

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 13/7/2022

# Higher Education Institution's Response

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

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

**In Greek:**

«Μάρκετινγκ και Ψηφιακές Επικοινωνίες (4 Έτη/240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)» Εξ' Αποστάσεως

**In English:**

«Marketing and Digital Communications (4 Years/240 ECTS, B.B.A.)» - E-Learning

- **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 2<sup>nd</sup> column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in \*.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>The programme team can consider more systematically how to translate the conventional programme into a distinctive e-learning offering. At the moment, there is much good practice at the individual course level. More can be done to bring things together at the program level. A learning framework such as that of Five Stage Model by Gilly Salmon (or other similar frameworks) may provide some inspiration on this front.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for this constructive feedback and concur with the importance of not only focusing at a course level, but in supporting the entirety of the program through a structured developmental process of e-learning.</p> <p>Consequently, as noted by the EEC each e-learning course is structured and delivered distinctively from each respective conventional course. At each course level, each instructor aims to actively engage students in their learning process through a series of interactions with the material, fellow-students and the instructor him/herself, in a conducive learning environment. This is in line with the essence of the Five Stage Model.</p> <p>As we acknowledge the importance of considering the Model's implementation at the program level, we map below current practise vi-a-vis each stage of the Model and present the areas which could benefit from additional efforts and the actions thereto. Specifically, as postulated in each stage of the Model of Gilly Salmon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access and Motivation: E-learning takes place in the <b>Blackboard Learn Ultra platform</b> a user-friendly, versatile platform. Blackboard Learn Ultra is an environment that provides access to learning resources and content and supports the students' interaction with the material, their instructors and their classmates. To further facilitate this process, the Distance Education Unit (DEU) provides administrative support for the E-Learning programmes of study of EUC. The Unit supports both students and academic staff of EUC's E-Learning programmes of study, by ensuring quality access to educational materials and technological resources. Students receive initial instruction in the use of the educational platform from the DEU, as well as ongoing advice, and if they face any issues with the technology or delivery of their courses (not of an academic content), then these are effectively resolved by the DEU. In addition, to the ease of access and the continuous support provided to this effect, a welcoming message by the instructor (in the form of an email and/or recording) is a must so as to introduce and motivate students in their learning journey. The</li> </ol>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>above practices align with the requirements of the first stage of the Model, where the two (2) e-moderators (i.e. the instructor and the DEU personnel) join forces to set the base for an engaging learning environment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Online socialization: To familiarize students and to provide bridges between their distinct cultural, social, and learning environments, group work forms an integral part of their learning experience. Such interaction is also facilitated through a plethora of e-tivities, e.g. discussion forums, teleconferences. At this stage, the instructor as the e-moderator, takes an active role to introduce students to each other, facilitate team and culture building.</li> <li>3. Information exchange: this takes place both at an individual and group level and it takes place more as <b>asynchronous communication</b>. In particular, during the semester, students communicate between themselves and with the instructor through the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform in a synchronous and an asynchronous form. Such exchange of perspectives and experiences of students is encouraged through various means including messages, short chats, break-out rooms, discussion forums and teleconferences. In particular, messages are personal or group, sent through the platform and delivered as an email message to the recipients' email inbox. Short one-to-one and group discussions in Blackboard Ultra are enabled over assignments or other tasks assigned on the platform, and provide an opportunity for students to asynchronously exchange informal comments and ideas on any course item. Break-out rooms are yet another means used to bring students to work together, facilitating group work the exchange of information, experiences and perspectives. Discussion forums can be either assignment focused (graded or non-graded) or for general discussions (e.g. course inquiries, exchange of perspectives on a selected topic).</li> </ol> <p>At this stage of information exchange, the instructor as the e-moderator, has a dual role. Firstly, to design engaging activities in line with each week's theme, and students are engaged in collaborative activities and interaction. Secondly, the instructor as e-moderator provides feedback on students' work.</p>	
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	<p>4. Knowledge construction: Learning collaboratively is in the heart of knowledge construction of the e-Learning program. Hence, at this stage even greater emphasis is placed on communities of learning and collaboration and use of critical thinking and application of models and work-based learning experience. It therefore entails teamwork, through communication and discussion with the instructor and other fellow students, so as to address different business scenarios, solve problems and/or develop projects, either independently or as part of a group. This construction of new knowledge is combined with the professional and personal experience of students, individual and group research processes and activities, via the Blackboard Learn Ultra tools. Collaboration is intertwined, supplemented and complemented with independent and autonomous learning, a necessary and needed condition of deep learning which is combined in a flexible way with other methodological approaches.</p> <p>On the whole, e-learning at EUC is designed in ways to promote interaction at various levels (learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, learner-technology) as it is acknowledged that effective e-learning can only occur among motivated individuals that work together. Interactive learning is at the core of e-learning at EUC as a hands-on/real life approach to education, founded upon building student engagement through guided social interaction (achieved at Stage 2) and connected with existing knowledge and their own experience and interests, to carefully designed and structured activities to facilitate both learning in groups and to challenge students to develop practical skills. Put differently, this own experience and interests of students are focal, as they strengthen a hands-on, real-life approach to education and help in knowledge construction through the application of practical, scientific-specific skills and knowledge which are connected to existing conceptual models. The focal point of interactivity is always on the skills of learners, not the capabilities of the technology that seeks to facilitate learning.</p>	
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	<p>5. Review: At the final stage the instructor / e-moderator is less active and allows students to lead discussions and transfer their skills to applied work. The students' understanding is assessed with both graded and non-graded activities. This takes place with Course Assignments and Final Exams:</p> <p>Course Assignments: For each course, students need to carry out individual and group assignments which are graded. The type and nature of each assignment is presented to students at the start of the semester through multiple avenues of communication on the platform, such as in the Course Outline and course Study Guides. It is also explained and discussed during the synchronous teleconferences (as described above). These graded assignments may require preparing an answer to a theoretical question (for instance, discussion of a quote from an academic article or judgment/position or discussion) which involves extended research, rational analysis, critical thinking and evaluation. Other graded assignments may include application of theory to real life business scenarios, which necessitates a comprehensive understanding of focal content issues.</p> <p>To increase student motivation and engagement, collaborative and interactive tools are used, such as Padlet for group participation and group projects, Flashcards, game-based learning (e.g. Kahoot &amp; Archy Learning, Simulations, etc.), interactive videos and other interactive activities (e.g. though H5P integrated in the learning platform). This kind of assignments are used mainly for formative evaluation and aim to enrich student's knowledge and skills on the learning objectives of the topic. Specific assignment topics for each course are described in detail in the Study Guide of each course and posted on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform, alongside evaluation rubrics for assignments including the grade weighting attached to each one. Through assignments, students conduct research on a specific topic using the online databases of the University library as well as other electronic resources, either individually and/or in groups (thus interacting with each other, with the material of the course, and with the instructor).</p>	
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	<p>Apart from presenting their findings in a written form, students might elaborate on these during short oral presentations. These oral presentations are usually conducted asynchronously to be shared on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform. There they can be viewed and commented on by fellow classmates, and evaluated by the instructor, as they form part of the overall grade ascribed to their assignments.</p> <p>When written assignments are submitted, these are automatically checked through Turnitin for plagiarism through performing a similarity check in available databases. Instructors may use also Turnitin as a pedagogical tool to help students improve the final draft of their assignment before the submission on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform. Flags for instances of similarity constitute opportunities for formative feedback and opportunities for revision during the writing process.</p> <p>Instructors proceed promptly (within 15 days at the latest) in providing the assignment grade as well as detailed feedback in a formative mode of assessment so as to improve the attainment of the learning outcomes.</p> <p>Blackboard analytics are also helpful for an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning, because they provide instructors greater insight into the factors that affect their students' performance. Analytics also provide a snapshot of what students know, what they should know and what can be done to meet students' academic needs.</p> <p>Final exams: After the 13-week learning period is completed, students take the final exam for each of their courses (allocated percentage at 50%). The final exam assesses in a comprehensive way the level at which students have acquired the theoretical knowledge covered in the course, as well as the degree to which they have developed the skills in critical analysis aimed at by the course (approximate time for exam preparation 50 hours).</p> <p>Overall, it may be argued that just as the framework prescribes, the students are supported and developed as they progress through the different stages in their learning journey. To further facilitate this process future specific trainings, supplemented with the respective</p>	
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	<p>manual and may be utilised to ensure the systematic holistic and rigorous implementation of the above.</p>	
<p>It will be useful to map assessment against courses and learning outcomes (similar to the course mapping against learning outcomes). This will help the programme team formulate a coherent assessment strategy that is suitable for an e-learning mode. As it stands, the assessments of conventional programme are identical with those of the proposed e-learning one. There is a need for tailoring to the e-learning mode of delivery. This may offer an opportunity to internationalise the programme further encouraging students to share their consumer and working experiences</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the opportunity given to further clarify our Assessment Strategy. The assessment strategy for the e-learning mode is quite distinct from the conventional program.</p> <p>Specifically, for the conventional program: For courses that have a quantitative nature, namely Statistics, Accounting, Economics and Finance, and for Introductory courses in Business, Management and Marketing, the Assignment: Examinations component is 20%: 80%. For the other courses, i.e. advanced Business, Management and Marketing courses, the weight of examinations is reduced to 60%-70%.</p> <p>For the e-learning program: Assignment: Examinations ratio is 50: 50. Consequently, as illustrated in the Study Guides, with the exception of the Undergraduate thesis, all the courses are in accordance to this. Hence the final exams account for 50% of the assessment, while assignments across the e-learning courses are divided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each week students should complete <b>non-graded self-assessment assignments</b>. Such activities uphold the interest of students, and motivate consistent participation and long-term engagement. Examples of such interactive exercises are: role playing, simulations, real-life scenarios, online discussions for debating via discussion forums, brainstorming activities for answering a theoretical question, problem-solving questions in groups, preparing group PowerPoint presentations (e.g. after watching a video or studying a specific source), answering quizzes and peer reviewing assignments of other students, as well as Gamification strategies.</li> <li>• Two (2) <b>graded self-assessment assignments</b> (5% each). These formative assessments aim at motivating students to work systematically and consistently and to offer feedback to both the students themselves and the e-moderator about the course progress.</li> </ul> <p>The self-assessment and interactive exercises/activities, are described in detail in the Study Guide of each course, which is available to students on the platform from the first week of the semester.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment(s) for 40%. These assessments pertain to both individual and group work and include a series of methods such as essays/literature reviews, case studies, applied projects and presentations. This flexibility is allowed so as to cater for/accommodate the distinct objectives and learning outcomes of each course.</li> </ul> <p>A sample of the marking scale used for these assignments is presented in Appendix I (Assignment Marking Scheme). In addition to the marking scale, for the grading of written assignments, the following criteria are considered: Structure of the assignment, Use of theories, Comprehension, Logic of argument, Critical approach and Clarity of expression. For presentations, additional criteria such as presentation skills and quality of slides are included. The weights of all of these criteria is decided by each instructor, pertaining to the learning outcomes of each course.</p> <p>Embedded in this assessment strategy is student motivation and engagement as well as systematic feedback to students; all of which are pillars for an e-learning mode, as prescribed by the Five Stages Model.</p> <p>Consequently, as described above, the whole concept and rationale of the e-Learning programme's assignments are totally different to the conventional programme.</p>	
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## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>It may be useful to systematise the delivery of the courses (namely to have a list of high-level design criteria that all courses adhere to) so that there is a minimum of consistency among them.</p>	<p>We strongly concur with the EEC's position on the importance of systematizing the delivery of the e-courses, through a list of high-level design criteria which the courses should follow.</p> <p>Therefore, at the program level, the B.B.A. in Marketing and Digital Communication (e-learning) was developed on the basis of the EUC Pedagogical Model. This model is based on the following learning principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Learner-Centred Learning Design:</b> The student holds a predominant position, and the e-learning experience and learning activities are based on the students' own needs and interests.</li> <li>• <b>Inclusive Design</b> which includes development activities in inclusive education, as well as differentiation and Universal Design for Learning in higher education (e.g. variety of assessment methods, individual and group work, variety of competencies to be gained, theoretical and practical content of courses)</li> <li>• <b>Codesign &amp; Collaboration:</b> where instructors, course coordinators and program coordinator regularly exchange opinions on courses' delivery</li> <li>• <b>Interactive and Collaborative Learning</b> through interaction at various levels (learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, learner-technology)</li> </ul> <p>All of the above 4 pillars have been extensively discussed throughout this report and especially in point 1 (pages 4-8).</p> <p>Furthermore, an additional list of high-level design criteria that all courses adhere to, is that of the Learning Outcomes of the program. To this end, Appendix II (Mapping of Program Learning Outcomes) presents the learning outcomes which are attained at each course level and how each course contributes to the overall program.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>It will be welcome to see the programme team consider offering more contact time to students beyond the minimum 6 teleconference sessions.</p>	<p>The criterion of up to six (6) teleconference sessions has been set in accordance to the expectation that e-Learning programs of study are based on independent and autonomous learning, a necessary and needed condition of deep learning, combined in a flexible way,</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>intertwined, supplemented and complemented with collaborative methodological approaches. These teleconferences with all the students enrolled in the courses are not the only synchronous meetings of the students with the instructor. The instructor, through the role of the e-moderator and as the facilitator who guides students for effective self-study, employs an array of alternative methods to increase his/her contact time and effectiveness. Consequently, considerable contact time is devoted to students in discussion forums and through emails (as discussed in page 5), through one-to-one teleconferences and group teleconferences aiming at addressing customised needs of individual and group student needs. This model follows the latest pedagogical guidelines and recommendations for the design and development of E-Learning programmes of study distributed by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CY.Q.A.A.), including announcements of CY.Q.A.A. on 29.4.2020 and 4.5.2020 on E-Learning programmes of study.</p>	
