

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

COLLEGE OF TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

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

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Diploma on Travel and Tourism Administration

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

- **Programme's status:** Choose status

- **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 report concerns the evaluation of the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration at the College of Tourism and Hotel Management. To this end, the institution produced an evaluation report that was duly analysed by the External Evaluation Commission (EEC). On 27 October 2025, a series of meetings took place at the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, organised by CYQAA, with a previously agreed agenda. During the meetings, presentations and discussions were held on the course, involving the EEC, the College Director, the Programme Director, the teaching and the administrative staff, the students and external stakeholders that collaborate with this institution. A visit to the building and an evaluation of the infrastructure and equipment were also conducted.

This report incorporates the EEC's analysis of the report submitted, as well as a set of analyses and conclusions arising from the meetings.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i><b>Name</b></i>	<i><b>Position</b></i>	<i><b>University</b></i>
<b>Carlos Costa</b>	Professor	University of Aveiro, Portugal
<b>Ioannis S. Pantelidis</b>	Professor	Ulster University
<b>Alexander Josiassen</b>	Professor	Copenhagen Business School
<b>Georgi Cholakov</b>	Student	Cyprus University of Technology

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

### Findings

The **Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration** is a two-year, 120 ECTS program designed to prepare students for careers in travel, tourism, and related service industries. It combines theoretical knowledge with applied learning, covering areas such as fares and ticketing, tourism planning, marketing, financial management, sustainability, and technology. The program aims to develop practical skills, personal attributes, and industry-relevant competencies to enhance employability.

Teaching is organised efficiently following ECTS standards, supported by an effective administrative structure and passionate faculty with strong subject expertise. Four international students interviewed expressed satisfaction with academic delivery and support services. Teaching staff seemed happy with the freedom to design courses and the relevant support offered by the college. Quality assurance processes are documented and include regular internal reviews and student feedback mechanisms.

However, the curriculum appears partially outdated and does not fully align with current industry developments, particularly in digital transformation and emerging tourism trends. Even though college staff claimed that digital transformation is at the heart of developments, there is not sufficient evidence of this in the course design. While the teaching team demonstrates sufficient expertise, research output in high-impact hospitality and tourism journals is limited. Academic integrity processes exist but rely on ad-hoc assignment submissions and basic plagiarism tools, which could be strengthened. Assessment appears to adopt a monolithic approach with heavy emphasis on exams.

More specifically:

### **Policy for Quality Assurance**

The program's quality assurance policy is formally documented, publicly available, and integrated into the institution's strategic management framework. The Internal Quality Committee meets regularly to review program performance, student feedback, and compliance with academic standards. Academic integrity is supported through documented anti-fraud policies; however, reliance on email submissions and basic plagiarism tools limits robustness. The policy promotes inclusivity and non-discrimination, with mechanisms for student welfare and equal opportunity. External stakeholder involvement is evident through Erasmus+ collaborations and industry

partnerships, but employer surveys and alumni feedback loops are not systematically implemented. Transparency is maintained via published program details on the college website, though graduate employment data and pass rates are not consistently updated.

### **Design, Approval, Monitoring, and Review**

The program objectives align with institutional strategy and European Qualifications Framework standards. Curriculum mapping exists, but course content and learning outcomes do not fully reflect emerging trends such as digital transformation, AI in tourism, and smart destination management. There were some minor issues in the documentation for example in at least one module, the assessment scores do not add to 100% and there needs to be a more careful approach with reading lists that clearly reflect the aims and objectives of each module.

The design process involved internal academic teams and some external input; however, systematic engagement with industry bodies and alumni for curriculum updates appeared somewhat limited. Student progression is supported through structured ECTS allocation and clear workload expectations. Formal approval processes are in place, but periodic reviews have not sufficiently addressed outdated content. Placement opportunities exist through local networking, yet structured internships and global exposure remain underdeveloped.

### **Public Information**

Program details (admission criteria, learning outcomes, qualification awarded) are published on the official website. Mechanisms for transparency include Erasmus+ collaborations and community engagement, but graduate employment statistics and alumni testimonials are missing. External validation of program descriptions is not consistently documented. The website can do with updating, as most information needed seems to be links to downloadable files

### **Information Management**

Data collection includes student satisfaction surveys, internal quality audits, and progression tracking. KPIs such as dropout rates and academic performance are monitored internally, but industry trend analysis and employer feedback are not systematically integrated. Limited evidence of using data analytics for curriculum enhancement or career readiness evaluation.

