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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:

  B.A. Hospitality Management

- **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 BA in Hospitality Management 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 of the building and an evaluation of the infrastructure and equipment was also conducted.

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

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Carlos Costa	Professor	University of Aveiro, Portugal
Ioannis S. Pantelidis	Professor	Ulster University
Alexander Josiassen	Professor	Copenhagen Business School
Georgi Cholakov	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 Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management offered by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management represents a well-structured programme that aligns with both academic standards and industry expectations. Designed as a four-year degree comprising 240 ECTS, the programme demonstrates a clear commitment to preparing graduates for management roles in the global hospitality sector. Its design reflects a balance between theoretical foundations and practical applications, ensuring that students acquire comprehensive knowledge alongside hands-on experience.

The programme's overarching aim is to equip students with the skills and competencies required for effective management in hospitality and tourism. It emphasises core operational areas such as front office procedures, food and beverage management, housekeeping, and facilities management, while integrating essential business disciplines like accounting, marketing, human resources, and strategic planning. This multidisciplinary approach ensures graduates are not only specialists in hospitality operations but also capable of making informed business decisions.

A notable strength of the programme is its responsiveness to contemporary industry trends and the inclusion of sustainability and circular economy modules. Modules on sustainability, circular economy, and some modules on technologies reflect the intended twin transition toward digitalisation and environmental responsibility. By embedding these themes into the curriculum, the programme prepares students to navigate the evolving challenges of the hospitality industry and contribute to sustainable business practices. However, these modules alone do not justify the intended title for sustainable hospitality management as there is still work to be done at the college to fully immerse itself into the notions of sustainability in a more holistic, rather than superficial way.

The curriculum is logically sequenced across eight semesters, enabling smooth progression from foundational courses to advanced management topics. Early semesters focus on introductory subjects such as hospitality fundamentals, language skills, and basic computer applications, while later stages incorporate specialised modules like strategic hospitality management, event planning, and research methods. This progression supports the development of both technical and managerial competencies. Modules such as macro and micro economics would better suit the programme if they were focused on the hospitality and tourism context rather than general micro-macro economics.

The programme also includes optional industrial placements, offering students the opportunity to gain real-world experience. While these placements are not mandatory, they represent a valuable component of applied learning and enhance employability. The inclusion of practical training in food and beverage service and front office operations further reinforces experiential learning within the academic setting.

The College demonstrates a robust internal quality assurance framework. Programme design and monitoring are overseen by the Internal Quality Committee, which includes academic staff, administrative representatives, and student members. Regular evaluations, student feedback mechanisms, and risk assessments ensure that the programme remains relevant and sustainable. The institution's commitment to academic integrity, anti-discrimination policies, and transparency further strengthens its quality culture.

However, while internal processes are good, the programme could benefit from more structured engagement with external stakeholders. Although collaborations with international universities and Erasmus+ partnerships provide benchmarking opportunities, formalised input from industry advisory boards and alumni networks would enhance curriculum relevance and graduate readiness for the labour   market.

The programme's international orientation is evident through its extensive network of partnerships with universities across Europe and beyond. These collaborations facilitate academic exchanges and joint initiatives, although student mobility is currently limited by visa restrictions for third-country nationals. Despite this challenge, the College's efforts to expand its local student base and diversify recruitment markets indicate a proactive approach to overcoming barriers.

Graduates of the programme enjoy strong employment prospects, supported by the hospitality sector's significant contribution to Cyprus's economy and global demand for skilled professionals. The curriculum's integration of business acumen, technological literacy, and sustainability principles positions graduates competitively for roles in hotel management, event coordination, tourism development, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Overall, the BA in Hospitality Management is a well-conceived programme delivered by a college with a clear strategic vision and commitment to quality. Its strengths lie in its comprehensive curriculum, experienced faculty, and alignment with industry trends. The emphasis on sustainability and some digital innovation reflects an intention towards forward-thinking design, while the inclusion of practical components ensures that learning outcomes translate into professional competence.

