Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 11/6/2022

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Limassol International University (LIU) (currently Cyprus International Institute of Management- CIIM)

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Technology and Innovation School**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Information Technologies**

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

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό στην Πράσινη και Ψηφιακή Διοίκηση

  In English:

  MSc Green & Digital Management

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The evaluation took place over two days (1 and 2 June) remotely due to the pandemic. During this time the EEC had several meetings with the senior management, the program coordinators, teaching faculty, students, and administrative personnel. The evaluation and the findings and recommendations of this report were based on these meetings, as well as the evidence provided. Clarifications and additional information were provided upon request.

The EEC did not have the opportunity to visit the University. A video displaying the existing teaching, administration and social spaces was available. As the project of a new campus is underway additional information was provided on this. The information provided was considered sufficient for the purposes of this evaluation.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) would like to thank the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) for their support.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Savvas Papagiannidis	Professor of Innovation and Enterprise	Newcastle University Business School
Christina Lioma	Professor in Computer Science	University of Copenhagen
Christina Boutsouki	Professor in Marketing	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Pantelitsa Leonidou	Student Representative	Cyprus University of Technology

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

Findings

There is a quality assurance policy in the form of formal processes that will be followed. Specific roles are assigned to academic and administrative staff to develop and implement the quality assurance policy. Decision making lies upon academic staff whereas the monitoring and implementation of the quality assurance policy is a joint responsibility of teaching and administrative staff. With respect to diversity and inclusion the quality assurance policy seems to safeguard against discrimination.

With respect to the objectives of the proposed program of study, the EEC finds that they align with the overall institutional strategy and the purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe.

The program of study will enable smooth student progression and will be subject to a formal institutional approval process. There are explicit learning outcomes. Admission criteria are clear. Completion of the program will result in a qualification that is in line with the Framework for Qualification of the European Higher Education Area.

Students are expected to complete 90 ECTS credits, 78 from core courses and 18 from electives. Students will choose three electives from one of the three tracks (Digital Marketing, Circular Economy and Oil & Gas Management). Alternatively, students could choose to work on a final project thesis that will provide them with 18 ECTS.

Student evaluation and feedback is part of the quality assurance process. The proposed student assessment meets the standards of CYQAA. There are policies to effectively handle plagiarism, ensure academic ethics and deal with any disputes. All courses and teaching staff are evaluated at the end. This information will be used for future course updates and developments.

Information related to the program of study will be published by the department. Graduate employment information will also be collected.

Strengths

There is a strong culture of cooperation and teamwork in the department. Teaching and administrative staff take an active role in the development and support of the new programme that combines two disciplines, Green and Digital Management. This is a unique combination that can be a competitive advantage for the programme, but requires commitment, a lot of effort and clear guidelines to be effectively implemented.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The rational for combining green and digital needs more thinking, especially when it comes recruitment. Considering that this programme will need to be able to attract students who are interested in both sides, marketing may be more challenging than usual.

Documenting quality assurance meetings and decisions needs to be more comprehensively and systematically undertaken and more formally structured. The EEC recommends that external stakeholders (especially considering the two thematic areas of the program) are involved in a structured and systematic way.

The quality assurance framework proposed is comprehensive. Still certain areas need to be considered more carefully and thoroughly. The EEC recommends that the quality assurance process is carefully monitored to meet CYQAA standards. This particularly applies to mapping the course program outcome and assessment to the program learning objectives and competencies.

Students are expected to attend the core courses (72 ECTS) and then choose between 18 ECTS of taught courses (3 electives from one of the three available tracks) or 18 ECTS as a result of a final project thesis. This creates a two-level approach and might lead to discrepancies with respect to evaluation outcomes, student performance, knowledge and competencies obtained. Potentially it may worth considering having all students undertake a thesis, which can also help scale up research outputs (especially in collaboration with local stakeholders related to the two themes of this program).

Course descriptions and workload specifications should be clear and balanced. The workload balance needs to be adjusted as now students are expected to spend a lot of hours studying on their own whereas there will be limited interaction with instructors in class. This ratio is not in line with international standards. The EEC recommends that the ratio of contact-hours versus non-contact hours becomes more balanced.

With respect to public information the EEC recommends that minutes should be kept in detail and should adhere to the usual standards. The sample of minutes that the EEC saw from existing programs were extremely brief overviews, compiled after specific requests have been made by the committee. Keeping detailed minutes and making them public should be a standard practice in the new program as they form evidence of quality assurance.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially 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

A variety of teaching methods will be used for each course. The process of teaching and learning in the Department (considering that this is a new program) appears to be flexible and students are encouraged to take an active role. The proposed course structure alongside the elective courses from the three tracks will enable a more personalized approach to the degree. Students will also have the choice of a final project thesis instead of course attendance in the elective track. The proposed teaching methods, tools and materials are up to date and effective.