### Strengths

The program demonstrates several notable strengths:

- It offers an industry-relevant curriculum that covers core tourism operations, sustainability, and essential business fundamentals, complemented by electives in psychology, economics, and management information systems.
- The teaching team comprises highly qualified faculty with diverse academic backgrounds, including some PhDs, MScs, and MBAs, and brings substantial industry experience while actively engaging in Erasmus+ and international collaborations.
- Students benefit from comprehensive support services, small class sizes, personalised learning, and strong administrative structures.
- The program has a robust international dimension, with 22 Erasmus+ agreements and partnerships with over 20 global universities, providing opportunities for credit transfer and progression to bachelor's degrees.
- Its employability focus is evident through practical case studies, the use of industry-standard tools such as Amadeus CRS and ECDL/ICDL, and internship opportunities that enhance career prospects both locally and internationally.
- Quality assurance is maintained through an Internal Quality Committee, documented policies, plagiarism detection tools, and regular curriculum reviews.
- Financial viability is also a strength, with a positive net contribution of €139,600 over two years and scholarship schemes available for both local and international students. Its good to see the emphasis on circular economy and elements of sustainability.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The program faces some challenges that require consideration for strategic improvement:

- The curriculum needs stronger alignment with emerging trends such as AI in tourism, digital marketing, and smart destination management. There is some integration of advanced technologies, but it seems limited.
- Research focus in the curriculum design is lacking and needs attention, even though this is a 2-year course; some notion of understanding tourism research is needed.
- Academic integrity processes rely on open-access plagiarism tools and email submissions, highlighting the need for a robust LMS-based system.
- The macro and micro economic modules could be better designed to reflect the reality of tourism and hospitality rather than the generic approach currently adopted.

- Assessment design is heavily weighted toward final exams, reducing opportunities for authentic, project-based evaluations. To address these issues, the program should modernize its curriculum by incorporating modules on digital transformation, AI, and tourism analytics; strengthen research culture through faculty development and integration of research into teaching; implement a centralised learning management system for secure submissions and plagiarism detection; expand industry engagement via internships and guest lectures; improve student mobility through targeted local recruitment and virtual Erasmus options; diversify assessment methods to include case studies and simulations.
- Not all staff CVs were available on the website and the difficulty of prospective students navigating it needs immediate attention.
- The issues with discrepancy in assessment % in at least one module (introduction to tourism) need addressing, and the reading lists need some attention, as some modules take a very limited approach, whilst others seem to be utilising reading that has nothing to do with the subject matter.

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially 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

### Findings

Teaching at COTHM is mostly lecture-based, sometimes complemented by question-and-answer sessions and occasional group activities. The approach to teaching varies among lecturers, but still

student participation is still encouraged. Many lecturers have both extensive teaching and industry backgrounds in tourism and hospitality, which has the potential to enrich teaching with practical examples. Since the last evaluation, the college has improved some aspects. Course outlines now more clearly outline learning outcomes and assessment criteria (e.g., Rubrics). The college uses the Edmodo learning platform as a teaching and learning platform used to share materials and communicate with students. The students experience that the lecturers generally upload lecture content on time.

Student feedback is collected by the teacher in paper format at the end of each semester, and it is then administratively reviewed (Internal Quality Assurance Committee). However, the use of this feedback for structured programme improvement seems to have remained informal. While one lecturer mentioned that there are some common sessions focused on teaching, our observation was that teaching innovations are mainly initiated by individual lecturers rather than guided by a common pedagogical strategy.

The opportunity to practice is central to the course. Despite the importance of this aspect, placement enquiries, scouting, liaising with employers, coordination and quality assurance are almost handled exclusively by one senior lecturer. Nonetheless, students expressed satisfaction with the level of support in terms of placements. Industry feedback could be more formalised. Assessment criteria seem transparent and available in advance to students. They are assessed on a combination of attendance and examinations. This was discouraged in the last evaluation, but students say it is still an important part of their assessment. Further, the assessment is a combination of coursework, mid-term assignments, and a final exam. However, more flexible approaches to assessment would be welcome. After the last evaluation, more research-based elements have been added, which is important to maintain and expand upon. While lecturers seem to grade fairly, the students there could have more standardisation in terms of moderation or double-marking across modules.