Areas for enhancement include making industrial placements compulsory, formalising external stakeholder involvement in programme review, and improving transparency through the publication of graduate employment data. Addressing these aspects would further elevate the programme's

standing and reinforce its reputation as a leading choice for hospitality education. Furthermore, the assessment strategy needs a serious rethink as it adopts a monolithic approach of an almost identical breakdown of assessment strategy, heavily geared towards exams. Furthermore, attention must be given to students with disabilities and neurodiversity, as there was not sufficient evidence to suggest that there is clarity of strategies in supporting students. Finally, although this will appear in section five of the report, the lab facilities need refurbishment before you can continue to run this program, as design alone is not sufficient, and the current state of the labs goes against your intended design towards both technological innovations and sustainability.

In conclusion, the College of Tourism and Hotel Management offers a programme that is academically strong and industry-relevant. With continuous improvement and strategic enhancements, it is well-positioned to maintain its role as a key contributor to hospitality education in Cyprus and beyond.

Strengths

- The BA in Hospitality Management demonstrates a robust and well-structured framework supported by a formal internal quality assurance system, led by an Internal Quality Committee comprising academic staff, administrative representatives, and student members.

  The programme operates under clear policies that safeguard academic integrity, promote equality, and uphold freedom of expression, while risk assessment and sustainability measures ensure its long-term viability.

  Regular student feedback mechanisms, including questionnaires and committee representation, contribute to continuous improvement, and comprehensive programme information covering aims, structure, and admission requirements is publicly accessible.

  The design aligns with the institutional strategy and European Qualifications Framework learning outcomes, reflecting the Council of Europe's four purposes of higher education: employability, personal development, active citizenship, and knowledge advancement. Its curriculum is thoughtfully structured across eight semesters with appropriate ECTS allocation, integrating sustainability, digital innovation, and research skills, and offering optional industrial placements to enhance practical experience.

  Internal review processes, supported by student evaluations and committee oversight, maintain academic rigour, while international collaborations through Erasmus+ and global partnerships provide benchmarking opportunities and a strong international dimension. Transparency is further reinforced through the publication of programme details, admission

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criteria, assessment policies, and faculty CVs online (although some are missing), alongside clear communication of tuition fees, scholarship schemes, and student support services.

Additionally, the College collects and analyses data on student progression, satisfaction, and dropout rates, maintaining accurate academic records and grade reports to inform evidence-based improvements. These strengths collectively position the programme as a high-quality, industry oriented offering that meets both academic standards and industry expectations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- **Policy for Quality Assurance**
  While the programme demonstrates a strong internal quality assurance framework, there are areas that require enhancement. Currently, there is limited evidence of systematic integration of employer and alumni feedback into curriculum updates, which is essential for maintaining industry relevance. Additionally, the absence of a formal industry advisory board or structured external stakeholder involvement beyond Erasmus partnerships reduces opportunities for external benchmarking. Transparency mechanisms for validating public information through independent bodies are also not clearly defined.

  Recommendations:
  To strengthen quality assurance, the College should establish a formal industry advisory panel that represents all the sectors it serves in order to provide regular input on curriculum development and quality standards. Implementing annual alumni and employer surveys will help track graduate performance and ensure alignment with market needs. Furthermore, publishing quality assurance reports and programme review outcomes on the institution's website will enhance transparency and stakeholder confidence. Quality assurance transcends across all aspects and the current state of the food and service labs suggests that the quality assurance strategies are not fully utilised. As such a review of quality assurance policies over teaching space are needed and urgent investment in the lab equipment and space is also needed.

- **Design, Approval, Monitoring & Review**
  The programme's design is comprehensive and aligned with institutional strategy; however, certain limitations affect its effectiveness. There is limited evidence of formal external academic review during monitoring phases, which is critical for maintaining academic rigor. Industrial placement, while valuable, is optional, reducing guaranteed practical exposure for all students. Additionally, the absence of curriculum mapping tools, such as rubrics linking

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learning outcomes to assessments, may hinder consistent evaluation of student achievement. Outgoing student mobility is constrained by visa issues, limiting international exposure and the benefits of global learning experiences.

Recommendations:

To address these gaps, industrial placement should be made mandatory or supplemented with structured alternatives like virtual internships. Introducing curriculum mapping and assessment rubrics will ensure clear alignment between course-level and programme-level outcomes. Formalizing external academic audits during each review cycle will provide benchmarking against international standards. Finally, developing visa facilitation partnerships or implementing virtual exchange programmes can help overcome mobility barriers and enhance the programme's international dimension.

