

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 21.11.2024

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
C.D.A. College
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Travel and Tourism
- **Department/ Sector:** Travel and Tourism
- **Travel and Tourism Administration (2 years, 120 ECTS, Diploma)**

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Travel and Tourism Administration

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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

•

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (henceforth EEC) examined the documentation for the Diploma programme in Travel & Tourism Administration (2 Years, Plus an Optional Foundation Year, 120 ECTS) offered at two branches of CDA College (henceforth known as College), located in, Larnaca and Limassol. The branches at Pafos and Nicosia do not seek reaccreditation. The CYQAA official, Ms. Droso Lavithi, Ms Varvara Georgiou, student representative and the academic members of the EEC held an initial meeting and discussed the schedule for the day, and clarified the documentation on Tuesday 5th of November 2024 via the video conferencing platform Zoom.

On November 19th the EEC conducted a site visit at the Limassol campus of the C.D.A College. The committee met the College's six members of the Internal Quality Committee where the College Chairman, Mr. Athanasios Christoforou, presented the College's strategy and standing. Further discussions on the strategy of the programme, the future direction and the reasons for discontinuing at 2 locations were undertaken.

Meetings were also arranged with the academic and administrative staff to better understand their involvement in the delivery, design and support for the Diploma. A meeting with four students (one of whom was from an unrelated programme offered at the College, three of whom graduated from the Diploma several years ago). Feedback in relation to their experience in the programme, satisfaction and aspirations and concerns were obtained. Given the fact that the programme is currently not offered we feel that best effort was made to provide access to the student's perspective. The committee further met with 2 industry representatives in person, the third industry stakeholder was included via Zoom. The EEC was offered a tour of the facilities to be able to judge the infrastructure. That included the physical and learning resources, classroom infrastructure, computer laboratories, library, and common recreational facilities.

The EEC got the impression that sufficient IT infrastructure as well as human resources were available to safeguard smooth delivery of the programme. Currently, the programme at CDA Limassol is in suspension and there are plans to re-open the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration programme (2 Years, Plus an Optional Foundation year, Diploma).

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>University</i> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Astrid Dickinger | Professor, Head of School | Modul University Vienna |
| Tom Baum | Professor | University of Strathclyde |
| Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis | Professor, Chairperson | Ball University, Indiana |
| Varvara Georgiou | MSc Student | Cyprus University of Technology |
| 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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the programme.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programme.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
 - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
 - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
 - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
 - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

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*

In addition, the programme has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate programme descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the programme's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the programme.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of programme outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the programme?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making programme information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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.

This evaluation is based on the application document submitted by the College and on-site meetings with the various teams. The currently suspended Diploma programme in Travel and Tourism Administration will target Cypriots and international students (India, China, Philippines, Pakistan, Egypt Middle east) with a Secondary School Leaving Certificate or equivalent, aiming to develop a career in the travel and tourism sectors.

The programme is positioned as an opportunity for students to prepare for employment and development in the Travel and Tourism industries, by equipping students with a range of skills, competencies and knowledge. It is also a springboard for further studies. The College's Diploma is designed to allow for a smooth transition into their bachelor programme.

During the evaluation meeting, the Internal Evaluation Committee of the College provided an overview of the institution in general and an insight into the quality assurance practice for the programme under evaluation. The committee indicates that a College Quality Assurance Mechanisms document has been drawn up and adhered to. The EEC panel was informed that the College has to comply with the law in the submission of a Internal Quality Assurance report every 3years. Documents for student course evaluation, teaching staff self evaluation and further quality measurement have been presented and discussed. The College further has to submit figures on their student body to the Ministry of Education.

It appears that the allocation of teaching is organized efficiently based on widely accepted ECTS-related workload standards. The four students interviewed were satisfied with the College's overall provision. Students are offered support for both academic as well as personal issues.

There is relevant Travel and Tourism expertise in the teaching team for the programme and there appears to be sufficient research output for a vocational programme. It is also evident that several members of staff are Travel and Tourism practitioners with relevant experience. Most members of the teaching team have a good insight of the Tourism and Hospitality industry and they are involved in the industry and other related activities.

The College's Internal (Educational) Quality Assurance mechanism has been documented to a satisfactory degree. Teaching staff report that an internal quality committee meets twice a year to discuss and resolve quality assurance issues. Further staff from the 4 campuses meet once a year for discussion. Processes for identifying academic fraud appear to be documented in the College's Quality Assurance policies. State of the art tools are used to detect plagiarism and monitor use of AI for completing assignments.

The documentation provides comprehensive insights into the programme proposed. The programme follows a traditional and mainstream approach to teaching Travel and Tourism. It offers a portfolio of practical skills alongside theory with modules in the field of Travel and Tourism. There are twenty-two (22) compulsory modules accounting for 112 ECTS and a choice of language electives (Russian or Greek 8 ECTS) in the first two terms, adding up to 120 ECTS.

