

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** Cyprus College (Limassol)
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS,
Πτυχίο

In English:

Business Administration (4 academic years, 240 ECTS,
Bachelor)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating



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].

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

1. Contextual Remarks

Cyprus College, founded in 1961, is the oldest higher education institution in Cyprus. The Cyprus College (since 2007 part of the European University Cyprus) has been operating in Limassol in new facilities that comply with the required standards of a modern college since 2010. Graduates have been leading distinguished careers in their professional fields and roughly 90% of graduates maintain proud and loyal alumni relations with the institution.

Cyprus College offers diploma and degree programs that are registered and evaluated by The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), thus offering students the opportunity to receive state grants and recognition of their diplomas for employment in both the private and the public sector.

The EEC notes that the Bachelor Program International Business under review has an ambitious growth strategy and is offered by an institution that also (synergetically) offers two- and four-year degree programs and prepares students for professional accounting exams such as ACCA, ICAEW and CAT. (School of Professional Studies, since 1977).

Cyprus College participates in the Erasmus + program in the form of an accredited consortium since 2016. Students and academic staff of Cyprus College have participated in programs in the Netherlands, Lithuania and Greece. A recent success of the College in the field of mobility is the application entitled “Cyprus College Nicosia Entrepreneurship in Europe” for participation in Key Action 1 of the Erasmus + Program, giving Cyprus College students the opportunity to travel to Spain in 2022.

2. Overall Evaluation

The EEC can confirm that the Business Administration Bachelor Programme of Cyprus College provides students with knowledge in management, marketing, sales, organizational behaviour and exposure to business functions and processes. Students actively (collaborative and experiential learning) develop important skills such as decision making, critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills and take part in a 48 hour internship program in various organizations (which significantly enhances their skills and enriches their professional knowledge).

The EEC confirms that Cyprus College students enjoy a range of student services that keep pace with a changing world and help to realize personal and professional goals to keep up with labour market trends, social changes and evolving technology. The College has well-equipped facilities including computer, technology and multimedia labs, library, cafeteria, ... and has a unique Makerspace where business students collaborate with computer science students, contributing greatly to the quality of education and student experience under guidance of distinguished teachers/professors with important and relevant expertise in practice. Student support services including new-student orientation, personalized academic advising and career guidance, access to extracurricular activities, personal growth opportunities through community service, volunteerism,

arts, sports and cultural activities is offered and a dedicated Career Center service assists students in their job search and career development.

The EEC also noted that the Cyprus College is very much a strong community, well connected to industry and proud alumni. As an employer of faculty and staff committed to high quality, the College recognizes that their greatest asset is their people. Employee wellbeing is high as a result of a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy environment free of discrimination, supporting its people at both professional and personal level.

Notwithstanding the areas of strengths and commendations mentioned in the above, the EEC identified three main areas of (continuous) improvement:

1. Differentiation and Positioning

The program could benefit from additional differentiation and positioning. One way to do that is to leverage its already existing focus in marketing (circa 8 courses are marketing related).

2. Permanent Staff and Research

The percentage of permanent staff needs to be increased significantly. This will also help with differentiation as well as with another area that the College identified as in need for improvement which is research. However, the approach to research should better be targeted (for instance to permanent staff), in order not to spread resources too thin, and without obvious advantages, given the more applied professional focus of the institution and the background of the staff. In addition, the new appointees should have a PhD and a research record (at the moment the percentage of academic staff with a PhD is low).

3. Diversity

Currently the student and staff are mostly local. More diversity and internationalization will help with its branding and exposure to different cultures and perspectives. In the first instance more students from Greece could be targeted, given the instruction language is Greek. Over time an English program could be considered. The College is doing well in terms of gender balance.

To conclude, the EEC stresses the importance to be paid to the economic profit (that is the accounting profit minus the opportunity cost of its resources). Given the information available the financial viability seems precarious. This can have damaging effects on the students and the chances for institutional accreditation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Professor Philip Vergauwen (Chair)	Professor Strategic Management Accounting & Control	Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium)
Professor Chris Pitelis	Professor International Business & Competitiveness	Leeds University Business School (United Kingdom)
Professor Louis Brennan	Professor Business Studies	Trinity College University Dublin (Ireland)
Mr. George Aristotelous	Student	Cyprus University of Technology

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

The Programme under review satisfies the standards with respect to policy for quality assurance of the programme of study.

The Programme has a formal status and is publicly available, operates a quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes involving teaching, administrative staff, students and external stakeholders, thereby ensuring academic integrity.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The programme of study under review satisfies design standards (content and delivery), has well defined overall ILOs in line with the institutional strategy and fully reflects the purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe. Overall, the programme 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.

A Programme Evaluation Review structure and process is in place and involves all relevant internal and external stakeholders.

