

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** C.D.A. College (Nicosia)
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Γραμματειακές Σπουδές (1 ακαδημαϊκό έτος, 60 ECTS, Πιστοποιητικό)

In English:

Secretarial Studies (1 academic year, 60 ECTS, Certificate)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):** N/A



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].

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the premises of the C.D.A. College in Nicosia on Wednesday 19th of June 2024. During the visit, the EEC had the opportunity to meet with the Head of the Institution, the Director of Academic Affairs, the Internal Evaluation Committee, the Coordinator of the programme, the teaching staff, the administrative staff and students from the program under evaluation.

The visit started with a welcome from the Head of the Institution, followed by an introductory presentation about the College as a whole and the offered curriculum, as well as a brief presentation of the branch of Nicosia from Chairman of the Internal Evaluation Committee.

Schedule continued with a meeting with the Coordinator of the programme where the programme's goals and objectives, students evaluations, teaching and learning pedagogical methods and the effective management of the programme were discussed.

The EEC then met with members of the teaching staff to discuss the academic staff's employment conditions, learning outcomes, approach to teaching, student-centre learning, as well as the content and assessment of each course.

A meeting with members of the administrative staff followed. A QA session took place regarding student care, working conditions, administration services, advancement opportunities, and the wider support of educational services.

Afterwards, a meeting with the College's students was held. EEC questions mainly concerned students' employment opportunities and professional rehabilitation, complaints, college's environment, evaluations, practical training opportunities and infrastructure services (e.g., library, laboratories).

Finally, the visit was concluded with a tour to the Nicosia's College facilities. Amongst those visited were classrooms, computer-based teaching laboratories, the library and study areas, teaching and administrative staff offices, and recreational areas (e.g., cafeteria).

A final exit meeting took place between the members of the EEC and the leadership team and program director; the EEC summed-up its findings and offered the opportunity for clarifications. The EEC acknowledges the cooperation of College in the process.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Antonios Georgopoulos	Professor	University of Patras
Alexandros Sahinidis	Professor	University of West Attica
Simos Chari	Professor	University of Manchester (Alliance Business School)
Petros Louca	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
- 1.3 Public information
- 1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The programme of Secretarial Studies (1-year) is a conventional program that has been accredited by the CYQAA in 2020; the EEC is evaluating a new proposed version of the running program. The program and its intended learning outcomes provide the necessary disciplinary knowledge and practical skills needed for professionals in the area of Secretarial Studies. The qualification awarded by C.D.A. College (across all branches – Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Nicosia) meets the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and at the same time industry's expectations.

The EEC has observed that C.D.A. College (across all branches) has several policies in place for quality assurance purposes. These support the institutions through appropriate structures, regulations and processes and ensure academic quality and integrity. The EEC has observed that such policies apply to both the development and implementation of the program; for instance, C.D.A. College, across all branches, collaborates with external stakeholders and seeks the advice of practitioners (e.g., lawyers) to ensure that the programme is industry relevant and up to date. It was also evident, that changes to the existing programme go through internal processes/policies as well. There are mechanisms in place, in all branches, such as the student course unit feedback and the staff self-evaluation report that are used to shape future policies. The leadership and management teams across all branches, responds to students' and staff's recommendations and suggestions and make program or unit level improvements when they deem it necessary. These improvements cover areas such as curriculum development, assessment policies, student progression, and ECTS credits.

Regarding the programme of study, important information such its selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, student progression, learning opportunities and graduate employment, is publicly available on the College's website and promotional material (i.e., brochure). The EEC also observed that all the branches of the C.D.A College collect information about key performance indicators (e.g., student progression, success rates, student satisfaction etc) and these allow them to effectively manage the program and ensure homogeneity across all branches.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. There is an established program in place which can be used as the foundation for the 2-year and full programme (3 years) of Secretarial Studies.
2. The leadership and the management teams, and the academic staff of all branches have the experience and qualifications in delivering this programme successfully.
3. The supportive staff across all branches appears to be well qualified.
4. The units offered during the 2 semesters are aligned to the program's aims and intended learning outcomes.
5. There are relatively small cohorts, across all branches, which lead to a good ratio of instructors and students and create a more customized experience.

