

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

# External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** C.D.A. College (Limassol)
- **Town:** Limassol
- **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 Limassol on Tuesday 18th of June 2024. During the visit, the EEC was given 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 an introductory presentation about the College as a whole and the offered curriculum, from the Head of the Institution, as well as a brief presentation of the branch of Limassol from Chairman of the Internal Evaluation Committee.

The visit progressed with a meeting with the coordinator of the programme where the programme's content and standards, students' assessments, teaching and learning pedagogical methodology and the effective management of the programme were thoroughly discussed.

The EEC then met with members of the teaching staff to discuss the academic staff's employment conditions, learning outcomes, approach to teaching, as well as a more detailed information on the implementation and assessment of each course.

The visit went on with a meeting with members of the college's administration. Questions were raised about student support, administration services, advancement opportunities, working environment, salaries and the wider support of educational services.

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

Finally, the visit was concluded with a tour to the Limassol's College facilities. In particular the EEC visited 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>
<b>Antonios Georgopoulos</b>	Professor	University of Patras
<b>Alexandros Sahinidis</b>	Professor	University of West Attica
<b>Simos Chari</b>	Professor	University of Manchester (Alliance Business School)
<b>Petros Louca</b>	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, essential 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 aims and the intended learning outcomes of the program.
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 EEC 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 several 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 program 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 EEC has observed the student learning and teaching and assessment at the Limassol branch of the C.D.A college and has reached the following conclusions:

The teaching process at the Limassol branch does not differ significantly from that observed at the branches of Larnaca, Paphos, and Nicosia. After discussing with several members of the teaching team at the premises of the Limassol branch, the EEC deemed that the teaching staff is well qualified and experienced in delivering the program. The EEC has observed that despite the fact that the teaching team is familiar with the student-centred pedagogical approach this is not implemented to its full potential by all members of the teaching staff. Notwithstanding, the EEC has observed that the teaching staff: (a) applies several modes of delivery that collectively facilitate the intended learning outcomes of the program and (b) acknowledges the diversity and learning difficulties of students and exhibits flexibility. In addition, and in relation to teaching and learning, the EEC concluded that the teaching tools, and material used (except 'Shorthand' and 'Typography'), are modern, effective, and are updated whenever the teaching staff deems it necessary. Please see below the suggestions of the EEC for further improvement. Like the other branches, the C.D.A College Limassol has in motion policies and procedures for dealing with students' teaching- and learning-related complaints.

Like the other branches, the Limassol branch also tries to link theory to practice and the program with the industry and external stakeholders; to this extent, the management team promotes industry visits, guest talks, internships, and job fairs, among others.

Each unit on the program offered at the Limassol branch, is assessed with a continuous assessment that accounts for the 40% and a final exam for the remainder 60% of the overall mark. The EEC observed that the assessments methods used at the Limassol branch across all the units of the program are: (a) appropriate and transparent; (b) support the development of the students; and (c) deliver diverse soft and hard skills. Notwithstanding, the EEC has identified that for each unit on the program, the same proforma of mid-term exam, assignment, and quizzes is applied. This runs the risk of over-assessing the students (between 14-21 assessments for each semester) and creating a significant workload.

Finally, the EEC observed that the students of the program are aware of the criteria for the method of assessment and marking; these are publicised to them in advance. The students were also aware of the formal procedures that the college has in place for appeals and mitigating circumstances.

### Strengths

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

The EEC would like to point out the following strengths observed at the Limassol branch:



1. The management team and the administrative staff of the college is capable and experienced.
2. The teaching staff is qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced in delivering the program of Secretarial Studies.
3. The program is fully managed by the teaching team in place.
4. The teaching methods, tools, material used in delivering the program are along the expectations set by modern practices.
5. The teaching team uses appropriate pedagogical methods that facilitate the intended learning outcomes of each unit.
6. The college has in place a quality assurance committee that meets regularly and takes actions when deemed necessary; these actions are for ensuring the program meets recommended standards.
7. Different policies and processes (e.g., dealing with students' complaints, diversity, and mitigating circumstances) are implemented at the college level to ensure the smooth operation of the college and the delivery of the program.
8. Highly satisfied students with teaching and by the friendly, flexible, and personalized approach of teaching they receive
9. The working environment at the C.D.A college of Limassol was identified by the administrative staff as collegial and friendly

#### 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 feels that the following recommendations should be considered for the Limassol branch of C.D.A College:

1. 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. The college needs to ensure that the students that do not progress to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the program, have a holistic understanding of how a business is run and more specialised knowledge on secretarial-related subject areas.
2. The EEC suggests restructuring the suggested program; the EEC's recommendations are in Section 1 of the report. The EEC's recommendations are for ensuring the competitiveness and viability of the program.
3. The teaching staff and the program director at the Limassol College need to conduct a mapping exercise that highlights how each unit taught on the curriculum contributes to the intended outcomes of the overall program. Please note, that this is a requirement of the CYQAA.
4. The EEC suggests that the teaching staff at the Limassol 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-centered

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 Limassol 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:**

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>2.1</b>	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
<b>2.2</b>	Practical training	Compliant
<b>2.3</b>	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 Limassol on the 18th of June 2024 and, after discussions with the administration, teaching staff, students, and administrative staff, concluded the following:

The teaching staff are highly qualified professionals, with considerable experience and at least a bachelor's degree. The Certificate curriculum consists of 14 courses, 13 compulsory and one elective, with five of the compulsory courses taught by a single lecturer.

There is a recruitment mechanism for hiring teaching staff, involving the academic director and the general manager of the college. The academic director identifies the need for new teaching staff after discussions with teachers, students, and other stakeholders, and requests a new hire. The college management then initiates the recruitment process, advertises the position, and invites candidates for interviews.

The teaching staff expressed satisfaction with the management's staff development policy. They are encouraged to attend workshops, seminars, and conferences; in most occasions the costs are covered by the college. Additionally, the college offers staff the opportunity to pursue their educational goals within the institution at reduced or no cost, and some staff members have earned their MBAs from C.D.A. Teaching staff use new technologies and computer systems to achieve course objectives.

The student-to-teacher ratio is low, with classes typically consisting of eight students. Research activity among the teaching staff is minimal, as the program is vocational and linked to the secretarial profession. However, some teachers attend conferences and make contributions and have research outputs.

C.D.A Limassol does not have visiting staff, but occasionally invites speakers with expertise in relevant subjects, such as law, medicine, and accounting, to share their knowledge. There is significant cooperation between the teaching staff at C.D.A Limassol and other branches of the college.

### Strengths

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

1. The experienced teaching staff provides students with applied knowledge rather than theory-based teaching.
2. The family-like culture at the college fosters strong bonds between students, teachers, and management.
3. Relations with other universities through the Erasmus program offer external learning opportunities.
4. The extensive C.D.A alumni network promotes the college's brand.
5. The program is offered in the mornings and/or afternoons to accommodate working students.
6. The C.D.A Limassol is a good corporate citizen with extensive Corporate social responsibility activities.
7. C.D.A Limassol is a well-known brand in secretarial studies, with 664 alumni. The program has been in existence since 2000, and the college's presence in all four large cities of Cyprus is a unique advantage.
8. The program is targeted at the local labor market, allowing graduates to be employed directly or continue their studies to higher degrees.
9. The program prepares students for a variety of employers, such as lawyers, medical doctors, and different business secretarial positions.
10. The small number of students enhances the learning process by allowing for a customized teaching approach.

### 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. One issue is the low-performing student quality, as secretarial studies often attract students with lower aspirations. This results in students who are not high performers.

2. The low number of enrolled students threatens the program's sustainability. Management and public relations need to explore ways to increase interest among students and parents. If there is a declining interest in secretarial studies, the program may need to be reconsidered.
3. There is room for improvement in teaching mobility through the Erasmus program by expanding agreements with other tertiary education institutions abroad.
4. Monitoring the careers of alumni and maintaining continuous contact with them will help the college formulate strategies and ultimately increase student intake

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>3.1</b>	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
<b>3.2</b>	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
<b>3.3</b>	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 provided by the college administration and met with college officials on June 18, 2024, at the C.D.A Limassol branch. After discussions with students, teachers, administrative employees, and management, the EEC concluded the following:

- (a) The admission regulations are predefined and publicly accessible.
- (b) Information is available through the admissions officer, the college website, study guides, and informally by teaching staff.
- (c) Candidates must hold a high school diploma or an equivalent certificate.
- (d) The program is taught in Greek and targets Cypriots and Greek speakers.
- (e) New students are accepted twice a year, in the fall and spring semesters.
- (f) Transfer students from other C.D.A programs, branches, or tertiary institutions in Cyprus and abroad are also accepted.
- (g) A course outline provides details on course content, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and outcomes.
- (h) This information is available on the Moodle platform used by the teaching staff.
- (i) The college collects relevant information to monitor students' progress, with the program director being always aware of students' academic standing.
- (j) Students typically pass their exams, with up to three re-examination opportunities if they fail.
- (k) Full-time students must attend 15 didactic periods per week. Graduation requires completing the necessary marks for each course and passing all courses.