### Strengths

- Experienced teaching staff with strong professional backgrounds in tourism and hospitality both in academia and industry.
- Clearer course documentation with learning outcomes and assessment criteria now available to students.
- The Edmodo platform for communication and access to materials.
- Positive student relations and seemingly supportive academic culture.
- More inclusion of research and presentation elements in assessments during the later stages of study.
- Practical training opportunities aligned with the local tourism industry.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Develop a formal pedagogical strategy promoting consistent use of student-centred and participatory methods across all lecturers.
- Adopt a more flexible assessment strategy.
- Broaden staff involvement in internship coordination and introduce systematic employer and student feedback forms after placements. This could increase relevance of internships, how well they link to the courses, and spread the load from the single person currently responsible.
- Institutionalise internal moderation or second-marking to enhance fairness and transparency in assessment.
- Formalise the handling of student evaluations, publishing outcomes, and tracking follow-up actions.
- Encourage continuous professional development in teaching and assessment methods, especially regarding digital tools and inclusive pedagogy. Also, more social elements among staff could be introduced.
- Consider introducing collaborative or project-based learning to increase student autonomy and practical skill development.

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

#### **Findings**

The programme has the required number of teaching staff with the necessary qualifications. The number of full-time and part-time staff meets the programme's needs. The qualifications of the teaching staff align with the programme's objectives.

There are a few members of staff with a PhD in the subject area. The college director acknowledged that retaining PhD holders is challenging due to the college's small size and strong competition from other institutions. However, most lecturers are either enrolled on a PhD programme or planning to start one, which demonstrates that the teaching staff are striving to enhance their skills.

The recruitment of teaching staff is transparent. It should be noted that fierce competition between different colleges also improves the recruitment processes.

The teaching materials respond to the needs of the programme. Staff make materials available to students, and these are generally well suited to current needs. The existing classroom equipment is also adapted to the programme. The college is planning to modernise some classrooms, making them more interactive and digitally advanced.

Teaching methods adhere to quality standards. These include traditional learning methods, student involvement, thorough case studies, brainstorming, and individual assignments, as well as other student-centric approaches.

The College is a small institution that focuses primarily on teaching, with research playing a minor role. While the EEC understands the College's priorities, it recommends further improvements in this area.

Some staff members have published materials, some of which have appeared in indexed journals, and they have also attended international conferences. While the institution's report is detailed in many areas, it does not provide clear information about publications, research projects, or the SCOPUS IDs of staff members. Nor does it disclose the budget allocated to research. This information must necessarily be included in future reports. The EEC strongly recommends that the

college increase its budget for this area, as there is a close link between teaching quality and the quality of research produced by teaching staff.

Regarding mobility programmes, it was found that several members of staff had participated in various exchange programmes abroad. This is a very positive development that should be continued and encouraged in future.

### Strengths

- The teaching staff are suited to the needs of the programme.
- The teaching materials meet the current requirements.
- The college is planning to modernise some classrooms.
- Most lecturers are enrolled or planning to enrol in a PhD.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The teaching staff's qualifications should be improved in future.
- Research does not meet needs and should be improved by increasing the number of papers, projects and research budgets.
- A dedicated budget for conference attendance would be welcome.
- More of the academic staff research outputs should be present in the reading lists of the modules.

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</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	Partially 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**

##### **Findings**

Admission procedures are fairly clear and applied consistently. Entry requirements are also clearly set by the College (partly officially mandated) and communicated to applicants, including the need for a secondary-school certificate and English-language competencies. Admissions are overseen by the Academic Director. The student body includes a relatively high proportion of international students. Formal minutes or systematic reviews of admission decisions seem to not be maintained.

Student progression is monitored through attendance and academic performance (grade average). The College enforces a minimum attendance requirement, and students who miss more than three lectures per module are flagged as students at risk. Academic progress is tracked via semester grades, and students failing five modules are being flagged and will be called for a conversation. While these rules are clear, the rationale for the thresholds and the systematic use of progression data for preventive intervention are limited. The current system is manual labour-heavy and there is no integrated digital solution or early-warning system for at-risk students.

Recognition of prior learning is handled on a case by case basis with the intention to follow international standards. However, the recording and oversight of these decisions could be more explicit. We found no indication of collaboration with external recognition bodies. In terms of recognition and certification, students get the certification documents with their qualification, level, and completed modules. Records are kept by the registrar before certificates are handed out.