6. The teaching approach used in classes, across all branches, is student-centered (in some branches this needs further improvement).
7. There are several internal policies in place that support all the branches and ensure the smooth implementation of the program.
8. There are synergies and collaboration with external stakeholders and other institutions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. All the branches should create an overarching document that demonstrates how each unit on the program contributes to the intended learning outcomes of the overall program. This is a requirement of CYQAA.
2. The leadership and the program directors across all branches need to reassess the structure of the program and consider the following changes / suggestions. The ECC strongly believes that these will significantly improve the program:
 - a. Considering its practical nature and importance, the unit “Office Automation” should be a core unit and not an elective. The EEC recommends that these should be merged with the unit of “Intro to Computers”
 - b. Considering that the graduates of the program need to have a holistic understanding of how a business is run (hence, the introductory units on Accounting and Marketing) the unit of “Intro to Management / Business” is missing from the core units of the program.
 - c. Considering the niche/specialized nature of the unit “Intro to Logistics”, this could be an elective and not core unit. The EEC suggests that the basic theory of supply chain and (inbound and outbound) logistics is covered with the units of “Intro to Management” and “Intro to Marketing.”
 - d. Finally, the EEC suggests incorporating basic theory of consumer psychology in the unit of “Customer Service” and rename the unit “Customer Psychology and Service Excellence”
3. Analyze whether students are being over assessed as it appears that every course in the same semester, across all branches, has multiple assessment methods.
4. EEC also encourages some differentiation in terms of assessment methods so that students are exposed to different assessments and their combinations. 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, across all branches, to formulate a coherent assessment strategy



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The teaching process at the Nicosia branch is similar to that observed at other branches of the college. The EEC had the opportunity to discuss with several members of the teaching staff responsible for teaching different units (e.g., English, Greek, social media, Typography etc.). After the discussion between the members of the committee and the teaching staff, the EEC has come to the following teaching and learning-related conclusions:

- (a) the teaching staff is adequately qualified, and has the required experienced in delivering the program under evaluation
- (b) the teaching team understand the concept and is familiar with the student-centered pedagogical approach
- (c) the student-centered approach is not fully exploited by all members of the teaching staff
- (d) the teaching team applies a diverse mode of delivery that collectively facilitate the intended leaning outcomes of the program
- (e) the teaching team acknowledges the diversity and learning difficulties that many students may exhibit, and they demonstrate flexibility.
- (f) the available teaching tools and material used are modern, effective, and are updated whenever the teaching staff deems it necessary (with the exceptions of the 'Shorthand' and 'Typography' units).
- (g) the C.D.A College Nicosia implements policies and procedures that allow it to effectively deal with students' teaching- and learning-related complaints.

Similarly to other branches, the Nicosia branch tries to associate theory with practice and the program with the industry and external stakeholders by promoting industry visits, guest talks, internships, and job fairs, among others.

Regarding the assessment of the various units on the program, it appears to be appropriate and transparent and supports the development of the learner. It was made apparent to the ECC that the criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance and are made available to the students. However, what was observed is that all members of staff seem to be applying the same proforma of mid-term exam, assignment, and quizzes for the continuous assessment that accounts for the 40% of the final mark and a final exam for the remainder 60%. The Branch of Paphos assured the EEC that there are formal procedures for student in place and regulations in place for assessment consider mitigating circumstances.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. Strong leadership and supportive administrative staff.

2. The program is fully managed by hired teaching teams which are qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced.
3. The teaching methods, tools, material used in the program's delivery are along the expectations set by modern practices.
4. There is evidence of appropriate pedagogical methods that facilitate the achievement of the program-level intended learning outcomes.
5. The college demonstrates flexibility and has the appropriate mechanisms for dealing with students' complaints, diversity, and mitigating circumstances.
6. There is a dedicated program quality control committee that convenes regularly for ensuring the quality and the proper delivery of the program and its material.
7. The program's size guarantees a friendly environment between students and teaching/administrative staff.
8. The students highlighted that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching.
9. The staff referred to the working environment as friendly, family-oriented, and collegial

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The college needs to ensure that the students that do not progress to the 2nd and 3rd year of the program, have a holistic understanding of how a business is run and more specialised knowledge on secretarial-related subject areas. Even though the foundation year is the stepping stone for Year 2 and 3, there is a need to detach the first year of the program from those of Year 2 and 3.
2. The EEC suggests restructuring the proposed program of study (See section 1 of the report) to ensure its competitiveness and viability.
3. As per the requirements of CYQAA, the college needs to perform a mapping exercise that highlights how each unit taught on the curriculum contributes to the intended outcomes of the overall program.
4. The EEC suggests that the teaching staff at the Nicosia College to fully embrace the student-centred learning approach and incorporate the learner in the discovery and delivery of knowledge. To this extent, the EEC suggests collaborations between the teaching teams of the different branches. Teaching staff from different colleges on a 'teaching-away day' could share best practices and effective pedagogical approaches that encourage a student-centred approach to teaching. Also, the EEC suggests that experienced staff is paired with junior staff in a mentorship program.
5. The college should strive to improve even further its engagement with industry and external stakeholders.
6. The C.D.A College of Nicosia could involve an external advisory board to ensure the continuous update and development of the program.
7. The teaching staff should ensure that the students not over assessed throughout the duration of their studies



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC visited C.D.A College in Nicosia and discussed with the administration, teaching staff, students, and supportive staff. Conclusions were reached regarding the qualifications and experience of the teaching staff, curriculum, recruitment process, staff development, and use of technology.