The study programme could be updated with developments in the industry. We would like to recommend that the 2 year diploma is re-visited to reflect future industry needs. The current syllabi need to be updated in terms of more current literature and textbooks. Some contents could be organized better (e.g. business communication scattered across different courses) and some updated (e.g. use of ICT, AI and AR, VR in travel and tourism). Finally, we recommend the faculty revisit the plan of study and monitor to ensure skills progression.

Networking with local travel and leisure companies are in place to provide students with employment opportunities. Further, these relationships allow for excursions, invited guest speakers and industry immersion. This element was highlighted by students who appreciate these activities and would like to see them implemented in all courses.

The students interviewed at lagre expressed their satisfaction with the academic delivery and support services of the College in general.

This programme of study is currently accredited and was last reviewed in 2020. Information in relation to the programme is currently available on the College's website.

Strengths

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

The College has a comprehensive Internal Quality Assurance document for the programme evaluated. The Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration includes fundamental academic and practical modules to help students prepare for the real world. The EEC feels that such opportunities for experiential learning must be sustained and extended. The industry relationships should be used to provide instances of real industry experience. The programme is located in a city with to tourism infrastructure, thus it should be no problem to seek collaborators.

The programme offers a special focus on travel agency and airline ticketing. Students can even acquire optional industry certificates. The promotional material should promote the current focus of the programme.

The teaching team has a wealth of relevant travel and tourism experience that could be better highlighted in the programme's promotional literature

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.

Minor changes are recommended:

- Reconsider some of the subject titles and content to better reflect current trends and demands. For example, Tourism Information Systems, Travel Writing, Communication. Key contemporary terminologies relevant to the sector should be included: 'sustainability', 'tourist experience', 'UN SDGs' 'e-Tourism' etc.
- The role of technology and tourism as well as Sustainability should be re-visited in the curriculum.
- Ensure that the literature is up to date and represents current practices.
- In accordance to the above, 'Information Management' 1.4, the following information could be made more readily accessible and monitored: (i) key performance indicators, (ii) profile of the student population, (iii) student progression, success and drop-out-rates (iv) graduate employment information.

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-centered 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

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.*
 - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
 - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

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 organized (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.) organized?*
- ***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.

During the EEC's onsite meetings there was an obvious spirit of teamwork and collegiality among the staff team who were very positive about their work and working environment. Many of the team have been working in the College for many years and they informed the EEC that they informally discuss the classes and are aware of the content of each other's teaching.

The student centered approach is exemplified by the emphasis of the faculty on student success. The student population is very diverse with unique experiences but also unique needs. Instructors appear to embrace this diversity and create an environment that supports learning by all. This is also supported by the wider welfare programme offered by the college.

Teaching staff use a variety of teaching strategies and methods to address both theory and practice in travel and tourism. The main emphasis of delivery is on classroom-based, theory teaching with limited practical exposure beyond the modules on air fares and ticketing. Field visits to industry are undertaken in relation to some modules.

When programmes are operational, internal monitoring of the programme is done through the Internal College Quality Assurance Committee by department which ensures that teaching and resources on the programme are adequate and appropriate. Additionally, teaching teams meet periodically per semester to discuss the teaching and learning experiences of students.

The 2-year programme equips the students with a wide range of professional and digital competencies in several ways:

- Completion of air fares and ticketing modules which also prepare students for external IATA examinations

- Through use of the virtual learning environment of Moodle,
- Through use of computer labs with recent hardware
- Access to information sources (journals, e-books) via analogue and virtual library resources
- Modules to develop professional tools for travel & tourism such as Amadeus

Even though research is not a requirement for a two-year diploma programme, some of the lecturers are involved in scholarly activity and participate in Erasmus faculty mobility programmes.

Strengths

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

Moodle is provided in English for this programme. Learning materials are made available to students via this highly efficient platform but online assessment is not currently undertaken via this platform.

Professional practice interaction is supported by the tourism and travel industry partnership with the College. This is a strength given that many of the lecturers have also a solid experience in the field. Collaboration with the local industry professionals is essential to the programme giving opportunities for potential future employment.

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.

Minor changes are recommended.

- Consider widening opportunities for exposure to practical skills development relevant to employment in travel and tourism, eg. customer service skills and service problem solving
- Training for front line employees dealing with stress, time management and customer care should be made a priority.
- Teaching faculty should meet and exchange their teaching material in a required and structured approach.
- Training on newer technology, AI and tools that are more up to date should be facilitated.

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

| Sub-area | Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant |
|----------|---|
|----------|---|

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 2.1 | Process of teaching and learning and student-centered 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.

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

During our visit we had an opportunity to meet the head of the programme and the school as well as lecturers who teach courses in the Diploma programme. They explained the process for teaching staff recruitment, which seems to be following government regulations that dictate educational attainment and industry experience.

The faculty appeared to be well versed in industry practices mainly due to their own past and present experiences in the field. Academically they appear to be qualified to teach their assigned subject matters. We received a list of current teaching staff and their assigned courses. Most of them teach full time (15 credit hours), thus, the predominant delivery by full time employees is safeguarded.

The teaching staff iterated the value the college puts on professional development and they share examples of opportunities available to them (professional trainings, engagement in the research center, Erasmus+ assignments, teaching skills training, taking degree programmes at the college).

