review the literature(s) relevant to their research project and strengthen the methodological tools they will need (and use) in their research. In practice, what they do while preparing for and taking this	Choose level of compliance:

	exam is an integral part of their PhD project. Having said that we will continue to encourage, enable and support students, who possess the necessary preparation and readiness, to engage faster with the “actual execution of the PhD research”, per your recommendation.	
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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Findings for PhD Business Administration

The committee met with the staff involved with the PhD program, who demonstrate to act as undoubtedly competent, dedicated, and ambitious research professionals with a focus on getting the PhD students to publish their dissertation-based research in AJG 4/4 journals or other outlets and formats as they may fit their research objectives. The program attracts a limited number of high-quality PhD candidates, mostly from Cyprus.*

Strengths for PhD Business Administration

The faculty possesses highly prolific research profiles with high-standard research achievements as illustrated by publishing in AJG 4/4 journals: It is clearly evidenced that highly qualified supervisors available across a range of topics in the department.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The small scale of the PhD program should be reconsidered by considering collaboration at the school level (or at the university level), thereby benefiting from larger economies of scale recommended. The department possesses an impressive pool of highly qualified scholars who might supervise a much larger cohort of PhD candidates, thereby providing educational as well as research services on a higher scale.	As already mentioned, we have already raised the issue of potential collaboration between our PhD program and those of the other departments of our Business School in a recent Faculty meeting, and the idea of specific courses to be jointly attended by students of all departments was well received (acknowledging the benefits derived from economies of scale and cross-fertilization of research ideas). In addition, we have identified certain PhD courses provided by other university departments (e.g., Department of Economics, Department of Education, Department of Psychology) which could be attended by our students, while also informing other departments about PhD courses that our Department could offer them. Through these initiatives, we expect to increase the number of students in classes and make the student base more diverse. This will also help our faculty members to provide high-quality educational and research services on a higher scale.	Choose level of compliance:



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

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Findings for PhD Business Administration

The quality of the selected candidates is undisputably high, leading to low occurrence of early dropouts. The multi-phased structure of the program with quite many assessment moments may lead to unnecessarily high late dropouts.

Strengths for PhD Business Administration

Clear and transparent documentation of the assessment criteria and the opportunity for PhD candidates to have a clear say in the development of their research proposal.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The PhD students mainly stem from Cyprus and the majority of them work parttime, and there is some decline in terms of the numbers. We recommend broadening the recruitment scope with more focus on those candidates who are motivated to do a fulltime PhD. To materialize this, it is essential to consider ways of using more resources and in a more bespoke way to make doing a PhD more attractive.	We fully agree with you that it is important to strengthen our efforts to attract more PhD students. As mentioned earlier, as a step in this direction, the Department has decided to use a substantial proportion of its funds to financially support in full one PhD student per year, as well as cover the tuition fees for another two PhD students. We are also in close contact with the University's Central Communications Office to launch a campaign on social media, the internet, and other communication channels to promote our PhD program and the benefits offered, as well as making announcements at local and international conferences and other fora. The decision on scholarships is being implemented already this Spring Semester, and we hope that it has enticed good candidates to apply (application deadline is May 31st).	Choose level of compliance:
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

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Findings for PhD Business Administration

The committee was impressed with facilities and overall quality of the premises, the fantastic campus context, and the unique and impressive library with its ample facilities, and resources to attend international academic conferences.

Strengths for PhD Business Administration

See the findings section

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
There are no major areas for improvement	Thank you for your supportive comments.	Choose level of compliance:
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

We thank the Committee for their kind and encouraging words, for highlighting our strengths in this area, and for their constructive suggestions and recommendations. For easy reference, we highlight the Committee's **Findings** and **Strengths** below (*in italics*). We insert **Areas of improvement and recommendations** and our **Responses** in the Table below.

Findings

The committee was presented the PhD program structure as well as the possibility to talk to a current PhD candidate and a PhD graduate. We got hold of a sample of PhD dissertations. The shown dissertations were impressive as also evidenced by the dissertation-based publications in high-quality journals.

The program looks undisputably professional, comprehensive with the necessary checks and balances when it comes to the PhD student's progression and the outcome.

Strengths

See findings section.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
See our recommendations for the PhD program under the sections 2, 3, and 4.	Thank you for your supportive comments. Please see our responses to these comments in the sections indicated above.	Choose level of compliance:
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
As per our assessment, we have found a department and two programmes which are solid, intellectually inspiring and applicable to relevant practices. There are top-level facilities and the overall quality of the premises, the campus context, and the unique and impressive library with its range of resources are major assets. While the number of staff is quite small, the quality of their professional profiles and achievements is impressively high, as reflected in publications in top journals and good teaching ability, considering both the evident shining results in their career and the satisfaction of students from this school. The workload of staff is somewhat high, and they may benefit from the hiring of some new colleagues and a rebalancing to relieve the workload and make it more conducive to an even better balance between teaching and research. The PhD program has successfully delivered the first series of PhDs, and it has become a good asset of the department. While the PhD programme is solid and comprehensive, given the small scale, considering higher levels of collaboration at the school level to benefit from economies of scale is recommended. A rebalancing of the exam component and a pursuit of the individual research project component may further enhance attractiveness and ultimately strengthen the programme.	We thank the Committee for the kind, developmental, encouraging, and supportive comments and recommendations throughout this process and in its reports. We made every effort to address all your recommendations in detail in our responses above. We will spare no effort to implement them within the timeframes and in the ways we outlined in our responses to your recommendations in the sections above.	Choose level of compliance:
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D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor George Kassinis	Department Chairperson	
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Date: 15/5/2026