Teaching Staff: Well-qualified professionals with significant experience, holding at least a bachelor's degree. There are seven lecturers in the program: five full-time, one part-time, and one special teaching staff. The Curriculum includes 14 courses: 13 compulsory and one elective, with five compulsory courses taught by one lecturer.

Recruitment Mechanism: The recruitment Involves the academic director and general manager. The academic director identifies the need for new staff and makes a request. The college management initiates the recruitment process, advertises the position, and interviews candidates.

Staff Development: The Teaching staff are satisfied with management policies on staff development. They are encouraged to participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences, with fees paid by the college. Staff can pursue educational goals within the college at no cost, with some obtaining their MBA from C.D.A. New technologies and computer systems are used to achieve course objectives.

Student-Teacher Ratio and Research: There is a low student-teacher ratio with four students per class. Also, research activity is limited due to the vocational nature of the program, although some staff attend conferences and try to keep up with their fields through reading relevant journals.

Visiting and Special Teaching Staff: There is no scheduled visiting staff, but occasional guest speakers from relevant professions offer their insight. Also, there are teaching mobilities from other countries through the Erasmus program. A High level of cooperation exists between teaching staff at C.D.A Nicosia and other C.D.A branches.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. C.D.A Nicosia is a well-known brand in secretarial studies with 359 alumni since 2000.
2. The presence of the college in all four large cities of Cyprus provides a unique advantage.
3. The program targets the local labor market, enabling graduates to be employed directly or pursue higher degrees. It prepares students for various secretarial roles in law, medicine, and business.
4. The small class sizes enhance the learning process with personalized teaching.
5. Experienced staff provide applied knowledge rather than theory-based teaching.
6. Strong bond between students, teachers, and management creates a family-like culture.
7. Erasmus program relationships provide external learning opportunities.
8. Extensive alumni network promotes the college's brand.
9. Flexible program schedules accommodate working students.
10. The college has a visible presence in the Nicosian society with participation in many Corporate social responsibility activities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The management and the public relations of C.D.A will need to explore ways to increase the student and parent interest in the market. If there is a trend of disinterest in secretarial studies in the market, the program may need to be abandoned.
2. Teaching mobility among the staff through the Erasmus program can be improved.
3. There is room for expanding the number of agreements with other tertiary education institutions from abroad.
4. The monitoring of the careers of alumni and the continuous contact with them is something that will help the college to formulate its strategies and ultimately increase student intake

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Not applicable

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The EEC reviewed the documents produced by the college administration and met with college officials on 19/6/2024 at the premises of C.D.A's Nicosia branch. Following the discussion with students, teachers, administrative employees and the management the EEC concluded the following:

Student Admission Regulations: Regulations for student admission are pre-defined and publicly available. Information is provided through the admissions officer, the college website, study guides, and informally by teaching staff. Candidates must have a high-school diploma or an equivalent certificate. The program is taught in Greek, targeting Cypriots and Greek speakers. New students are accepted twice a year, for fall and spring semesters. Transfer students from other C.D.A programs, branches or tertiary institutions in Cyprus and abroad are also accepted.

Course Information: A course outline provides details on course content, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and outcomes. This information is available on the Moodle platform used by the teaching staff.

Student Progress Monitoring: The college collects relevant information to monitor students' progress. The program director is always aware of students' academic standing. Students typically pass their exams, with up to three re-examination opportunities if they fail. Full-time students must

attend 15 didactic periods per week. Graduation requires completion of necessary marks for each course and a passing mark in all courses.

Assessment Methods: Student assessment consists of continuous assessment and final examinations. Continuous assessment includes mid-terms, project work, oral tests, and other forms of evaluation throughout the semester. There are three examination periods: end of fall semester, end of spring semester, and September. Final exams account for 60% of the grade, with the remaining 40% from continuous assessment activities.

