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Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 24/02/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)

- **Town: Pyla, Larnaca**

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

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού

  In English:

  Masters of Science in Human Resource Management

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

- **Programme's status: New**

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: N/A
  In English: N/A

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The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws" of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

- *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
- *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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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 by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Revise the syllabi to provide more clarity about the content of each course. At present, the course content in each syllabus is rather vague and does not allow one to see how the functional areas of HRM (i.e., recruitment & selection, training & development, performance management & compensation, career development) are covered within these courses. It would also be helpful to provide this detailed coverage to allow identifying any potential significant overlap across courses.	We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for its thorough and constructive review of our syllabi and the feedback it provided for its improvement. In response to EEC's comments, we have carefully reviewed the syllabus of the MSc in HRM's modules (i.e. courses) and revised it with the aims of ensuring it provides a clear outline of each module's content. We ensured that the syllabus of each module provides students with the required information to develop their knowledge and skills in line with the learning outcomes of the programme. Particularly with regards to the functional areas of HRM, we have ensured that the following such areas are addressed by module HR4201 'Managing People' (Please refer to the Appendix I for the updated module descriptor): - Recruitment and selection - Training and development - Performance management and compensation - Career development It is important to note that modules HR4204 'Global People Development' and HR4206 'Strategic HRM Features' also cover aspects of the above functional areas, but from a different perspective, allowing thereby for a richer and deeper approach to learning without significant overlaps (Please refer to the Appendix I for the updated module descriptors). For example: - **'Intercultural Training and Development'** will be covered in the module HR4204 'Global People Development' in order to address and explore *cross-cultural* people development practices. - **'Recruitment and Selection'** and **'Training and Development'** will be covered in the module HR4206 'Strategic HRM Features' in order to examine and illustrate how HR practitioners can utilise technology to support the above HR practices (in line with the theme 'Future of work'). As such coverage of these functions in the context of this module complements rather than overlaps with the way these functions are covered by module HR4201 'Managing People', above.	Choose an item.
At present, each syllabus lists an extensive list of references. While it is important to expose students to many resources, it would be helpful to indicate which references are deemed mandatory for reading, and which ones are optional.	We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for this meticulous comment. We have now indicated in each module descriptor the core textbooks as well as resources for further reading (Please refer to the Appendix I for the updated module descriptors).	Choose an item.

The learning outcomes of the programmes are well crafted. While each course has learning outcomes stated in the syllabus, it is not clear how those connect to the programme learning outcomes. It will be helpful to provide a curriculum map that shows how the programme learning outcomes are covered across the courses. It would also be helpful to provide an assessment plan to capture how each learning objective will be assessed, and how it will be reported to ensure assurance of learning. This is an important point namely if the school is intending to apply for the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation.	We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for these valuable recommendations. To this effect, we have developed a curriculum map that shows how the programme learning outcomes are covered across the modules (courses), while we have also developed an assessment plan to capture how each learning objective will be assessed, and how it will be reported to ensure assurance of learning. Please refer to Appendix I for a review of the requested documents.	Choose an item.