1.3 Public information

Clear, accurate, up-to date, complete and readily accessible information about the programme and the (support) services) is adequately published.

1.4 Information management

Relevant Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed.

Student drop-out rates:

F2016: 3 students (19 enrolled)

F2017: 0 (12 enrolled)

F2018: 3 (12)

F2019: 3 (18)

Findings

The EEC finds full compliance with the standards relating to (policy for) quality assurance, design, approval, on-going monitoring and review of the Programme. All relevant information is readily and publicly available and well managed.

Strengths

The EEC was satisfied that the programme under review is sufficiently supported by modern and even innovative teaching and learning resources. The team were very pleased to learn during the site visit of the major developments that have taken place in terms of the provision of additional software resources to students and the introduction of Blackboard.

The EEC had the benefit of a tour of the physical resources available to support the programme and was more than satisfied that with the adequacy of the resources available and were also very impressed with cutting edge resource innovations recently undertaken by the College such as the Maker Space.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the different functional areas and disciplines of Business are covered in the programme, Operations is notable by its absence. It is the case that there is a course on Project Management in the programme, but this only addresses one topic in the increasingly important area of Operations from the perspectives of Business sustainability and strategy. Given the critical role of Supply Chain Management in the functioning of a Business in today's uncertain environment and the increasingly prevalence of Industry 4.0 and digitalisation of the enterprise, the need for Business graduates to have exposure to Operations in the curriculum is ever more important. We would suggest that the College give serious consideration to the inclusion of Operations in the programme curriculum.



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 – centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual professional and social development through the use of a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates ensuring collaborative and experiential learning and the achievement of planned learning outcomes.

Students take an active role in the learning process and the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate and systematic guidance and support from the teacher.

Teaching methods, tools, material used, facilities, processes and structures with respect to teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated. The Makerspace is a best-practice innovation.

2.2 Practical training

Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected and ensure achievement of planned learning outcomes to the needs of all stakeholders.

2.3 Student assessment

Assessment is consistent, fairly applied, in accordance with the stated procedures.

Findings

The EEC finds full compliance with the standards relating to Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment, including processes of teaching and learning, practical training (experiential, collaborative learning) and overall student assessment.

Strengths

The EEC commends the College for the pride its students take in being College students. The students the EEC met during the visit all seem to have a pretty clear picture of what they intend to do once they graduate. The college's administrative personnel and teaching staff are highly appreciated by the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The most important (potential) improvement identified by the students concerns the language of instruction. Although the programs is in Greek, many of the students were rather poor in English. Studying (international) business requires English proficiency. Offering more courses in English would be helpful and even necessary.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-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

The EEC finds non-compliance with respect to standards related to full time equivalent staff recruitment. This was also reflected in the poor attendance of teaching staff during the visit: only 4 out of 10 teachers that had confirmed their attendance were actually present.

The EEC did find proof of fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up and was satisfied that 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. While recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme, this is also a potential vulnerability going forward in the light of too few permanent staff.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The EEC finds non-compliance with respect to the number of permanent FTE. In particular, the number of visiting staff exceeds by far the number of the permanent staff.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

The EEC finds only partial compliance with respect to standards related to scholarly activity (research) to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged. While teaching staff publications are within the relevant disciplines and are closely related to the programme's courses, the number of research committed staff (i.e. permanent) is too low.

Findings

The EEC finds only partial compliance with the standards synergies of teaching and research. The EEC found non-compliance with respect to teaching staff number, status, recruitment and development, because there is only 1 FTE staff member recruited for the programme under review.

The EEC is convinced that having only one FTE member of staff on the programme does not satisfy the adequacy criteria, certainly in view of the ambitious growth plans.

The EEC strongly encourages the College to demonstrate long term investment in adequate permanent and research active staff.

Strengths

The EEC wants to stress that the (part-time and very experienced) teaching staff to the College and highly appreciated by the students. Moreover, the teaching staff is commended for its team spirit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

As a consequence of the EEC's finding, the percentage of permanent staff needs to be increased significantly. This will also help with differentiation as well as with another area that the College identified as in need for improvement which is research. However, the approach to research should better be targeted (for instance to permanent staff), in order not to spread resources too thin, and without obvious advantages, given the more applied professional focus of the institution and the background of the staff. In addition, the new appointees should have a PhD and a research record (at the moment the percentage of academic staff with a PhD is low).



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	Non-compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Non-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**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place and implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.

4.2 Student progression

Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place and implemented in a consistent and transparent manner.

4.3 Student recognition

Pre-defined, appropriate and published regulations (in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention) regarding student recognition are in place, ensuring fair recognition of higher education qualifications, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies.

4.4 Student certification

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place ensuring certification of achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

Findings

The EEC finds full compliance with standards relating to student admission processes and criteria, student progression and drop-out, and student certification.