### Strengths

- The admissions process appears consistent and transparent as handled by the administrative staff.
- Clear attendance and progression regulations are known to students.
- Manual verification of transcripts and certification.
- A welcoming environment for international students.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It would be beneficial to document the admission and decisions surrounding it more systematically, including having an annual analysis of admission procedures and outcomes.
- Develop a formal written policy for the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer, aligned with international recognition bodies. Preferably, these should be published on the College website.
- Implement a more standardised/automatic system to track students at risk early and trigger review.
- Clarify the pedagogical rationale behind existing progression thresholds (e.g., attendance, failed modules).

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**

### **Findings**

The existing learning resources are suited to the programme's needs. The college is preparing to modernise some classrooms by installing modern equipment. Given the small number of students, the college seems to have the capacity to accommodate small increases in numbers in future.

Although the teachers are sensitive to modern, student-centric learning approaches, the students' evaluation methods are still too standardised and inflexible. The college should adapt its assessment methods to align with these new teaching and learning approaches.

The building's architecture appears to be the result of a conversion from residential use. The rooms are small. Nevertheless, the EEC is of the opinion that the college complies with the requirements.

However, the EEC recommends that the college be modernised in future by knocking down some walls to create larger spaces and bringing the areas up to date to make them more modern and comfortable. Although the library is small, it is well organised. There are books and journals available, and online access to international databases meets the required standard.

The number and qualifications of the administrative staff are suitable for the needs of the college. As it is a small college, the staff know almost every student personally, which allows for personalised treatment. The EEC found the administrative staff to be professional, organised and aware of their responsibilities. This also explains the positive feedback that students provide about them.

The administrative staff are fully aware of how to deal with students coming from abroad and their accommodation needs. An 'induction' day takes place for all students two weeks upon their arrival.

In future, the college's internal organisation would benefit from a clearer separation between management and academic operations.

### Strengths

- The college is modernising some of its classrooms with fashionable technology.
- The professional administrative staff are aware of the profile of the students.
- Learning methods are progressing towards a more student-centred approach.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The labs and the classrooms should be modernised.

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

## C. Conclusions and final remarks

The Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration offered by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management is a well-developed program designed to provide students with practical skills and foundational knowledge for careers in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The program corresponds to the EQF Level 5 cycle of higher education

The curriculum is clear and coherent, combining theoretical components with some practical training. Students gain exposure to industry operations through internships and applied coursework, and the program benefits from experienced lecturers with strong professional backgrounds in tourism and hospitality. Updates implemented since the previous accreditation, such as the inclusion of presentation skills, research-based coursework, and a technology and innovation module, have improved the program. Teaching facilities meet current requirements, though the planned classroom modernisation and expansion will further enhance the learning environment.

However, several areas require further development:

- Quality Assurance: Formalise the role of external stakeholders in curriculum review through an advisory board and establish systematic feedback mechanisms involving students, alumni, and industry partners.

- Teaching and Learning: Make clear a standardised student-centred pedagogy and ensure consistent application across all modules. Encourage broader staff involvement in internship supervision and introduce structured employer feedback on placements.
- Curriculum Updating: Continue refreshing module content to reflect current trends in tourism, including digitalisation, sustainability, and emerging travel technologies. Though with the caveats of actually integrating these thoroughly, and not only in name.
- Assessment and Moderation: Implement internal moderation or second-marking to ensure fairness and transparency in assessment.
- Admissions and Progression: Formalise and document admissions criteria and progression rules, and introduce transparent tools for early identification of students at academic risk.
- Recognition and Certification: Publish a clear policy for the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer, and ensure certification documents remain consistent with European transparency standards. Make these available on the college website, preferably without having to download anything.

Overall, the Diploma in Travel and Tourism Administration provides a sound foundation for entry-level employment in the tourism industry and offers pathways to further study. By addressing the above recommendations, the College will strengthen the program's alignment with European quality frameworks and further enhance its reputation for delivering accessible, practice-oriented tourism education.



#### D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Carlos Costa</b>	
<b>Ioannis S. Pantelidis</b>	
<b>Alexander Josiassen</b>	
<b>Georgi Cholakov</b>	

**Date:** 2025.10.28