<p>Onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment during the course could be reinforced instead.</p>	<p>Onsite final exams are conducted in line with the regulations of CY.Q.A.A. Nevertheless, in the past years, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the exams have been conducted online through the Respondus LockDown browser. In the case that CY.Q.A.A. reaches a decision which will allow the continuation of this, such practice may continue.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the central role of continuous formative assessment during the course is acknowledged and as described in pages 9 and 10 in our response in this document, these form an integral part of the Assessment Strategy of the BBA in Marketing and Digital Communications, whereby these formative assessments inform the instructors/e-moderators. In turn, this feedback enables them to adjust, where necessary, the students learning experience, so as to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>More sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.</p>	<p>The European University Cyprus is currently implementing the EEC's suggestion on introducing more sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, starting as of the Spring Semester 2022. The system utilizes usability data from Blackboard on a daily basis, to provide both instructors and students information about:</p> <p>(a) Classroom Analytics e.g., how much time students spend on the course platform, how many times a week</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>they log in into the platform, what is the progress of each student towards the completion of a course based on the timeline, whether and for how long do students participate in the synchronous meetings and</p> <p>b) Learning Analytics: whether students complete assignments/test/quizzes on-time, how well students performed in assignments/test/quizzes/exams based on the difficulty of the exam (calculated based on the average of the class and other parameters).</p> <p>This data is also used to feed a dashboard that seeks to work as an early warning system for students that might be at risk of failing a course. Data from these systems that are directly related to individual students are directed to the individual student portal of the student, in order to provide early information/feedback on a daily basis on each student's progression in the course(s) that they are enrolled in each semester.</p> <p>In terms of learning progression and student feedback, instructors use two sources of tools that are already available in Blackboard Learn Ultra:</p> <p>(a) The quizzes capability provides tools for developing short quizzes related to a lecture, a week or a unit of the course. It allows students to receive automated self-feedback and if students forget to attempt the quizzes, the automated Blackboard Analytics system will direct a warning in the student portal, alerting the student that there is a quiz on a particular learning module/week/unit.</p> <p>(b) Instructors also utilize the H5P system, which is a dynamic automated system for imposing over videos of any source automated quizzes. In this case, during watching a pre-recorded video, the instructor can link it with a quiz, which will be imposed over the video, the video will be paused, and students will have to answer the quiz before they can move on. Instructors have the ability to set up the video in ways that if the student does not answer correctly (i) they have to re-watch the video or parts of it, (ii) students can be offered insights towards the correct answer so that they can re-try the quiz, or (iii) the system can provide the correct answer along with explanation(s) as to why that particular answer was the correct one and/or why the rest of the answers were not correct. H5P, of course, can do more than just showing students' videos. Instructors use is to develop case studies that students can follow and based on their decisions the system directs them to different directions of taking decisions or making recommendations for that particular case study. Such case study material can include videos, documents, links to external sources or readings etc. Again, the</p>	
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	<p>feedback provided to students is automated, based on the scenario prepared by the instructor.</p>	
<p>While the EEC emphasizes the benefits of any form of collaboration among students, the online synchronous collaboration among students was perceived as problematic. Especially, if in the next years the program is open internationally and many students across different time zones attend. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their e-learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous interaction and collaboration.</p>	<p>We appreciate this legitimate concern of the Committee on the operation of synchronous meetings, because of the probable participation of students from different time zones. This issue is addressed in the EUC E-Learning Document (Appendix III: The EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study Document). Synchronous meetings:</p> <p>“are set by the instructor of each course in coordination with the students in order to best accommodate their availability and needs. Though Study Guides and the Course Outlines are structured in weeks, instructors are free to design and present their course content and activities in any way they consider useful to facilitate students’ organization of their self-paced study, as well as to help students follow the Course Outline and learning objectives as communicated to them at the beginning of the course. This may maintain the weekly format, or follow a thematic organisation structure. In the case of thematic organisation, instructors should provide an indication of estimated week(s) of study, as well as matching with learning objectives and milestones of activities and course requirements during the semester”. (page 8, Appendix III: The EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study Document).</p> <p>The document details the function of both asynchronous and synchronous meetings (pages 8 and 9, Appendix III: The EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study Document). This is one of the main reasons why many universities worldwide, with e-learning programmes, attract students from all over the world: the opportunity of combining synchronous and asynchronous learning.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Considering that students already work there is an opportunity for students to work in research projects related to their employment, where possible. In doing so they can only take part in research, but also act as ambassadors for the program.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for this important recommendation. Indeed, such practice will not only help in further motivating and engaging the students, but also in them assuming the role of program ambassadors. To this effect, we currently encourage our students to work in research projects related to their employment and this primarily focuses on their undergraduate thesis.</p> <p>Nevertheless, with the re-designed program (currently under re-accreditation), a number of additional courses may be seen as good candidates to this effect. Such courses include:</p> <p>MAR330 – Direct Marketing</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>MAR335 – Digital Marketing</p> <p>MAR360- Public Relations Management &amp; Practice</p> <p>MAR410 - Digital Communications Strategy</p> <p>MAR420 - Simulation in Digital Marketing</p> <p>MAR450 - IMC Strategy,</p> <p>In addition to undertaking applied projects/ assignments, students are invited to participate in work-in-progress (research/papers) of faculty members. In fact, in the past year, two recent graduates have been involved in the DIMAS project (i.e. Digital Marketing at Secondary Schools), co-funded by the Erasmus + program.</p>	
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### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Considering that the BBA in Marketing and Digital Communications will be effectively offered via different “channels” it may worth considering the increasing workload implications this may have. Similarly, any changes to members of staff and in turn courses will affect more than just the e-learning program.</p>	<p>The E-Learning BBA in Marketing and Digital Communications programme under re-accreditation was not offered the last two years in its previous version, as its re-accreditation was expected. Once the accreditation of the program is completed, at which stage the programme will be re-offered, the teaching needs for new programme will become more evident. Based on the holistic re-assessment of the needs for the E-Learning programme and the number of students it will attract, a new position will be forwarded for immediate recruitment.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>It would be welcome to see the European University of Cyprus considering a more formal training/development program for its staff that its potentially run by the Distant Learning Unit. The interdisciplinary nature of the Distant Learning Unit can provide a distinctive environment in which best practices and knowledge related to e-learning is shared. This can potentially benefit the community of the University more widely.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the EEC for this comment given that it provides us the opportunity to explain in more detail how the University provides formal professional development to its staff. Formal professional development for all instructors teaching in the EUC E-Learning programmes of study is planned every year by the Pedagogical Planning of E-Learning Programs of Study Standing Committee in collaboration with the Faculty Professional Development Standing Committee. Both committees are standing committees of the Committee of Internal Quality Assurance (C.I.Q.A.) of the University.</p> <p>In more specific, the two Standing Committees set up a series of annual trainings which are provided to the teaching staff to enhance their e-learning skills, both as initial training and as on-going training. Hence, EUC provides constant pedagogical and technological support to academic staff through the Faculty Professional Development Program. The Professional Development Program ensures a high-level quality of teaching and the familiarization of all teaching personnel with contemporary pedagogical approaches and methodologies as well as technological and technical innovations.</p> <p>University wide, Professional Development programs, which are organized and offered by the Office of the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs have three (3) schemes as follows:</p> <p>1. The EUC Professional Development Program for its newly hired academic staff: This is a 35-hour induction professional development program offered to all newly hired academic-staff. The content of the program focuses on various aspects on teaching and learning in tertiary education.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>You may see the annual Faculty Professional Development programme of the academic year 2021-22 in Appendix IV. As you may see in the Attachment out the 35 hours induction professional development program offered to all newly hired academic-staff, 18 were devoted on topics and themes on e-learning teaching, learning and instruction (highlighted with red).</p> <p>2. The EUC Ongoing Professional Development Program for both full-time and part-time academic staff and is offered throughout the year. The content includes topics such as: Testing, Grading and evaluating in higher education; Project based learning; Assessment in small and large classes; Playful Simulations in Higher Education Workshop. etc.</p> <p>In 2021-22 all 18 hours professional development activities highlighted with red in Appendix IV were open for all existing academic staff teaching in the EUC E-Learning programmes of study.</p> <p>3. The EUC Professional Development Program on Innovative Strategic Interventions.</p> <p>As a final note, European University Cyprus has recently established connections to the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU), which is Europe's leading <b>institutional association for online, open &amp; distance higher education</b>. Around ten members of the academic staff of EUC attended a three continuous afternoon series of 2-hour webinars each on <b>ONLINE ASSESSEMENT</b> (14-16/6/2022). More on the program <a href="#">here</a> Online Assessment was a central theme of EUC Faculty Professional Development the academic year 2021-22.</p> <p>All material and recordings of all EUC Professional Development activities are available for all EUC academic staff on Blackboard Learn, under the course title 'Faculty Professional Development' (all academic staff have access to this course by using their EUC credentials, email and password, <a href="https://virtualcampus.euc.ac.cy/ultra/courses/973931/outline">here</a> <a href="https://virtualcampus.euc.ac.cy/ultra/courses/973931/outline">https://virtualcampus.euc.ac.cy/ultra/courses/973931/outline.</a>)</p>	
<p>The EEC suggest incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's Agenda 2030 in the training programs of faculty staff. This will make it possible to redesign the teaching materials accordingly with the aim to empower students with emerging competencies and skills (e.g., climate action, gender equality, global</p>	<p>We also thank the EEC for this notable suggestion.</p> <p>To reiterate, on-going training is a key component in the quality of our programs, hence future Professional Development programs will incorporate the Development Goals of the UN's Agenda 2030, with special emphasis on the following, which are highly pertinent for the education sector:</p> <p>GOAL 4: Quality Education          GOAL 5: Gender Equality          GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth          GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure          GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality          GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>and ethical engagement, etc.) to take action for a more sustainable world</p>	<p>For the following academic years, the activities below have already been planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and capacity building for the promotion of a shared and more widespread work-life balance culture (Fall 2022)</li> <li>• Workshop for the development of skills necessary for the attainment of work-life balance (Fall 2022)</li> <li>• Training on unconscious/implicit bias and gender bias in leadership and decision-making (Spring 2023)</li> <li>• Training on integration of the gender dimension into teaching (tailored to each discipline) (Fall 2023)</li> <li>• Training on integration of the gender dimension into research (tailored to each discipline) (Fall 2023)</li> <li>• Training on gender-based violence in academic and research institutions (Fall 2023).</li> </ul>	
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#### 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI were mentioned during the meetings to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and/or the number of online students.</p>	<p>In terms of the EEC's comment on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform and the mechanisms for monitoring and predicting students' performance and dropouts, the European University Cyprus is currently implementing the Committee's recommendation on introducing more sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and Machine Learning. The system is already available, but it is thoroughly updated, whereby on a weekly basis additional features that are important for monitoring teaching and learning are incorporated.</p> <p>As noted in pages 12 and 13, the system utilizes usability data from Blackboard on a daily basis, to provide both instructors and students information about</p> <p>(a) <b>Classroom analytics</b> (e.g., how much time students spend on the course platform, how many times a week they log in into the platform, what is the progress of each student towards the completion of a course based on the timeline, whether and for how long do students participate in the synchronous meetings and</p> <p>(b) <b>Learning analytics</b> i.e. whether students complete assignments/test/quizzes on-time, how well students performed in assignments/test/quizzes/exams based on the difficulty of the exam (calculated based on the average of the class and other parameters).</p> <p>All these data are also used to feed a dashboard that seeks to work as an early warning system for students that seem to be at risk of failing a course. The system provides information that is structured based on the course level, the particular activity level, the student level, the synchronous videoconferencing levels, and a student failure risk level. The University also has an overview of the instructor level and the overall program level.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>While the online courses include a plethora of multi-format learning materials (e-books, articles, videos, audio, etc.), the EEC suggests that the recorded teleconferences and videos become a key feature of the delivery. They can be short, involving the teacher in all the videos, and adding subtitles for accessibility.</p>	<p>The importance of recorded teleconferences and videos is also underlined by the University. This is why in a new initiative which has started in May 2022, the University has developed a Content Factory Unit. The Unit is among other things, responsible for producing a series of short videos per course, embedded in SCROM Learning Packages that also include scientific text and quizzes. These units/videos are authored/produced and run by each course instructor and are available after production on a central database, so that they can be used by instructors teaching the same or similar courses. Videos are usually 5-7 minutes long and focus on specific ideas/concepts. All videos include subtitles for easy accessibility.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>In addition, the EEC suggest that some considerations should be taken into account to the provision of entire volumes (instead of clearly selected chapters and book pages) as basic materials in order to adapt them to online part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>The program team appreciates the time constraints of part-time students (who enrol in the e-learning program). To this effect, clear instructions are given each week as to the material that students should learn and the activities that they need to engage with. Within that material, students are directed to the specific book chapter(s) or even the specific pages of the book(s) that is/are listed in the Course Outline and the Study Guide.</p> <p>An example of this practice has been shared with the Committee (Appendix V: Sample of educational material) upon the re-evaluation of the program. That is, given that the re-evaluation of the B.B.A. in Marketing and Digital Communications (E-Learning), took place in the examination period and the live streaming of a course was not possible, a sample of different recordings and material that were used in the delivery of an E-Learning course (i.e. MAR260 Professional Selling in Spring Semester 2022), was compiled. The enclosed readings and notes, clearly indicated the relevant chapter and pages from each book.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.



## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.

## **B. Conclusions and final remarks**

We sincerely thank the EEC for the positive feedback and its constructive recommendations. As described in the previous sections of the report, we focused on addressing each of the EEC's recommendations.

Moreover, we would like to say that we found the EEC's candid discussions a constructive learning process. We all believe this review was a positive experience, and we were provided with critical input on moving forward effectively. We have thoroughly reviewed the findings, strengths, and areas of improvement indicated by the EEC following its review and attempted to respond to each item precisely and succinctly. By embracing the EEC's comments and suggestions, we are convinced that our program will effectively ensure its students' learning outcomes.

In closing, we are grateful to the EEC for their candid discussions and the insightful comments and suggestions for our program.



### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Dr. Pieris Chourides</b>	Dean, School of Business Administration	
<b>Dr. Myria Ioannou</b>	Program Coordinator, Chair Department of Management and Marketing	

**Date:** 13/7/2022



## APPENDIX I: ASSIGNMENT MARKING SCHEME

Mark Band	Criteria
90-100	<p><b>Excellent work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough and systematic knowledge and understanding of <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources</li> <li>• Knowledge beyond <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality</li> <li>• Methodological rigour</li> <li>• High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>
85-89	<p><b>Very good, comprehensive work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Good knowledge and understanding of <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Methodological rigour</li> <li>• Critical judgement</li> <li>• Use of additional learning resources.</li> </ul>
80-84	<p><b>Good work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Some evidence of originality and critical judgement</li> <li>• Sound methodology</li> <li>• Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>
75-79	<p><b>Above average work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of knowledge and understanding of the <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Largely descriptive or narrative in focus</li> <li>• Methodological application is consistent or thorough</li> </ul>
70-74	<p><b>Average work showing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little evidence of knowledge and understanding of the <i>module content</i></li> <li>• Largely descriptive or narrative in focus</li> <li>• Methodological application is consistent or thorough</li> </ul>
65-69	<p><b>Below average work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are few points relevant to the question</li> <li>• The bulk of the answer is not very relevant</li> <li>• There are minor misunderstandings of the material</li> </ul>
60-64	<p><b>Poor work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete</li> <li>• Disorganized</li> <li>• Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding</li> <li>• Little evidence of methodology</li> <li>• Minimal or no relevant material</li> </ul>
0-59	<p><b>Failure work showing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrelevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete</li> <li>• Disorganized</li> <li>• No evidence of methodology</li> <li>• No relevant material</li> <li>• Academic Dishonesty</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX II: MAPPING OF PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Demonstrate awareness and capability of analyzing environmental trends (economic, social, political, legal, and technological) and their impact on individuals and businesses	Critically evaluate and apply concepts, techniques, strategies, and theories from any appropriate discipline in business contexts	Demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in business situations through speaking, writing, and by use of electronic media.	Demonstrate the ability to build teams and work effectively within them	Project the ability to work in accordance with the professional ethics, standards, practices and the relevant laws	Differentiate and analyze consumer data sources and collection methods via an empirical research approach	Describe the application of manual and computer-based quantitative and qualitative tools and methodologies in identifying and solving problems and making decisions in business situations
COM215 Public Speaking and Human Communication		X	X	X	X		
ENB220 Writing for Business Studies*		X	X	X	X		
ENB230 Business Communication in English		X	X	X	X		
BUS100 Introduction to Business	X		X	X	X		
BUS210 Numerical Methods and Applications in Business		X		X		X	X
BUS220 Innovation and Entrepreneurship	X		X	X	X		
BUS230 Computer		X	X	X		X	X