Resources ranging from building facilities, library, teaching rooms and technological infrastructure to general academic support and student welfare services are expected to be adequate.

The proposed assessment of student performance meets the standards of CYQAA. Feedback on currently offered courses appears to be sufficient. Student mentoring will also be available.

Strengths

The program is designed so that it can flexibly adapt to student needs. Student numbers are estimated to be initially small. This will allow for a better cooperation and feedback to review courses, material, and evaluation processes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Due to the dynamic areas combined in the degree it is important the external stakeholders from local industry are regularly and actively involved at a course and program level. This will help build strong relationships with the local community/industry and will improve student employability.

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-centred 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

Findings

The proposed teaching staff to support the new programme are appropriately qualified to teach postgraduate modules. Modules will be assigned with respect to their area of expertise as evident by their qualifications and research experience. Visiting staff is a significant resource that can effectively contribute to the success of the program. Modules will be provided through block-teaching approaches. This is an incentive for visiting staff.

All existing staff members are actively engaged with the development of the new programme. Yet there are plans for more academic staff to join the department and participate in the new masters' programmes. The recruitment of staff is in line with expectations. The new members of staff will be resident and research active.

A proportion of the existing Faculty members is research active. Existing staff members were given the option to join a more research centred scheme or opt for a more teaching -less research approach. Those options have been made explicit and have been embraced by academic staff. There will be resources available (e.g. funding for projects of attending conferences) to encourage and support research.

Strengths

Staff appear to be engaged with the Institution, and their duties. There is a good basis for cooperation and teamwork that enables the transfer of experience of running programmes to new members of staff that have recently joined the department.

There is a comprehensive Staff Handbook to guide new members of staff on expectations, responsibilities, workload and performance evaluation. The same principles will be applied to the new program as well.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

According to the new policy the academic staff workload is divided among teaching (30%), research (30%), administration (30%) and community (10%). Yet taking into consideration that resident academic faculty members have a teaching load of 40 ECTS and this is delivered twice (in two different sites) this can result in a significant workload imbalance in teaching. The additional administrative demands associated with the new MSc development and the Institutional support will

further suppress the available time for research and quality time for students in the course. As student numbers are expected to eventually increase, there are going to be demands for effective student handling as well. All these create a pressing situation for immediate staff recruitment as well as the implementation of practices that will ensure that workloads remain manageable.

Moreover, as it was noted by the EEC, there are different contracts in the various staff members creating a confusion as to what is expected of staff and what are the criteria for performance evaluation.

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

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	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

The EEC met with current students as well as graduates of other programmes. There was an agreement that the quality of the programme attended was satisfactory. They all considered that they acquired new knowledge and skills and that the programme greatly enhanced their employment opportunities.

Students mentioned the open-door policy practiced by all academic staff. They considered that they could interact with staff and get feedback on their work whenever they needed to do so. Such practices are expected to take place in the new programme as well.

Strengths

All student requirements as well as entitlements are clearly stated in the student handbook. The handbook will be provided to students upon admission to the programme and will be a reference point for every process and student matter.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Admissions criteria need to be made explicit in the proposed programme (especially when interviews are undertaken to consider borderline cases).

Systematic data collection about student related issues (employability and diversity) can help improve the program.

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

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 virtual tour and the reports from staff and students highlight the availability or resources (library, lecture rooms and labs). At the moment, the number of computers tend to be limited but there are plans for updating and replacing lab equipment.

The library is part of the Cyprus Libraries Consortium. It provides a wide range of online and offline services, e books, and databases.

All course and related material will be available on Moodle. There will be access to a computer lab throughout the day.

Students will be assigned advisors upon their admission to the program to guide them throughout their studies. There will be a student induction to help them familiarize with the program and tutoring in the context of course delivery, assignments and final exams.

Strengths

There are adequate financial resources to support the program. New facilities are being developed and there is a commitment to invest in new academic and administrative staff that will enable the program to run successfully.

Also there is a high morale and strong commitment among existing staff to support the new masters programs introduced by the department as part of the CIIM evolvement into Limassol International University.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
There are currently restricted resources with respect to the labs and lecture rooms available. With the prospect of the new programmes, student numbers are likely to grow. There are plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs which will limit the need for students to use their own computers.

Library resources are currently updated. Such updates are important and can enhance the quality of education provided, especially with up to date, cutting edge textbooks and reading material in a rapidly evolving area of study.

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

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

This is not a doctoral program. The section does not apply.

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		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

Overall, the EEC concludes that the proposed MSc program in Green & Digital Management has the potential to deliver quality education, adhering to the standards of the CYQAA.

The comments provided by the EEC aim to further strengthen the programme and improve its future success prospects.

If CYQAA have any queries with regards to the report, the EEC members will be more than happy to attend to them.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Savvas Papagiannidis	
Christina Lioma	
Christina Boutsouki	
Pantelitsa Leonidou	

Date: 11/6/2022