- **Public Information**

  Although the programme publishes essential details such as structure, admission criteria, and assessment policies online, there are notable shortcomings. Graduate employment statistics and alumni success stories are not regularly updated, limiting prospective students' ability to assess career outcomes. Additionally, there is no evidence of external validation of published information, which could raise concerns about accuracy and credibility.

  Recommendations:

  The College should publish annual graduate employment reports and feature alumni testimonials to showcase real-world success and strengthen the programme's appeal. Engaging external auditors or professional bodies to validate public information will enhance trust and accountability. Including industry trend insights and updates on programme relevance will further demonstrate responsiveness to market needs. Improve the website functionality with a seamless design that does not force visitors to download files and update records, such as the full faculty CVs.

- **Information Management**

  The institution collects data on student progression, satisfaction, and dropout rates, but there are gaps in strategic data utilisation. There is no explicit mention of key performance indicators for employability or systematic industry trend analysis. Furthermore, evidence of data sharing with external stakeholders or professional networks is limited, reducing opportunities for collaborative improvement.

  Recommendations:

  To optimise information management, the College should define and monitor key performance indicators related to graduate employment, employer satisfaction, and skill

gaps. Establishing data exchange agreements with industry associations will enable robust trend analysis and informed decision-making. Additionally, involving students and staff in data-driven workshops will foster a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility for programme development.

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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 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 are 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 is 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 that promotes the 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 the relevance of internships,

how well they align with the courses, and spread the workload 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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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, except for the operation labs. 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 enroll 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		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	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 not to 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 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		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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.

Clearly, improvements are needed to the food production laboratory and other operational labs. The rooms are rather small, and the equipment needs to be modernised. As the EEC lacks the necessary expertise to determine whether the college meets all health and safety requirements, it is asking the Agency to request a further analysis from specialists in this field.

The EEC suggests that the college could improve the existing conditions in one of three possible ways: one, by fully modernising the current labs; two, by creating agreements with other colleges, hotels and restaurants where students could complete their practical training; and three, to utilise the entrance area of the ground floor to create an open plan food production area that serves as an operational cafeteria that can cater for staff and students.

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 need urgent modernisation.

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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 Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management offered by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management is a well-structured and academically rigorous programme that aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and reflects the Council of Europe's four purposes of higher education. Its comprehensive curriculum, integration of sustainability principles, and international orientation position it as a strong contributor to hospitality education in Cyprus and beyond.

The programme demonstrates notable strengths, including a clear strategic vision, robust internal quality assurance processes, and a curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical application. The inclusion of sustainability and digital innovation modules, alongside optional industrial placements, enhances graduate employability and responsiveness to industry trends.

However, several areas require improvement to ensure full compliance with ESG standards and to elevate the programme's quality. Key priorities include:

- **Quality Assurance:** Establish formal industry advisory boards and integrate systematic employer and alumni feedback into curriculum development.
- **Curriculum Design:** Make industrial placements mandatory, introduce curriculum mapping tools and assessment rubrics, and formalise external academic audits.
- **Transparency:** Publish graduate employment data and engage external bodies to validate public information.

- **Resources and Inclusivity:** Upgrade physical facilities, **particularly food production and service labs,** improve classroom environments and overall college appearance, and implement clear strategies to support students with disabilities and neurodiversity.
- **Research Integration:** Strengthen the link between research and teaching to foster scholarly engagement and innovation.
- **Admissions and Progression:** Document admission decisions more systematically, including annual analysis of admission procedures and outcomes. Develop a formal written policy for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer aligned with international recognition bodies, and publish these on the College website. Implement a standardised system to track students at risk early and trigger timely interventions. Clarify the pedagogical rationale behind existing progression thresholds (e.g., attendance, failed modules).

Addressing these recommendations will strengthen the programme's alignment with EQF standards, enhance its international competitiveness, and ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills and competencies required for leadership roles in the global hospitality sector. Continuous improvement in these areas will reinforce the College's reputation as a forward-thinking institution committed to excellence in hospitality education.

The EEC also reminds the comments made in section 5, concerning the operational labs. Clearly, improvements are needed in the food production laboratory and other operational labs. The rooms are rather small, and the equipment needs to be modernised. As the EEC lacks the necessary expertise to determine whether the college meets all health and safety requirements, it asks the Agency to request a further analysis from specialists in this field.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Carlos Costa	
Ioannis S. Pantelidis	
Alexander Josiassen	
Georgi Cholakov	

Date: 2025.10.28