Applications for Business							
BUS400 Strategic Management	x		x	x	x		
BUS405 Undergraduate Thesis	x		x	x	x		x
MAR100 Introduction to Marketing	x	x	x			x	
MGT100 Principles of Management	x		x	x	x		
MGT150 Organizational Behavior	x		x	x	x		
AEF110 Introduction to Financial Accounting			x	x	x		
AEF125 Introduction to Managerial Accounting			x	x	x		
AEF100 Principles of Microeconomics	x		x	x	x		
AEF115 Principles of Macroeconomics	x		x	x	x		
AEF135 Essentials of Financial Analysis	x		x	x	x		
AEF320 Corporate and Business Law I	x		x	x	x		

AEF105 Business Statistics		X		X			
MAR110 Social Media & Marketing Communications	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR130 Advertising and Sales Promotion	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR200 Marketing Research	X		X	X	X	X	X
MAR220 Emerging Issues in International Marketing	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR225 Professional Selling	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR230 Consumer Behaviour	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAR330 Direct Marketing	X	X	X	X	X		
MAR360 Public Relations Management and Practice	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR450 Integrated Marketing Communications Strategy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAR335 Digital Marketing	X		X	X	X	X	
MAR410 Digital Communications Strategy	X		X	X	X	X	

MAR415 Customer Engagement	x		x	x	x	x	
MAR420 Simulation in Digital Marketing	x		x	x	x	x	
<b>Electives:</b>							
MAR350 The Art of Persuasion	x		x	x	x		
MAR355 Brand Management	x		x	x	x		
MAR435 Contemporary Advertising Practice	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
MAR440 Marketing of Services	x		x	x	x		

	Describe the coordination of the production of visually effective print, graphic, and electronic communications	Demonstrate a thorough understanding of each element of the marketing communications mix and the importance of integrating them	Apply knowledge from business and communication disciplines to develop an effective integrated marketing communications campaign in the dynamic environment	Demonstrate a thorough understanding of Social Media principles and how these platforms are re-formulating business communications	Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of digital platforms in general and successfully implement a digital communications campaign	Demonstrate the capability of engaging audiences and building and maintaining professional relationships with the various audiences of the organization
COM215 Public Speaking and Human Communication						
ENB220 Writing for Business Studies*						
ENB230 Business Communication in English	x					
BUS100 Introduction to Business						
BUS210 Numerical Methods and Applications in Business						
BUS220 Innovation and Entrepreneurship						x
BUS230 Computer						

Applications for Business						
BUS400 Strategic Management						X
BUS405 Undergraduate Thesis		X	X	X	X	X
MAR100 Introduction to Marketing				X		
MGT100 Principles of Management						
MGT150 Organizational Behavior						
AEF110 Introduction to Financial Accounting						
AEF125 Introduction to Managerial Accounting						
AEF100 Principles of Microeconomics						
AEF115 Principles of Macroeconomics						
AEF135 Essentials of Financial Analysis						
AEF320 Corporate and Business Law I						

AEF105 Business Statistics						
MAR110 Social Media & Marketing Communications	x			x	x	x
MAR130 Advertising and Sales Promotion	x	x		x		x
MAR200 Marketing Research						x
MAR220 Emerging Issues in International Marketing						x
MAR225 Professional Selling	x	x	x			x
MAR230 Consumer Behaviour			x			x
MAR330 Direct Marketing	x	x	x			x
MAR335 Digital Marketing	x	x	x	x	x	x
MAR360 Public Relations Management and Practice	x	x	x			x
MAR410 Digital Communications Strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x
MAR415 Customer Engagement	x	x	x	x	x	x
MAR420 Simulation in Digital Marketing	x	x	x	x	x	x

MAR450 Integrated Marketing Communications Strategy	x	x	x			x
MAR350 The Art of Persuasion	x		x	x		x
MAR355 Brand Management	x		x			x
MAR435 Contemporary Advertising Practice	x	x	x	x	x	x
MAR440 Marketing of Services						x

## APPENDIX III

### The EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study

#### A Note on this Document

This document is intended primarily for all academic staff involved in course design and teaching on the E-Learning programmes of study at European University Cyprus (EUC). The document introduces the essential elements of the pedagogical principles and teaching philosophy employed on all E-Learning courses at EUC. The document breaks down into the following sections:

1. Introduction to e-learning at EUC
2. The Distance Education Unit
3. The EUC e-learning pedagogical model
4. The main principles of e-learning:
  - a. Learner-centred learning design
  - b. Inclusive design
  - c. Co-design
  - d. Interactive and collaborative learning
5. Support for e-learning at EUC
  - a. Learning resources
  - b. Academic guidance and support
  - c. Administrative support
6. The fundamental structure of EUC's E-Learning Courses
  - a. Course structure
  - b. Synchronous meetings
  - c. Asynchronous communication
  - d. Course assignments
  - e. Final exams
7. Student assessment in E-Learning courses
8. Programmes' quality assurance

## **1. Introduction to e-learning at EUC**

European University Cyprus (EUC) has always met the differing educational needs of society by using the most up-to-date tools. As part of this mission, since 2013, EUC has offered fully recognized E-Learning Bachelor's (undergraduate) and Master's (postgraduate) programmes of study. The aim is to provide access to education for as many people as possible, particularly those who may not have had otherwise the chance to attend a programme of study.

Academic staff of the Departments and Schools teaching on E-Learning programmes of study have prolonged experience of instruction in tertiary education and research in their fields of study. All instructors receive ongoing professional development and training in e-learning, particularly in the use of communication technologies for teaching and learning. This combination of instructors' proficiency in their discipline, prolonged experience in e-learning, combined with the modern infrastructure of EUC, is what guarantees the quality of EUC's E-Learning programmes of study.

## **2. The Distance Education Unit**

The Distance Education Unit (DEU) provides the administrative support for the E-Learning programmes of study of EUC. The Unit supports both students and academic staff of EUC's E-Learning programmes of study, by ensuring quality access to educational materials and technological resources. Students receive initial instruction in the use of the educational platform from the DEU, as well as ongoing advice, and if they have issues with the technology or delivery of their courses (not the academic content) then they bring these up with the DEU. The Unit also helps coordinate the production of training materials and courses, as well as coordinating with other administrative elements of the University, such as the Office of the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, the Department of Information Systems and Operations, the Department of Enrollment, and the Registrar's Office. Its mission is to ensure that e-learning is a vital element in all aspects of the University's academic and administrative policies and actions.

## **3. The EUC e-Learning Pedagogical Model**

E-learning at EUC works according to a flexible pedagogical model that considers the needs of the student, the requirements of the discipline, and the technological infrastructure. It promotes best practice in instructional design and educational delivery, and provides useful guidelines against which instructors can assess their own educational practices.

This model follows the latest pedagogical guidelines and recommendations for the design and development of E-Learning programmes of study distributed by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CY.Q.A.A.), including announcements of CY.Q.A.A. on 29.4.2020 and 4.5.2020 on E-Learning programmes of study, Study Guides and e-learning interactive activities. The model is regularly updated to ensure compliance with all requirements of the national framework. The EUC pedagogical model also takes into consideration the requirements and special characteristics of the legislation of countries other than Cyprus from which EUC E-Learning programmes of study have a large number of students (e.g. Greece), as well as the fundamental

functioning principles of the Open University of Cyprus, the Hellenic Open University, and other international Open Universities.

The **Blackboard Learn Ultra platform** is the environment that provides access to learning resources and content and supports the students' interaction with the material, their instructors and their classmates.

#### **4. The main principles of e-learning**

The EUC Pedagogical Model is based on the following learning principles:

- Learner-centred learning design
- Inclusive design
- Co-design
- Interactive and collaborative learning

Each of these principles are described below.

##### **a. Learner-Centred learning design**

The student holds a predominant position in the EUC pedagogical model. The entire process revolves around designing areas and resources to enable the student's learning. Information related to the E-Learning programmes of study are publicly available and objectives and expected learning outcomes of the courses as well as grading policies are available to all students and potential students. At the beginning of each semester, during the first meeting with students in courses, each instructor goes through her/his course outline and discusses with students the course content, learning process, activities and assignments. Students have the opportunity to make suggestions and customizations, bearing in mind that the fundamental content and objectives of the course cannot be altered as these were accredited by CY.Q.A.A. Meaningful learner-centred learning is also achieved by taking account of students' background, professional and prior education experiences, as well as taking advantage of opportunities for customization of the e-learning experience and learning activities based on students' own needs and interests. Finally, towards the end of each semester, students are asked to evaluate each of their courses online. Submission is anonymous and the time it takes to fill out the evaluation form is around 10-15 minutes. The survey pertains all aspects of the course and the overall learning experience of the student (hence named the Survey on 'Student Feedback on their Learning Experience' -SFLE), such as the course structure and content, the faculty performance, the facilities involved, the administrative support, etc. The information received are forwarded to faculty to review and act accordingly. The Chairperson of the Department also reviews the aggregated information per course and makes recommendations where needed.