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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
Consider recording some events or doing some online/hybrid events, guest speakers, lectures to allow those who cannot attend to benefit from these extra-curricular activities.	We would like to thank the EEC for this suggestion. The School of Business and Management follows the University's strategy, which commits to providing an attractive teaching and learning experience to the students. As such, we welcome your recommendation and will seek to implement it to record any extra-curricular activities (e.g. guest lectures) so that students who cannot attend these, can do so at their own time. Your recommendation can easily be implemented as we have all the necessary infrastructure in place (i.e. each classroom is equipped with cameras to livestream and/or record sessions for later viewing). We have learnt the benefits of online/hybrid events during the pandemic; and we acknowledge that certain extra-curricular activities (e.g. guest speakers) can be recorded to increase the level of student engagement and assist with the diffusion of knowledge to those students who cannot attend. However, it is important to clarify here that the MSc in HRM is to be validated as a programme of study for conventional delivery. As such, we must always ensure that we provide teaching and learning in this mode and that therefore the learning outcomes of the programme are achieved via students' physical attendance.	Choose an item.
Consider changing the deadline of the research project dissertation since it is hard to collect primary data in the summer. For example, most professionals are on vacation and will not be available for interviews or responding to survey requests.	UCLan Cyprus is committed to support students and their learning journey. The teaching part of the academic year for postgraduate programmes starts in October each year and comprises three semesters. The module HR4200 'Research Project' will be delivered across the three semesters (fall-spring and summer). This arrangement allows students to collect data primarily during the spring semester (semester 2) to ensure that they have sufficient time to analyse it and produce their thesis during the summer semester. The delivery of the module will begin with taught lectures and interactive workshop sessions that will support learners to gain the knowledge and expertise required to undertake a research project.	Choose an item.
Given the apparent intention of the school to recruit more international students, to consider an evaluation of the in-year English language support (i.e., Language Academy) to ensure it will be	All students admitted to the programme should have a certified proof of English Language proficiency to a score of at least IELTS 6.5 or equivalent according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).	Choose an item.

| able to support the needs of students with a mix of language abilities. | Yet, UCLan Cyprus provides sufficient English language support to students who need further assistance through the Language Academy. The Language Academy of UCLan Cyprus is offering a series of opportunities to students who need targeted support in certain aspects of English (e.g. specialised terminology, academic skills). In this respect, the WISER Service is aimed at offering targeted assistance to students with respect to e.g. enhancing their academic writing and argumentation skills in English as well as training students in using specialised terms appropriately. | |

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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
At an initial stage, no permanent member of staff above the level of assistant professor will be involved in the delivery of the programme. Going forward, this imbalance will be naturally corrected as members of staff move up the ranks through the promotion process. In the meantime, the leadership of the school might want to consider implementing a mentoring system for teaching staff who will be delivering the new HRM programme to make sure that staff feel appropriately supported and mentored, especially those in the early-career researcher category. Where relevant/feasible, UCLan Cyprus may seek the support of UCLan UK faculty for such subject-specific mentoring.	The University and the School consider academic development, and more importantly, the provision of mentoring for the advancement of research and the cultivation of pedagogical skills, an essential element for the successful delivery of a programme and the provision of an effective student experience.

Specifically, the University operates a university-wide academic mentoring scheme, namely: the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Mentoring (RIEM) scheme. Through the RIEM scheme, early career academics are partnered with more experienced academic staff (their mentors) who will support and guide them through their early career years.

In addition to the University RIEM scheme, UCLan Cyprus academics enjoy further mentoring from colleagues in UCLan UK. We currently have 3 peer groups (early career, mid-career and professor groups), in which academics from both campuses are members. Academics who are members of these groups, enjoy two main benefits, i.e. i) the exchange of information, ideas and practices with other academics who are at the same career level as with them, and ii) the group mentoring from more established academics.

Besides, and as far as support on teaching and learning is concerned, the University operates the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee (TLEC) that is responsible to provide training and support for all members of academic staff on a variety of teaching and pedagogical methodologies, including teaching in a blended learning environment. Throughout the academic year, beyond the e-learning/blended-learning seminars and trainings, TLEC provides forums for the exchange and sharing of information between academics who deliver on conventional or e-learning programmes. This takes place through interactive workshops as well as a monthly bulletin/newsletter where academics can write about their own classroom experience. TLEC also works closely with UCLan UK's Centre for Collaborative Learning (CCL), and specifically, the Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching (TELT) unit of CCL. Through TELT, academics have access to several professional development resources including in the following categories:
- Inclusive Learning (producing inclusive and accessible content)
- Teaching Technologies
- Creating and re-using e-learning content
- E-learning packages and interactive apps
- Graphics and animations
- Video production
- Classroom Technologies
- Case Studies

In addition to the resources available, through e3Hub (part of TELT), academics have access to seminars and trainings focusing on areas such as, but not limited to:
- Feedback and assessment
- Content creation and curation
- Collaborative practice
- Digital learning environments | Choose an item. |

- Student engagement
- Learning design and development

Some of these trainings are compulsory for academics at the the School of Business and Management.