The student population Business Administration (4yr Bachelor) programme:

2022: 12 Cyprus, 1 Greek and 4 international

2021: 15 Cyprus

Strengths



The EEC commends Cyprus College for its students enjoying and appreciating a range of student services that keep pace with a changing world and help to realize personal and professional goals to keep up with labour market trends, social changes and evolving technology.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Currently the student and staff and mostly local. More diversity and internationalization will help with its branding and exposure to different cultures and perspectives. In the first instance more students from Greece could be targeted, given the instruction language is Greek. Over time an English program could be considered.

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

The EEC explicitly commends the Cyprus College for its adequate, fit-to-purpose and readily accessible high quality 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. Effective student-centered learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching are continuously taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.

5.2 Physical resources

The EEC's commendations extends to the adequacy and quality of the physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.

5.3 Human support resources

The EEC considers the College's human support resources best-practice: professors/teachers, qualified administrative staff adequately support the study programme and this is explicitly recognized by the students.

5.4 Student support

The EEC was impressed by the students' appreciation of the student support provided covering the needs of the student population both on cohort as on individual student level.

Findings

The EEC finds full compliance with the standards related to learning resources and student support.

Strengths

The evaluation team were satisfied that teaching and learning resources are adequate. The team were very pleased to learn during the site visit of the major developments that have taken place in terms of the provision of additional software resources to students and the introduction of Blackboard.

The EEC had the benefit of a tour of the physical resources available to support the programme. The team were satisfied that with the adequacy of the resources available and were also very impressed with cutting edge resource innovations recently undertaken by the College such as the Makerspace.

Moreover, the EEC commends the College for having outstanding human resources in place to support the programme. Both academic staff and students expressed considerable satisfaction with the resources in place. The team were very impressed with the ethos of human resources and the supportive, collaborative work culture that obtained.

To conclude, the EEC found student support of the highest level. The students that the team met with emphasised their high degree of satisfaction on support services and especially the problem solving mindset that they experienced from the College.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC was informed that the building (facilities) were rented. It is important to minimize the risk associated with a potential loss of the facility.

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

n.a.

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

n.a.

6.3 Supervision and committees

n.a.

Findings

N/A

Strengths

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC commends the Bachelor Program International Business under review for its ambitious growth strategy (with matching budget) offered by an institution that also (synergetically) offers two- and four-year degree programs and prepares students for professional accounting exams such as ACCA, ICAEW and CAT.

There is, however, one « caveat ». As this review did not concern an institutional review/accreditation, the EEC did not have the relevant financial information to assess (long term) viability of the institution. This viability, however, critically and crucially impacts the programmatic evaluation in the sense that the quality and the perceived value of the programme offered stands or falls with this financial viability of the institution. In other words, the EEC stresses the importance to be paid to the economic profit (that is the accounting profit minus the opportunity cost of its resources) as this can have damaging effects on the students and the chances for institutional accreditation. The EEC, therefore, strongly recommends the College to address the issue in full when preparing for College's institutional accreditation by the CYQAA. In particular, the building rental duration and cost can be a vulnerability affecting total costs significantly.

The EEC commends the College for its well-equipped facilities including computer, technology and multimedia labs, library, cafeteria, ... and for its unique Makerspace. Student support services including new-student orientation, personalized academic advising and career guidance, access to extracurricular activities, personal growth opportunities through community service, and a dedicated Career Center service assisting students in their job search and career development are to be seen as best-practice.

The EEC was impressed by the College's a strong team-spirit and sense of community, its connections to industry and the obvious pride of its current students and proud alumni. As an employer of faculty and staff committed to high quality, the College recognizes that their greatest asset is their people. Employee wellbeing is high as a result of a welcoming, inclusive, safe and healthy environment free of discrimination, supporting its people at both professional and personal level.

The EEC identified the following areas for further improvement:

1. Differentiation and Positioning

The program could benefit from additional differentiation and positioning. One way to do that is to leverage its already existing focus in marketing (circa 8 courses are marketing related).

2. Permanent Staff and Research

The percentage of permanent staff needs to be increased significantly. This will also help with differentiation as well as with another area that the College identified as in need for improvement



which is research. However, the approach to research should better be targeted (for instance to permanent staff), in order not to spread resources too thin, and without obvious advantages, given the more applied professional focus of the institution and the background of the staff. In addition, the new appointees should have a PhD and a research record (at the moment the percentage of academic staff with a PhD is low).

3. Diversity

Currently the student and staff are mostly local. More diversity and internationalization will help with its branding and exposure to different cultures and perspectives. In the first instance more students from Greece could be targeted, given the instruction language is Greek. Over time an English program could be considered. The College is doing well in terms of gender balance.



4. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Philip Vergauwen	
Chris Pitelis	
Louis Brennan	
George Aristotelous	

Date: January 14th 2023