##### **b. Inclusive design**

The inclusive design implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles is one of the main concerns of the programme design and development

of all EUC programmes of study. The UDL principles in EUC's E-Learning programmes of study are implemented as shown in the table below:

<b>UDL Principles</b>	<b>Activities and Course Design</b>	<b>Means, Technology and Tools</b>
Provide options for Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Organisation of the course in weeks/themes/units with indicative timeframe for study</li> <li>-Facilitation of self-paced learning/study</li> <li>-Regular contact with instructor in a variety of ways</li> <li>-Assignments and learning activities linked to personal experiences, background, professional status, etc. (e.g. variations of practical experience, assignments linked to own experiences and work environment)</li> <li>-Compulsory and optional activities</li> <li>-Opportunity to choose some graded activities over others.</li> <li>-Options for individual and group activities and assignments</li> <li>-Options for authentic work (e.g. conducting small research projects in activities, assignments that avoid reproduction of literature but entail practical/implementation sections)</li> <li>-Variety in assessment methods (e.g. projects, portfolios, quizzes, open-ended questions, public dialogue discussions, discussion forum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-LMS Blackboard Learn Ultra with accessibility features</li> <li>-Study guides available in various forms (word document, pdf) as well as content structured on platform follows the study guides</li> <li>-LMS build-in communication tools (e.g. discussion forums, chat options and messaging)</li> <li>-Options for communication off platform (e.g. blogs, personal IM, social network closed groups, video channels)</li> </ul>
Provide options for Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Alternative options of introduction of new knowledge and content (e.g. readings, teleconferencing, slide notes, pre-recorded videos, links to external content)</li> <li>-Both English and Greek literature (for programmes offered in Greek)</li> <li>-Uses of Glossary (in some courses that terminology is especially important)</li> <li>-Use of synchronous and asynchronous content connection activities (e.g. wikis, presentations, mind-mapping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Videos (accessible where possible)</li> <li>-Text on platform (online documents)</li> <li>-Visuals (e.g. diagrams, images, mind-maps)</li> <li>-Hyper-titles where possible</li> <li>-Recorded teleconferencing meetings available to all</li> </ul>
Provide options for Action and Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Synchronous and asynchronous options for interaction (student-student, student-instructor, student-content, student-platform) through various channels</li> <li>-Variety in assessment methods (e.g. projects, portfolios, quizzes, open-ended questions, public dialogue discussions, discussion forum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interactive videos</li> <li>-Interactive (user-controlled) content (e.g. through authoring tools such as H5P)</li> <li>-Alternative accepted modes of communication (e.g. email, IM, discussion forum, chat, social media closed groups)</li> <li>-Alternative accepted modes of class participation (e.g. written, auditory, video presentations)</li> </ul>

	-Variety of types of questions in final exams (by regulation all need to be written exams) -Creative assignments (e.g. presentations, repositories of resources, peer review activities) -Assignments broken in consecutive sections/parts during the semester (one building on the other)	-Access to Assistive Technology and reasonable adaptations through the Committee for the Support of Students with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs (E.Φ.E.E.A.)
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In addition to the above, inclusive e-learning design takes into consideration the students' workload (including assignments, examinations, learning outcomes and course literature) calculated in accordance with the ECTS of each course, and involves a variety of assessment methods that enable students to engage with and practice diverse skills and meet varying challenges. Various forms of written and oral examinations and assignments support the learner's general competencies. These include both individual and group work.

Where appropriate and possible, in order to ensure interconnections between theories and practice, syllabi comprise both theoretical and practical content; in particular, instructors are encouraged to develop assignments and examinations where students are required to use their experience gained from practice, in order to connect theory with practice. Finally, instructors provide support adjusted to students' individual abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities.

The University's annual Faculty Development Programme provides development training activities in inclusive design, as well as in differentiation and UDL in higher education.

### **c. Co-design**

The instructors and the course coordinators, under the supervision and guidance of each program coordinator, regularly update their study guides to incorporate insights from ongoing training in learner-centred and inclusive design. Moreover, at the beginning and around the middle of the semester the program coordinator invites the instructors to a meeting to exchange opinions on students' issues and course delivery.

### **d. Interactive and collaborative learning**

E-learning at EUC is designed in ways to promote interaction in various levels (learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, learner-technology). The ultimate goal is to enhance the interaction between students and the learning that can only occur among motivated individuals working together. Interactive learning is a hands-on/real life approach to education founded upon building student engagement through guided social interaction connected with existing knowledge and their own experience and interests, with carefully designed and structured activities to facilitate learning in groups and challenge students to develop practical skills.

Interactive learning seeks to enhance the interaction between learners and:

1. the course materials
2. the instructor
3. their peers

Interactive learning emphasizes the active engagement of the learner in enrichment activities which aim at the practical and critical application of the theoretical knowledge. When interactive learning takes place within the contexts of student-material interaction, the student should be able to receive immediately feedback during her/his interaction with the course materials, and thus interactive learning will provide self-assessment opportunities. Interactive learning is, thus, a hands-on, real-life approach to education founded upon building activities to facilitate learning individually and/or in groups, challenging students to develop and apply practical scientific-specific skills and knowledge which are meaningful, connected to their existing theoretical knowledge, personal experiences, interests and (academic and professional) goals. The focal point of interactivity is always on the skills of learners, not the capabilities of the technology that seeks to facilitate learning.

Self-assessment and interactive exercises/activities are presented on a weekly basis. Such activities uphold the interest of students, motivate consistent participation and long-term engagement. Examples of such interactive exercises are the following:

- role playing
- simulations
- real-life scenarios
- learning tools
- online discussions for debating
- the use of visualization tools to come to a specific outcome
- brainstorming activities for answering a theoretical question
- problem-solving questions in groups
- preparing group PowerPoint presentations (e.g. after watching a video or studying a specific source)
- answering quizzes and peer reviewing assignments of other students, etc.

Gamification strategies are also embedded in EUC's E-Learning programmes of study. In addition, great emphasis is placed on communities of learning and collaboration. Learning collaboratively refers to using teamwork, through communication and discussion with the instructor and other student mates, to solve problems, develop projects, create products, either independently or jointly, etc. The construction of new knowledge is combined with the professional and personal experience of students, individual and group research processes and activities, knowledge management via the Blackboard Learn Ultra tools, etc. Collaboration is intertwined, supplemented and complemented with independent and autonomous learning, a necessary and needed condition of deep learning which is combined in a flexible way with other methodological approaches.

## **5. EUC support for e-learning:**

Through guidance and support, each student receives personalized attention according to their needs, from the first day of their enrolment in an E-Learning programme of study. EUC supplies the following supportive structures and resources for students on their e-learning courses:

### **a. Learning resources**

This can include educational materials expressly designed to support and convey the learning content, but it might also include other types of open educational resources and tools (either text, media, multimedia, digital documents, e.g. audible content, motion pictures, spreadsheets, photos, pdfs, graphics, etc. or material created by the students themselves), etc. EUC's pedagogical model is flexible and can be adapted to the special characteristics and objectives of each course.

### **b. Academic guidance and support**

Students are guided and supported in all their academic activities by the instructors teaching in the E-Learning programmes of study. Course instructors provide tutoring and mentoring on the content of student's courses and their evaluation and assessment. The course instructor is the person in charge for the teaching and learning process of each course. They provide students with all the necessary information and resources for the delivery of the course. They are the persons responsible for the students' evaluation, as well as for the management of the learning content.

In addition, in alignment with relevant CY.Q.A.A. guidelines and respective open university international practices, for each course a Course Coordinator is appointed. Their role is to coordinate the course in case there are more than one sections regarding issues of content, design and elaboration of the learning activities, procedures and student evaluation.

The Program Coordinator is the person in charge of the structure and the content of each program, as well as for resolving conflicts between instructors and the students or between the students and the administrative services of the University.

### **c. Administrative support**

Students are also supported by Student Advisors and the members of the Distance Education Unit who counsel them on administrative related issues, the planning of their study, problem resolution, and decision-making issues (e.g. course selection and enrolment, the registration and payment of tuition fees, etc.).

## **6. The fundamental structure of EUC E-Learning Courses**

### **a. Course structure**

Each course is carried out over 13 weeks, followed by a final exam week. Throughout the 13-week teaching period, up to six synchronous teleconferences are organised. The first of these is always scheduled for the first week of the semester after the orientation/familiarisation week (during which students become familiar with the **Blackboard Learn Ultra platform** and spend time studying the Course Outline and Study Guide of their courses); and the last is always scheduled in the last two weeks of the semester (always before the final examination week).

The rest of the synchronous teleconference dates are set by the instructor of each course in coordination with the students in order to best accommodate their availability and needs. Though Study Guides and the Course Outlines are structured in weeks, instructors are free to design and present their course content and activities in any way they consider useful to facilitate students' organization of their self-paced study, as well as to help students follow the Course Outline and learning objectives as communicated to them at the beginning of the course. This may maintain the weekly format, or follow a thematic organisation structure. In the case of thematic organisation, instructors should provide an indication of estimated week(s) of study, as well as matching with learning objectives and milestones of activities and course requirements during the semester.

### **b. Synchronous meetings**

Teleconferences are set up using **Blackboard Collaborate** which is an embedded e-learning collaboration tool of the Blackboard Learn Ultra LMS platform. This virtual classroom tool enables instructors to create an engaging and pedagogically innovative environment for students fostering e-learning. During the teleconferences, the instructor, as facilitator and moderator, presents the main points of the topic under discussion, discusses with students related fundamental issues and provides guidance as to the content and materials to be studied at home by the students over the following weeks. Teleconference sessions may also include opportunities for synchronous group or individual work by students. All material is provided beforehand on the **Blackboard Learn Ultra platform**, so that students have a chance to study it, prepare questions on the content and activities of the specific weeks, and discuss these during the synchronous session that follows. The assignments and activities that are to be conducted asynchronously (approximate weekly study time is estimated at 10 hours – excluding assignment preparation time), are also discussed in these synchronous teleconferences. More importantly, through these teleconferences, interaction between the students and the instructor is achieved as students are given, among other things, the opportunity to ask questions or share reflections with other students and their instructor. The instructor also prepares interactive activities (please see relevant section above) to be prepared for and conducted during the synchronous teleconferences.

### **c. Asynchronous communication**

During the semester, students communicate between themselves and with the instructor through the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform in an asynchronous form. The most common methods of asynchronous communication are by message, short chats and discussion forums. Messages are personal or group, sent through the platform and delivered as an email message to recipients' email inbox. Short chat discussions in Blackboard Ultra are enabled over assignments or other tasks assigned on the platform, and provide an opportunity for students to asynchronously exchange informal comments and ideas on any course item. Discussion forums can be either for general discussions (e.g. course inquiries), or assignment focused (graded or non-graded). For the latter, as appropriate per week or theme, students are engaged in collaborative activities and interaction such as discussion of particular course material. This material might have been

either independently studied, or presented and discussed in a videoconference synchronous learning meeting with the instructor.

#### **d. Course assignments**

For each course, students need to carry out individual and group assignments which are graded. The type and nature of each assignment is presented to students at the start of the semester through multiple avenues of communication on the platform, such as in the Course Outline and course Study Guides. It is also explained and discussed during the synchronous teleconferences (as described above). These graded assignments may require preparing an answer to a theoretical question (for instance, discussion of a quote from an academic article or judgment/position or discussion) which involves extended research, rational analysis, critical thinking and evaluation. Other graded assignments may include responding to a focus/problem question, which involves comprehensive understanding of focal content issues.