Finally, through CCL, there is an active blog that is shared between both campuses (UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK) and in which academics can share their experiences as well as best practices in various teaching environments. https://msuclanac.sharepoint.com/sites/TechnologyEnabledLearningTeaching

It is also worth mentioning that it is as part of all University academic staff's contract of employment terms to complete HEA training and become Fellows (FHEA). Further, our academics are encouraged to become Senior Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA).

The School also embraces the belief that co-delivery of certain modules can enhance not only the academics' teaching skills, but also provide for an improved learning experience to the students. This practice promotes reflection and peer learning. Furthermore, peer observations are part of the School's culture as well. Peer observations are carried out as a teaching and learning mentoring mechanism, which provides score for reflection and improvement that is aided by the provision of peer-feedback (academic staff members have an opportunity to observe colleagues and to be observed).

The School also benefits from the Erasmus+ University grant to support Faculty members to participate in teaching and training mobility. The University adherence to Erasmus+ Charter also allows mobility of staff from our partners to UCLan Cyprus enriching the teaching experience of our academic staff members.

Moreover, the School has an academic staff development budget, which can be used for conferences, training and academic visits that help to enrich presentation skills, teaching competency, networking and open opportunities for research development.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
The programme is both open to recent graduates as well as mature learners who are hoping to upgrade their knowledge and skills in relation to HR. While this positively responds to an inclusive approach, it would be advisable for UCLan Cyprus to ensure that each cohort has an appropriate mix of students from these two key categories. Cohort diversity fosters learning and will be beneficial to the quality of student interactions and participation.	We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for this valuable recommendation. All University's bodies need to abide by the University's values and policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. As part of implementing these policies our Admissions Department ensures that each programme of study of the University recruits an inclusive cohort of students with diverse backgrounds, while respecting the admissions criteria for each programme. This year campaign's theme for recruitment was WE EMBRACE. As the EEC correctly noted, the MSc in HRM is aimed at both graduate students and working professionals who seek to develop further their knowledge and skills in the area of HR. Our endeavor is to ensure that we maintain an appropriate cohort mix between these two target groups. At the same time, the University is increasingly investing in local and international partnerships with industry stakeholders, other educational establishments and policy makers in order to set up a scholarship scheme aimed at students from less advantaged social backgrounds or students from emerging economies. We believe that this approach facilitates further an increase of cohort diversity and inclusion.	Choose an item.