Recognition of Certificate: Student work is recognized by government and private organizations. Certificate holders qualify for the associated benefits, which include recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes. Opportunity for certificate recipients to continue their studies towards a diploma or higher diploma in the same field, unique to C.D.A.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. Abundant information offered by the college creates trust among parents, students, and stakeholders, strengthening relationships with the college.
2. Small class sizes allow for better learning and personalized attention.
3. High level of trust and affection between students and teachers, fostering a family-like culture.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. Small enrolment poses a threat to program sustainability. The College may need to promote the program more aggressively or adapt to market changes favouring longer education programs.
2. One-year programs have inherent limitations, such as the need for more specific courses for certain careers.
3. Knowledge acquired in one job may become less useful if the student changes careers.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The Evaluation Committee focused on the analysis of 4 groups of resources: (a) Teaching and learning resources; (b) Physical resources; (c) Human support resources; (d) Student support

Regarding educational resources and student support, the Evaluation Committee found a student-focused learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching. Activities are designed to foster student engagement and participation.

Physical resources were considered particularly persuasive.

The teaching staff includes experienced teachers. The knowledge and research subjects as well as the practical experience of the teachers are relevant and in correspondence with the assignments of their courses in the curriculum.

An appreciable effort to adapt resources was observed [e.g. renewal of computer equipment and software, renewal of textbooks and training manuals]

There are adequate human support resources (i.e., tutors/mentors, counselors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff) and the student support services provided cover the needs of a diverse student population (e.g., employed students and students with special needs). The interviews with the students showed that students are informed about the support services available to them. Particularly, the students highlighted that they are content with the support services provided and special mention was made to the career's office of the college.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The following elements highlight the general advantages of the program in terms of teaching methods, teaching staff, and student support

1. Flexible learning and teaching approaches are tailored to student needs.
2. A well-defined system for assessing student performance is in place.
3. Cutting-edge methods and technologies are integrated into the education process.
4. Incorporation of modern educational methods and technologies such as the Moodle platform, computer labs, electronic databases, modern classrooms, and comfortable recreational areas for students.
5. Excellent student support services for housing, psychological support, and financial aid.
6. Special attention given to disabled students, working students, and international students.
7. Alignment of teachers' academic subjects with the program.
8. Low student-to-teacher ratio.
9. High professional dedication and commitment from teachers.
10. High satisfaction of students as regards the program and services provided.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. Promote more active participation of teachers in mobility programs, training seminars, and conferences related to their subjects.
2. Increase the involvement of teachers with extensive professional experience to enhance practical knowledge transfer and the appeal of the professional degree.
3. Strengthen student exchange programs (e.g., ERASMUS+) to include more EU countries.
4. Increase the international College's collaborations.
5. Regularly update and enrich educational materials, especially supplementary teachers' manuals.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
- 6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

N/A

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

N/A

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The external evaluation committee has formed a very positive opinion of the proposed study program after reviewing the application, accompanying materials, and conducting an on-site visit. The program is recognized for its flexibility, allowing students to obtain a professional certificate in a short period, in a field with promising growth prospects.

The one-year program operates autonomously while being harmoniously integrated with the two-year and three-year secretarial studies programs on a modular basis. This integration allows students who wish to continue their studies to deepen their knowledge and significantly enhance their skills. The program is offered by an educational organization with approximately 50 years of experience in this field. C.D.A College was a pioneer in introducing this specific program into professional education.

Currently, the program is available in four cities (Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos, and Nicosia), facilitating the standardization of management procedures, administrative functions, educational delivery, and financial management. Synergies between the four units enhance management techniques, teaching staff, and the availability of technical resources and materials.

As of now, C.D.A College Nicosia has graduated 359 students from the one-year secretarial studies program, with 4 students currently enrolled. Notably, this program started in Nicosia before expanding to the other three cities.

The program maintains strong connections with the local labor market through networks with potential employers such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, hotels, and government agencies (networking economies). Many graduates find employment within the College's own units.

The program's human resources, both educational and administrative, are considered a significant asset. Highly qualified professionals impart valuable knowledge and practical experience to students. Currently, C.D.A College Nicosia employs 8 teachers of various specialties, all possessing important skills and knowledge. The quality of physical and technical infrastructure in Nicosia is adequate.

Active student participation and a high graduation rate are notable strengths. The small student-to-teacher ratio significantly enhances the quality of education. Graduates consistently pass external certification exams in fields such as typing and computers, a trend observed across all college units.

At present, there is a significant reduction in student numbers at the Nicosia unit, likely due to high competition from four other institutions in the city. To ensure the program's sustainability, the Committee suggests:

1. Better promotion of the organization's strengths.
2. Adapting to competitive pressures, changing labor market conditions, and technological advancements.
3. Conducting further analysis of labor market trends and prospects.



4. Aligning program content with emerging professional changes; Implementing certain course changes or mergers to make the program more attractive.
5. Developing a more comprehensive business plan and conducting a thorough viability study.

The EEC believes that these measures will strengthen the organization's market position and improve the professional prospects for its graduates.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Antonios Georgopoulos	
Alexandros Sahinidis	
Simos Chari	
Petros Louca	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 20/06/2024