To increase student motivation and engagement, collaborative and interactive tools are used, such as Padlet for group participation and group projects, Flashcards, game-based learning (e.g. Kahoot & Archy Learning, Simulations, etc.), interactive videos and other interactive activities (e.g. though H5P integrated in the learning platform). This kind of assignments are used mainly for formative evaluation and aim to enrich student's knowledge and skills on the learning objectives of the topic. Specific assignment topics for each course are described in detail in the Study Guide of each course and posted on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform, alongside evaluation rubrics for assignments including the grade weighting attached to each one. Through assignments, students conduct research on a specific topic using the online databases of the University library as well as other electronic resources, either individually and/or in groups (thus interacting with each other, with the material of the course, and with the instructor).

Apart from presenting their findings in a written form, students might elaborate on these during short oral presentations. These oral presentations are usually conducted asynchronously to be shared on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform. There they can be viewed and commented on by fellow classmates, and evaluated by the instructor, as they form part of the overall grade ascribed to their assignments.

Even though variations across programmes of study exist, the approximate time for an individual assignment preparation is approximately 20 hours, for a group assignment preparation is approximately 15 hours and for preparing an oral presentation is approximately 5 hours.

When written assignments are submitted, these are automatically checked through Turnitin for plagiarism through performing a similarity check in available databases. Instructors may use also Turnitin as a pedagogical tool to help students improve the final draft of their assignment before the submission on the Blackboard Learn Ultra platform. Flags for instances of similarity constitute opportunities for formative feedback and opportunities for revision during the writing process.

Instructors proceed promptly (within 15 days at the latest) in providing the assignment grade as well as detailed feedback that the student needs to take into

consideration in a formative mode of assessment for his/her better preparation of the final exam. Feedback can be given either on an individual basis (especially for individual assignments), on a group basis (e.g. in the case of group assignments) or a whole class basis.

Blackboard analytics are also helpful for an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning, because they provide instructors greater insight into the factors that affect their students' performance. Analytics also provide a snapshot of what students know, what they should know and what can be done to meet students' academic needs.

During the semester, students are requested to work both individually and in groups in order to conduct their self-assessment and interactive exercises/activities, which are described in detail in the Study Guide of each course on the platform, and are presented on a weekly basis. At least three to five of such interactive activities/exercises are graded by the instructor (allocated a percentage of 10-15%). This element of the course further allows the students to engage in asynchronous interactive learning at three levels presented in the respective section above (approximate time for activities/exercises preparation is estimated at 30 hours).

#### **e. Final exams**

After the 13-week learning period is completed, students take the final exam for each of their courses (allocated percentage at 50%). The final exam assesses in a comprehensive way the level at which students have acquired the theoretical knowledge covered in the course, as well as the degree to which they have developed the skills in critical analysis aimed at by the course (approximate time for exam preparation 50 hours).

For the online/e-Proctoring implementation of the final exams of E-Learning courses, the LockDown browser platform **Respondus** is used. This tool allows the students to undertake their exams in a proctored environment. Before starting the exam, the students are asked to use their University IDs to identify themselves. Exam recorded videos are stored on GDPR compliant Amazon Web Services (AWS Servers) and are automatically deleted every two (2) months. Up until students have submitted their final answers, the software 'locks' their computer, not allowing them to perform any other actions on their PCs, other than their final examination, until they have submitted their final answers. The software uses the camera and microphone of the student's PC to monitor their movements, sounds, conversations, etc. and produces reports of student activity at the time of the examination. If potential transgressions are detected by the software, the instructor is alerted accordingly (i.e. the software flags specific snapshots and then the instructor when reviewing the recording can view those points more cautiously). The instructor, who is the only one with access to the recording, can access the video to review the reasons for a high alert. If deemed necessary, the student is interviewed and explanations for the alert are requested. If the information is not sufficient, further actions are taken based on the University's regulation on academic dishonesty. The University policy on penalties related to academic dishonesty is presented on instructors' Course Outlines for each course.

A video presentation of the semester delivery of a typical E-Learning course appears here:

[MA Ed Sciences SpecialandInclusive DL video.mp4](#)

### 7. Student assessment in E-Learning courses:

The Study Guides provided at the beginning of the semester contain specific instructions, resource guidance, rubrics for grading, assigned grade value for graded activities, and timelines. Students prepare and deliver their work, including the final exam, aiming to accumulate a grade of at least 60% to pass an undergraduate class, or 70% to pass a graduate class. The grading system of E-Learning courses according to EUC regulations appears in the table below:

BACHELOR'S DEGREES (UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES)				MASTER'S DEGREES (POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES)			
Grade	Description	ECTS	Percentage	Grade	Description	ECTS	Percentage
A	Excellent	4.0	90+	A	Excellent	4.0	90+
B+	Very Good	3.5	85-89	B+	Very Good	3.5	85-89
B	Good	3.0	80-84	B	Good	3.0	80-84
C+	Fairly Good	2.5	75-79	C+	Fairly Good	2.5	75-79
C	Average	2.0	70-74	C	Average	2.0	70-74
D+	Below Average	1.5	65-69	D+	Below Average	0	
D	Poor	1.0	60-64	D	Poor	0	
F	Failure	0		F	Failure	0	
I	Incomplete	0		I	Incomplete	0	
W	Withdrawal	0		W	Withdrawal	0	
P	Pass	0		P	Pass	0	
AU	Attendance	0		AU	Attendance	0	
TR	Course from transfer	0		TR	Course from transfer	0	

For every week the objectives and learning outcomes are clearly stated in all Study Guides, allowing students to self-assess progress by reflecting on their grasp of target concepts and knowledge. Based on each assignment specific criteria, an indicative grading rubric is included in the Study Guides. An example of a rubric for a group research paper in a research methodology course appears below:

Group Assignment Evaluation	Criterion	Maximum points possible	Points Earned
<b>Names:</b>			
<b>Literature review and theoretical framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate presentation of basic theoretical tools</li> <li>adequate presentation of local and international literature on the topic</li> <li>presentation of researcher's epistemological paradigm</li> <li>justification of necessity and importance of study</li> </ul>	4	
<b>Methodology</b>	Justified presentation and bibliographic documentation of the	8	

	<p>methodological choices concerning all parts of the methodological design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate research problem statement and research questions</li> <li>• data collection methods</li> <li>• participant profile</li> <li>• sampling and recruitment method</li> <li>• data analysis method</li> <li>• data collection duration</li> <li>• ethics issues</li> <li>• validity and reliability strategies</li> </ul>		
<b>Analysis-interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequate interpretation and presentation of the findings</li> <li>• with documentation with original excerpts from the data, and</li> <li>• documentation from the literature</li> </ul>	8	
<b>Conclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• link of basic conclusions to the literature</li> <li>• comprehensive discussion of basic conclusions</li> </ul>	3	
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proficient use of language</li> <li>• appropriate use of APA</li> <li>• general presentation-appearance of the work</li> </ul>	2	
<b>Total points</b>		<b>25</b>	

### **8. Programmes' quality assurance**

In order to improve the learning experience for the students, EUC has established a Standing Committee under the University's Committee of Internal Quality Assurance (C.I.Q.A.) named the "Pedagogical Planning of E-Learning Programmes of Study Standing Committee". The Committee is involved in all internal quality assurance procedures and decisions related to the University's E-Learning programmes of study. The Committee's aim is to improve the learning experience of E-Learning students through its active and qualitative support of the University's E-Learning programmes of study and is responsible for supporting Schools in:

- monitoring and evaluating the existing E-Learning programmes of study;
- the pedagogical planning of new E-Learning programmes of study;
- the design and evaluation of educational material for E-Learning programmes of study;
- the support and feedback processes to the students;
- the pedagogical use of technology, internet and digital information;
- the technical training and support of the instructors of E-Learning programmes of study;
- the interaction between academic staff and students in the E-Learning programmes of study.

The composition of the Pedagogical Planning of E-Learning Programmes of Study Standing Committee for the academic years 2020-2022 is the following:

Chair

**Dr. Paraskevi Chatzipanagiotou**, Assistant Professor,  
Director of Distance Education Unit (Ex-Officio)

Members: School  
representatives

*School of Humanities, Social  
and Education Sciences*

**Dr. James Mackay**, Assistant Professor  
**Dr. Maria Papazachariou**, Lecturer  
**Ms Petra Daniel**, Special Teaching Personnel

*School of Sciences*

**Dr. Yianna Danidou**, Lecturer  
**Dr. Constantinos Giannakou**, Lecturer  
**Dr. Costantinos Nikiforou**, Assistant Professor

*School of Business  
Administration*

**Prof. George Papageorgiou**, Professor  
**Dr. Lycourgos Hadjiphanis**, Assistant Professor  
**Dr. Onisiforos Iordanous**, Assistant Professor

*School of Medicine*

**Dr. Theodoros Lytras**, Assistant Professor  
**Dr. Kostas Gianakopoulos**, Assistant Professor

*School of Law*

**Dr. George Chloupis**, Lecturer

Ex-Officio Members:

*Chair of Digitally Enhanced  
Learning (D.e.L.) Ad-Hoc  
Committee*

**Dr. Loucas Louca**, Associate Professor

*Chair of Faculty Professional  
Development Standing  
Committee*

**Dr. Eleni Theodorou**, Associate Professor

**APPENDIX IV**

## Faculty Professional Development Program 2021-22

A/A		HOURS	DATE
1.	Orientation Session F21	4	22/9/2021
2.	Blackboard Learn Familiarization Session	2	23/9/2021
3.	Blackboard Learn Ultra New and Advanced Tools	2	27/9/2021
4.	The EUC E-Learning Pedagogical Model & Basic Principles of E-Learning	2	29/9/2021
5.	Assigning and Evaluating Group Work in Higher Education	5	5/10/2021
6.	E-Assessment and Feedback in E-Learning Programs of Study	2	7/10/2021
7.	Digital Enhanced Learning Tools to Support Hyflex Teaching	2	13/10/2021
8.	Administration of Research Projects	2	21/10/2021
9.	Online Exams on Blackboard Learn Ultra	2	26/10/2021
10.	The EU Co-Funded Project Becom Material	2	27/10/2021
11.	E-Learning Best Technological Practices in Teaching, Assessment and Communication	2	4/11/2021
12.	Setting-up Exams with Respondus	2	13/1/2022
13.	Setting-up your Course on Blackboard Learn Ultra	2	2/2/2022
14.	The New Office Hours Software 'MS Bookings'	2	9/2/2022
15.	Information Session on Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions and ERC Grants	2	16/2/2022
<b>TOTAL HOURS ATTENDED</b>		<b>35 Hours</b>	

## **APPENDIX V: SAMPLE OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL**

The re-evaluation of the BBA in Marketing and Digital Communications (E-Learning), takes place in the examination period. Therefore, in the absence of the live streaming of a course, we have compiled a sample of different recordings and material that were used in the delivery of MAR260Y (Spring Semester 2022), an online course in Professional Selling, instructed by Dr. Dino Domic.