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

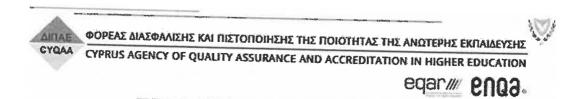| Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Students indicated that they would welcome the reinstalment of some resources that were available to them during COVID, such as, recordings of the lectures. The committee would encourage this practice, which would ensure that, for instance, students with professional responsibilities would have equal access to learning resources.	We would like to thank the EEC for this recommendation. It is also our belief that our students need to be offered equal opportunities for access to the curriculum and the learning resources available as part of the MSc in HRM. We fulfill our commitment for equal access to learning resources via our use of Blackboard, which is the University's key virtual learning environment, which students use to get access to instrumental curriculum information, including learning and teaching material such as lecture slides and videos, seminar activities, case studies and assessment briefs, as well as the Module Information Pack, the Module Descriptor, academic staff contact and office hours, a comprehensive online reading list with links to e-books and e-resources available in the library. However, as per CY Quality Assurance Agency (DIPAE) guidelines, programmes of study which are approved for conventional delivery expect that students are attending their modules in person, physically. Making available recorded lectures to our students via Blackboard is a recommendation that we welcome but which we need to consider in line with the above guidelines and also while assessing the potential risk that availability of such lectures may have on student attendance, overall (both for working professionals and for recent graduates who need to have equal access rights to recorded lecture material). At the same time, students are encouraged to ripe the valuable benefits accruing from face-to-face learning. Yet, the University acknowledges the busy routines of students with professional responsibilities and as such it arranges lectures for postgraduate programmes to be taking place in the evening (6 – 9 pm). In addition to the above, a flipped classroom as a pedagogic approach will be used as one of the teaching practices to promote active and participative learning for the students. We believe that this approach will help address equal access to a rich pool of learning resources by helping students to practise active and experiential learning. They will be able to combine different learning modalities such as watching videos/ listening to podcasts at their own time and dedicating classroom time to group discussions, group problem solving, case study reviews.	Choose an item.
Given the distinctiveness of the CIPD qualification for the programme, UCLan Cyprus could consider closer involvement with the CIPD and local CIPD	We would like to thank the EEC for this sensible and value-adding recommendation. We consider closer involvement with the CIPD and the local community of CIPD professionals to ensure that academic staff members are informed about	Choose an item.

community to ensure students are better informed about the implications of professional membership in the HR arena.	the implications and standards of professional membership in the HR arena. The content of the modules of the programme is developed in light of the latest CIPD ethical and professional standards as well as CIPD's evidence and insights from current professional practice (academic staff members have constant communication with the UCLan UK faculty for subject-specific matters). Two members of the academic staff are currently Associate members of CIPD, and this also ensures compliance with CIPD expectations and the smooth sharing of CIPD's standards with our students. The Course Leader is a member of the local Agile HR community that ensures that students are informed about relevant practices regarding how to invest in sharpening managers' skills, organising their work and talent systems.	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes – N/A
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) – N/A
(ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
The MSc HRM programme proposed by UCLan Cyprus, tied to the CIPD professional membership and building on the UCLan UK offering, offers a distinctive opportunity to the local market in terms of combining (i) an academic syllabus validated in the UK context, (ii) the organic research strengths of key academics in the School of Business and Management with some potential synergies with other departments e.g., psychology, and (iii) the skills and competence required to be an HR professional. The more these local elements are developed over time, the more the distinctiveness of the programme will emerge from a local and international perspective.	We are very thankful to the External Evaluation Committee for their positive final remarks and for acknowledging the importance of the MSc HRM programme for the local market and the School's portfolio of postgraduate programmes. The School will ensure that it leads on efforts to the development of organic research strengths of key academics with some potential synergies with other departments e.g., psychology. Further, it will support the development of the skills and competence required to be an HR professional. Besides, the School is committed to staff development by implementing a series of schemes as noted previously (section 3, pages 7-8).	Choose an item.
Following discussions with the leadership, the proposal fits very well within the School and University's strategy to expand its suite of programmes and to attract international students. The committee also notes that UCLan Cyprus will be part of UCLan UK's AACSB accreditation journey, which is to be commended.	We are very thankful to the External Evaluation Committee for their positive remarks.	Choose an item.
As it stands, the programme structure and expectations seem in line with the EQF. In the main, the committee has recommended further clarity in terms of the content of the modules, alongside a few other recommendations for considerations. To this extent therefore, the committee is supportive of the UCLan Cyprus MSc Human Resource Management programme.	We are very thankful to the External Evaluation Committee for their positive final remarks and note here that we have already taken appropriate action to address the comment on adding clarity to the content of the modules (Please refer to Section 1 'Study programme and study programme's design and development', above).	Choose an item.

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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr. Irina Lokhtina	Course Leader for MSc Human Resources Management	
Prof. Loukas Glyptis	Head of School of Business and Management	
Dr. Cosmina Theodoulou	Chair of the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee of UCLan Cyprus	

Date: 24/02/2023