- (l) Student assessment includes continuous assessment and final examinations.
- (m) Continuous assessment consists of mid-terms, project work, oral tests, and other evaluations throughout the semester.
- (n) There are three examination periods: end of fall semester, end of spring semester, and September.
- (o) Final exams account for 60% of the grade, with the remaining 40% from continuous assessment activities.
- (p) Student work is recognized by government and private organizations.
- (q) Certificate holders qualify for benefits, including recognition of qualifications and learning outcomes.
- (r) Certificate recipients could continue their studies towards a diploma or higher diploma in the same field unique to C.D.A.

### Strengths

1. The college provides abundant information, creating trust among parents, students, and stakeholders, thus strengthening relationships with the college.
2. Small class sizes enhance learning and allow for personalized attention.
3. A high level of trust and affection exists between students and teachers, fostering a family-like culture.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. 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 needing 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. The physical resources were considered particularly persuasive.

The teaching staff includes experienced teachers at all levels, in each case at least one level above the degree level offered by the educational institution. 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).

Regarding the support (human) resources and the support services, the EEC observed that all resources are fit for purpose. There are adequate human support resources (i.e., tutors/mentors, counsellors, 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 student body 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 given to the careers office of the school.

### Strengths

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

Regarding physical infrastructure, notable strengths include:

1. **Advanced Teaching Facilities:** The use of modern technologies, such as the Moodle platform, computer labs, electronic databases, and well-equipped classrooms. There are also comfortable areas for students to relax and socialize.
2. **Comprehensive Student Support:** Excellent support systems for students, including housing assistance, psychological support, and financial aid options (e.g., tuition payment plans, discounts).

Concerning student feedback, the on-site visit revealed:

1. **High Student Satisfaction:** Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the program and services provided.
2. **Quality Services:** Exceptional service is provided to students by both teaching and administrative staff.
3. **Inclusive Support:** Special attention is given to disabled students, working students, and international students.

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. Encourage Teacher Development: Promote more active participation of teachers in mobility programs, training seminars, and conferences related to their subjects.
2. Leverage Professional Experience: Increase the involvement of teachers with extensive professional experience to enhance the transfer of practical knowledge and the appeal of the professional degree.
3. Expand Student Mobility: Strengthen student exchange programs (e.g., ERASMUS+) to include more EU countries beyond Greece.
4. Enhance International Collaborations: Increase collaborations with individual scientists, institutes, and academic organizations worldwide.
5. Update Educational Material: Regularly update and enrich educational materials, especially supplementary teachers' manuals.

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>5.1</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Compliant
<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	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. Overall, the program is noted for its flexibility, allowing students to obtain a professional certificate in a short period, in a field with promising growth prospects.

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.

Despite some differences in building facilities and technical infrastructure among the four units, these do not affect the core characteristics and philosophy of the program. Students can transfer between units without facing academic adjustment issues. As of now, C.D.A College Limassol has graduated 664 students from the one-year secretarial studies program, with 8 students currently enrolled.

The program maintains strong connections with the local labor market through networks with potential employers such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, hotels, and government agencies. 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 Limassol employs 7 teachers and 8 administrative staff, all with important skills and knowledge.

The physical infrastructure in Limassol is of a good quality. 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.

The College is actively involved in society, with students making voluntary contributions to vulnerable social groups.

One concern is the decreasing number of students, possibly due to external factors like the economic crisis, the coronavirus pandemic, and a shift among young people towards academic careers.

To ensure the program's sustainability, the Committee suggests:

1. Highlighting Strengths: Better promotion of the organization's strengths.
2. Adapting to Market Conditions: Adapting to competitive pressures, changing labour market conditions, and technological advancements.
3. Market Analysis: Conducting further analysis of labour market trends and prospects.
4. Curriculum Alignment: Aligning program content with emerging professional changes.
5. Business Planning: Developing a more comprehensive business plan and conducting a thorough viability study.
6. Course Adjustments: Implementing certain course changes or mergers to make the program more attractive.

The EEC believes that these measures will strengthen the market position of C.D.A and improve the professional prospects for its graduates.



## E. Signatures of the EEC

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

**Date:** 21/06/2024