The enclosed recordings, readings and notes, as well as the exercise and case study illustrate how material is integrated across synchronous and asynchronous content.

### **Pre-recorded sessions for the External Evaluation Committee**

#### **Video 1: Creating Value with a Relationship Strategy**

The aim of this week was to highlight the importance of business relationships in today's competitive marketplace. To this effect, the attached notes (named Creating Value):

- introduce the notion of "partnering"
- outline the processes that enhance the relationship strategy
- introduce the "win-win philosophy" and
- the present the importance of understanding body language and handshakes.

In the above recording, the instructor underlines the premise of "customers as life-time partners" and discusses a series of company cases/real life examples which have cemented valued relationships with their clients (i.e. DHL, Chrysler, Harley Davidson).

.....

#### **Video 2: Creating a product strategy**

The aim of this week's theme was to:

- introduce students to the mass explosion of new products within international markets
- help students understand how to become product experts
- explain how to convert products features into benefits for the buyer

In the above recording, the instructor highlights the important areas of the notes on product strategy, which had been uploaded in Blackboard (please see attached notes named Product Strategy). To facilitate the learning process, in the recording the instructor also explains a real-life example (i.e. Ferrari) and provides an exercise which the students are requested to complete.

#### **Video 3: Creating a product strategy**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> video recording is also from Product Strategy and provides a set of questions to be answered as an exercise. This individual assignment is non-graded.

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### **Assignment: D. Zavos Group**

Through the above assignment, the instructor aimed at examining the students' ability to understand and synthesise the material covered across the course and across both asynchronous and synchronous content.

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#### **Enclosed material:**

- 3 recordings
- 2 sets of notes uploaded on Blackboard
- 1 assignment

**MAR 260 – Professional Selling**

**Creating value with a relationship strategy**

**Selling Today (Manning, L & Reece, L)**

**Pages 49-70**

Relationships add value

Partnering – The highest quality selling relationship

Relationship strategies focus on four key groups

Developing though processes that enhance your relationship strategy

- Self-image – an important dimension of the relationship strategy
- Self-image and success
- Double win
- Character and integrity

Nonverbal strategies that improve relationships

- Effect of body language on relationships
- Shaking hands
- Facial expressions

EFFECT OF APPEARANCE ON RELATIONSHIPS

- Simplicity
- Appropriateness
- Quality
- Visual integrity

Effect of voice quality on relationships

Effect of manners on your relationships

Conversational strategies that enhance relationships

- Comments on here and now observations
- Compliments
- Search for mutual acquaintances or interests

Strategies for self improvement

**MAR 260 – Professional Selling**

**Creating value with a relationship strategy**

**Selling Today (Manning, L & Reece, L)**

**Pages 49-70**

**Relationships add value:** yesterday value was something extra ... today value is everything to the customer and one way to increase value is to develop relationships with the clientele.

**Partnering – The highest quality selling relationship:** Salespeople today are encouraged to think of the customer as a business partner. They should constantly strive to build a quality long-term partnership. (salespeople must think of creating the lifetime customer)

PARTNERING can be defined as a strategically developed, high quality, long term, relationship that focuses on solving the customers buying problems.

**Relationship strategies focus on four key groups:** High performance personnel build strong relationships with four groups,

- 1) Customers: As stated previously, a major success in selling is the ability to establish working relationships with customers.
- 2) Secondary decision makers: (receptionist, secretary, assistant) – these people are the customers first point of contact.
- 3) Company support staff: (market research, product service, credit, training, shipping) – internal relationships are a vital aspect of selling.
- 4) Management personnel: (heads of department, sales manager, supervisor) – maintaining a good relationship with superiors is important.

### **Developing thought processes that enhance your relationship strategy**

- **Self-image – an important dimension of the relationship strategy:** Self-image is shaped by the ideas, attitudes, feelings and other thoughts which you have about yourself that influence the way you relate to others.

If you believe that you will fail in something than you usually make yourself fail (self-fulfilment philosophy/ positive/ negative self-image/ real vs. ideal selves))

- **Self-image and success:** Dr. Maxwell Maltz has helped us understand the “why” of human behaviour,

- 1) Feelings and behaviour are consistent with self-image: If an individual feels like a failure then he is likely to find some way to fail. The more positive your self-image the greater the probability that you will achieve success.
- 2) The self-image can be changed: one is never too young or old to change your self-image.

How can one develop a more positive self-image??

- 1) Stop think about the past mistakes and start focusing on the future.
  - 2) Develop expertise in selected areas: By developing expert power you improve your self-image and increase your contribution to your employer.
  - 3) Learn to develop a positive mental attitude: read books and listen to audio-tapes.
- **Double win:** the double win philosophy states, that “if I help you win, I win too”. Both the customer and the salesperson must leave the sale having a feeling of satisfaction.
  - **Character and integrity:** Your character strongly influences your relationships. Character is composed of your personal standards of behaviour, including your honesty, integrity and moral fibre.

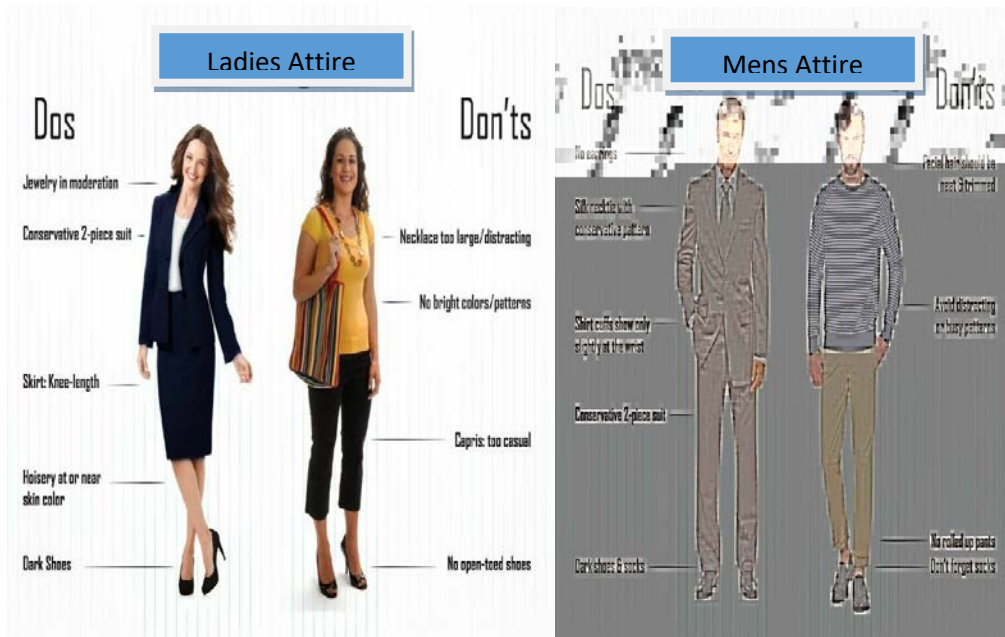
### Nonverbal strategies that improve relationships

- **Effect of body language on relationships:** Body language is a form of nonverbal communication. (sales-agent who is continually glancing at his watch is communicating a concern for time).
  - **Entrance and carriage:** The first impression we make is very important. Bixler says that the key to making a successful entrance to a meeting is simply believing – and projecting – that you have a reason to be there and that you have something to offer to the client.
  - **Shaking hands:** An inadequate handshake is like dandruff, no one mentions it but everyone notices it. The message we communicate with a handshake is determined by a combination of factors,
- 1) Eye contact during handshake: always make eye contact

- 2) Degree of firmness: firm is good
  - 3) Depth of interlock: a full deep grip communicates friendship and interest.
  - 4) Duration of grip: by extending the duration of the handshake we can communicate a greater degree of interest and concern for the other person.
  - 5) Degree of dryness of hands: a moist palm is not only uncomfortable but can also communicate the impression that you are nervous. Moist hands repel customers on a subconscious level.
- **Facial expressions:** George Rotter of Montclair University states that people tend to trust a smiling face.

**EFFECT OF APPEARANCE ON RELATIONSHIPS:** Always dress for success. There are some guidelines that we must follow when selecting clothes for sales work.

- **Simplicity:** Stick to simple colours, in business we want to be taken seriously, so avoid flashy colours.
- **Appropriateness:** We must carefully consider the clientele we will be selling to and decide what will be acceptable to them.
- **Quality:** A salesperson's wardrobe must be regarded as an investment, remember ... "if you want respect, you have to dress as well as or better than your industry standards".
- **Visual integrity:** Too much jewellery, a shirt that does not fit well, un-matching shoes can all detract from the professional look you want to project. (Customs officer at port)



**Effect of voice quality on relationships:** Voice quality contributes to 38% of the meaning attached to spoken messages. Some people have a naturally pleasing voice, for those of us who don't this is how to improve the quality of your voice:

- 1) Do not talk too fast or too slowly
- 2) Avoid a speech pattern that is dull and colourless

**Effect of manners on your relationships:** Salespeople who possess knowledge of good etiquette can perform their daily work with greater poise and confidence. The following are some of the rules of etiquette that are especially important to salespeople,

- 1) Avoid the temptation to address a new prospect by their first name
- 2) Avoid offensive comments or stories
- 3) Do not express personal views on politics and religion
- 4) When you invite a customer to lunch, do not discuss business until the meal is ordered.
- 5) When you use voicemail, leave a clear, concise message. Do not speak too fast or too slow.

### **Conversational strategies that enhance relationships:**

- **Comments on here and now observations:** Be aware of your surroundings, a special watch or an unusual artefact in the client's office.
- **Compliments:** When offering a sincere compliment to your prospect you are saying "something about you is special".
- **Search for mutual acquaintances or interests:** A good way of establishing rapport is by finding common friends and interests. If you know someone with the same last name this might be a good time to ask if that person is a relative.