3.2. Number and status of teaching staff

Based on the documents provided by the College all members of teaching staff hold a Bachelor or Master degree. Some individuals even hold a PhD degree. The majority of courses are taught by full time faculty, accordingly the ratio of internally taught courses is satisfied.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Only very few staff members indicated research activity. Some publication and conference participation could be highlighted in the respective CVs included in the accreditation documents. Since this is a vocational training programme we feel that sufficiently synergies between teaching and research could be identified.

Strengths

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

- Almost all teaching staff have industry background.
- They are academically prepared to teach the courses assigned to them.
- The teaching staff is in regular exchange across campuses to help them improve teaching and learning in the classroom.
- The teaching faculty are very student focused and have the student interest as a top priority.
- The college supports professional development of their teaching staff.
- The small class size allows teachers to really know their students and their needs.
- There seem to be sufficient support processes in place for teaching staff.

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 colleges should build communities of practice across their campus locations to share ideas and resources. This would ensure common standards of assessment. The college should build on the momentum the Erasmus+ provides for improving both teaching and administrative processes. Faculty should monitor industry development but at the same time they should monitor current findings by academics. This should inform their teaching to stay ahead of trends.

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 | Compliant |

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.

4.1. Student admissions

We reviewed evidence of effective procedures for student admission. The procedures set forth in the document were sufficiently transparent and the discussion with both teaching as well as administrative staff showed that the guidelines are followed.

The college will enroll students from Cyprus and other countries. The objectives by the college are well communicated.

4.2. Student progression

Student progression seems to be a top priority by teaching staff. The consequences of course failure, however, should be monitored and reflected in efficient sequencing of courses that require prerequisites.

The semester conference seems to be an effective mechanism to identify students that might not be able to follow the curriculum.

4.3. Student recognition

Secondary school leaving certificates and equivalents are recognized as admissions relevant. Other formal or informal learning could not be identified in the material submitted or the conversations we had.

4.4. Student certification

Appropriate student certification is provided upon successful completion of the programme.

Strengths

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

The college has well established procedures for running college diploma programmes.

Admission criteria are clearly communicated.

Student progression is a priority. Student commented on the support they receive; lecturers are always available and very supportive. Their progress is also safeguarded by readily available learning material on Moodle.

The college provides students with personalized counselling and access to a psychologist.

Personalized assistance is offered when securing accommodation and finding jobs.

There is flexibility with payment plans such as instalments and discounts as well as scholarships should there be financial difficulties.

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 programme successfully recruited in the past, however, post-pandemic recruitment of international students was problematic and the programme is only now being relaunched. Thus, we recommend updating all promotional material to reflect current trends and the actual focus of the programme (update website, print material etc.)

There should be more tracking of student progression, dropout rates, grade averages in courses to inform the internal quality management. Relevant key performance indicators should be calculated and monitored.

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-centered 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-centered 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.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

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 of this part is primarily based on the evidence shown during the site visit.

5.1. Teaching and learning resources

Moodle is used as a learning platform, both teaching staff as well as students are reporting that they are satisfied with the system. All literature, ppt slides and other teaching material is made available.

The library provides access to books but most importantly online access to resources. A system is in place for inter library loans with major public and private universities.

5.2. Physical resources

The lecture rooms, premises, libraries and IT infrastructure seem to be adequately supporting the programme. They also seem to be able to maintain the infrastructure during times of low enrolment. Students were very aware of all the services available to them. The premises seem to be sufficiently accessible, accordingly compliant with requirements for people with reduced mobility.

5.3. & 5.4. Human support and Student support

Student support services seem to be well resourced by competent and accessible staff. The focus on student wellbeing and the services to support this are highly commendable.

From conversations with students we learned that there is sufficient support for a diverse student body. The international students get dedicated support in their visa seeking process, housing support, banking services etc. Working students get the flexibility to work and study. We also met more mature students who seem to get support in their academic journey. Students are aware of the wealth of services available to them and seem to make good use of them.

Strengths

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

The above findings highlight the strength in the area of student support.

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.

Please maintain the current support provided. We feel it is adequate to meet the current student needs.

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?
- Are the criteria reflected in 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

| Sub-area | | Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 6.1 | Selection criteria and requirements | Choose answer |
| 6.2 | Proposal and dissertation | Choose answer |
| 6.3 | Supervision and committees | Choose answer |

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.

Generally, the EEC is satisfied with the programme, staff performance, and the physical aspects of the campus.

The EEC was also highly satisfied with the performance and engagement of the academic and administrative staff. Although we detected some room for updating the programme, these are considered as minor and can be easily fixed. We had a positive exchange with the management and the staff team on those issues, indicating our recommendations on what and how to improve the College programmes 'performance.

The EEC concludes that the programme evaluated is compliant with the required standards within each of the five core foundations discussed in this report. The EEC is of the opinion that its recommendations are minor and feasible in order to enhance both student experience and the quality of the programme.



E. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Astrid Dickinger | |
| Tom Baum | |
| Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis | |
| Varvara Georgiou | |
| Click to enter Name | |
| Click to enter Name | |

Date: 21.11.2024