### **Strategies for self-improvement**

**Step one:** Set goals - goal setting is an important element of self improvement.

**Step two:** Visualize yourself reaching your goal

**Step three:** Self talk – (Shad Helmstetter) states that you should talk to yourself in order to consciously prepare for positive new direction.

**Step Four:** Recognize your progress – when you see yourself making progress, reward yourself.

**MAR 260 – Professional Selling**

**Developing a product strategy: creating product  
solutions**

**Selling Today (Manning, L & Reece, L)**

**Pages 91-113**

### **Developing a product solution**

Explosion of product options  
Creating solutions with product configuration  
Product knowledge adds value

### **Becoming a product expert**

Product development and quality improvement process  
Performance and data specifications  
Maintenance and service contracts  
Price and delivery

### **Know your company**

Company culture and organization  
Company support for product

### **Know your competition**

Your attitude toward your competition  
Become an industry expert

### **Sources of product information**

Product literature  
Sales training meetings  
Plant tours  
Internal sales and sales support team members  
Customers  
Product  
Internet  
Publications  
Word of caution

### **Adding value with a feature – Benefit strategy**

Distinguish between feature and benefits  
Use bridge systems  
Identify features and benefits  
Feature – Benefit approach compliments

**MAR 260 – Professional Selling**

**Developing a product strategy: creating product  
solutions**

**Selling Today (Manning, L & Reece, L)**

**Pages 91-113**

**Developing a product solution:** Creating the right product solution with the right price for the customer is the most important part of the salesperson's job. The product strategy is a well-conceived plan that emphasizes becoming a product expert, selling benefits, and configuring value-added solutions (discussed later).

**Explosion of product options:** The domestic and global markets are overflowing with new goods and services (grocery stores introduce 10,000 new products each year). For the customer, this is a good news-bad news situation, the good news being the choice that the customer has, the bad news being the confusion created in choosing the correct product for the customer's needs.



**Creating solutions with product configuration:** The product selection process is often referred to as product configuration. (EXAMPLE many IT firms are now creating product solutions that include computer hardware, software, installation, and training.) Today companies use product configuration software, this software incorporates product selection criteria and associates them directly with customer requirements. ([https://www.mini.co.uk/en\\_GB/home/standardselector/configurator.html](https://www.mini.co.uk/en_GB/home/standardselector/configurator.html))

**Product knowledge adds value:** the seller must know his/her product extremely well and pass on the benefits of that knowledge to the customer (selling the right product to the right customer)

**Becoming a product expert:** A good salesperson must be a product expert. Ideally the salesperson possesses product knowledge that exceeds the expectations of the buyer. This section concentrates on the most common product information categories.

1) Product development and quality improvement process: salespeople need to be familiar with the product development history, this information sets the stage for stronger sales appeals (Porsche 924-944 development).

2) Performance and data specifications: a salesperson must be able to answer complex questions relating to the specifications of a specific product (BHP?, fuel consumption ratings?). A good seller must address these kind of questions whenever they are raised. Performance data are especially critical when the customer is attempting to compare similar products.

3) Maintenance and service contracts: prospects usually ask for information regarding maintenance and care requirements of a product. The salesperson that can quickly and accurately answer these questions will have the edge.

4) Price and delivery: finally the prospect will want to know about the price of the product and how and when the product can be delivered. It is important to note that price objections represent one of the most common barriers to closing the sale.

**Know your company:** Acquiring and presenting knowledge about your company is an important step towards gathering complete product knowledge. In this section we will examine the type of information needed in most selling situations.

Company culture and organization: the culture and organization of a company is a collection of beliefs, behaviours, and work patterns held in common by people employed by a specific firm. (Jaguar in Cyprus did not allow test drives of their cars back in 2002-2003)

Company support for product: Services after the sale is the theme of many marketing programs. Firms should attempt to stay in touch with customers in order to determine levels of satisfaction with product usage.

**Know your competition:** Salespeople that possess knowledge of their competitors strengths and weaknesses are better able to adjust their own position, and adjust their selling strategy accordingly.

**Your attitude toward your competition:** You must acquire knowledge about the competitors products, once armed with this information, you will be more confident in your ability to answer questions.

A few basic guidelines regarding the best way of dealing with issues regarding your competition,

- 1) In most cases, do not refer to the competition during the sales presentation.
- 2) Never discuss the competition unless you have all your facts straight.
- 3) Avoid criticizing the competition, remain respectful.

**Become an industry expert:** An effective salesperson must become an expert within a specific industry. If a sales force includes more than one person, each might assume responsibility for a specific area or niche in the industry. (Stephanides cars, bikes, jet skis .....)

**Sources of product information:** There are several sources of product information available to salespeople, some of the most common include the following,

**Product literature:** prepared and published by the company itself.

**Sales training meetings:** company sponsored sales training programs frequently focus on product knowledge.

**Plant tours:** Many companies believe that's salespeople must visit the manufacturing plant and see the production process firsthand.

**Internal sales and sales support team members:** professional salespeople should learn from each other.

**Customers:** the individuals who actually use the product can be an important source of information. They have actually observed the performance of the product under actual working conditions and can thus provide an objective assessment of the products strengths and weaknesses.

Product: salespeople must closely examine and if possible use the product, which they sell.

Internet: many firms are using the internet in order to showcase the features and benefits of their products. (YouTube)

Publications: Trade and technical publications provide valuable product information.

Word of caution: The salesperson must accurately gauge the prospects intellectual capacity. There is always the danger that a knowledgeable salesperson can overwhelm the potential buyer with facts and figures.

**Adding value with a feature – Benefit strategy**: Charles Revson, founder of the Revlon company once stated “in our factory we make cosmetics, in our stores we sell hope”. It is important to state that all successful product presentation translate product features into buyer benefits. People do not buy features ... they buy benefits.

Distinguish between feature and benefits: A product feature is anything that can be seen, felt or measured. A product benefit is whatever provides the customer with personal advantage or gain.

Use bridge statements: a bridge statement is a transitional phrase that connect a statement of features to a statement of benefits. EXAMPLE “Lanitis juices are nationally marketed, which means you will benefit from more presold customers”

Identify features and benefits: An effective salesperson should make a list of a products features and buyer benefits that connect to those features. The following is a list of the product features and benefits associated with driving a Ferrari.

**FERRARI**

Feature	Benefits
High Performance	Driving pleasure
Great styling	Draws attention/optical pleasure
Respected brand	Social mobility/ recognition
Reliability	No headaches

**Exercise**: Produce a list of features and benefits in owning an Apple iPhone

# **EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS**

**DEPARTMENT: Management & Marketing**

**SUBJECT: Professional Selling – MAR 260 – ASSIGNMENT**

**LECTURER: Dr. Dino Domic**

**DUE DATE: Week 12 (2-6 MAY 2022)**

For this assignment, you are required to **answer all** of the subsequent questions.

## **D. ZAVOS GROUP**

When people buy or sell a home, they hold their real estate agent to the highest of standards. After all, for most people the home purchase represents the largest single investment they will make throughout their lifetime. The salespeople employed by D. Zavos group ([www.zavos.com](http://www.zavos.com)), understand the magnitude of the home purchase or home sale experience. They know that the customers are anxious to partner with someone who can be trusted to look after their best interests.

When new salespeople join the D. Zavos group, they usually come under the tutelage of Dimitra Ioannou, vice president of marketing. She helps salespeople develop a professional image that appeals to the type of clientele served by the company. She is aware of the fact that there is a direct link between the image projected by the salespeople and the success of the company. When training salespeople she emphasizes the following points,

- Customers notice even the little details such as the quality of stationery, note paper, and business cards. If the business card features a photo of the salesperson, the salesperson should be looking straight ahead, not away from the camera. This pose permits the salesperson to make eye contact with the customer.
- Salespeople at D. Zavos group must be able to build rapport with a variety of personality types. Some customers are quiet, reserved, and somewhat guarded when expressing their views. Others are more impulsive and express their views openly. Salespeople are encouraged to alter their communication style to

increase the comfort level of the customer. Dimitra Ioannou encourages salespeople to mirror the behaviour of the prospect to the greatest extent possible. She claims that it is always important to gauge how your communication style impacts on the prospect. A positive attitude is another important aspect of the relationship building process at D.Zavos group.

- In ever more frequent cases salespeople at D. Zavos group must communicate across language and cultural barriers. Foreign clients are becoming more common since Cyprus has joined the E.U, and this means that salespeople must develop a deeper understanding and respect for cultural diversity. To impose our way of doing business on every prospect is short-sighted.
- Dimitra Ioannou suggests that salespeople should find out what customers value. What is the most important aspect of the home purchase or home sale? Most customers do not open up and share important information until they trust the salesperson.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1) Does it appear that the D. Zavos Group supports the three prescriptions that serve as a foundation of the relationship strategy? Support your answer with theory, references, and examples. **20 Marks**
- 2) Why should real estate salespeople spend time developing a relationship strategy? What might be some long term benefits of this strategy? **10 Marks**
- 3) Is it ever appropriate to touch your client other than a handshake? Explain and support your answer. **10 Marks**
- 4) What are some of the benefits of the salesperson who can mirror the behaviour of the prospect? **10 Marks**
- 5) What are some precautions to take when preparing a meeting with a foreign prospect? What subject/s must be avoided at all times? **10 Marks**
- 6) As a prospective buyer of retirement property on the island of Cyprus, would you be most influenced by rational or emotional buying motives? Explain why. **10 Marks**
- 7) Katia Paraskeva has recently been offered a job opportunity by D. Zavos group. Katia though is unsure of how lucrative a career in selling would be. What are

the pros and cons Katia should be thinking about whilst considering a career in professional selling.

**20 Marks**

**The grading of your assignment is subject to the following:**

- A 2000 word limit is imposed (not counting appendices or references).
- Students who engage in any form of plagiarism or collusion shall be heavily penalised.
- Assignments **must** be uploaded electronically via the specific courses BlackBoard portal (under the section titled as “assignment”).
- Do include the following in your final piece of work:
  - Title page
  - Lecturers comment’s page
  - Table of contents
  - References section
  - Appendices (if so applicable)

**Note: 10% of the total mark will be allocated for appropriate English usage, Presentation, and conformation to assignment guidelines.**