ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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External Evaluation Report

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

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

- **Town: Limassol**

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

- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Information Technologies in the Technology and Innovation School

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

  In Greek:

  Μάστερ στην Επιχειρηματική Ευφυΐα και Ανάλυση Δεδομένων

  In English:

  MSc Business Intelligence and Data Analytics

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

First of all, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) would like to thank the CYQAA for the opportunity to be involved in the evaluation of the MSc Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (BIDA). This is an existing program that has seen significant interest from the market.

This evaluation and in turn the report examined a number of aspects of the program's design, evolution and operationalization in the context of the institutional changes that are underway. To this the EEC notes that this an exciting time for the host institution as CIIM plans to transform itself into LIU with a new campus and a new set of aspirations for the future. Such a transformation can potentially have a positive impact and spill-over effect on program, staff and students.

Considering the above, this report presents the key findings, areas of strength and areas of potential improvement that colleagues may want to consider when it comes to strengthening the MSc Business Intelligence and Data Analytics. The report was based on the materials provided by the Institution in the form of self-assessment report. In turn an evaluation took place over 2 days, during which the EEC reviewed both the Department within which the program will be hosted by also the program itself. The agenda included several meetings with the senior management, the program coordinators, teaching faculty, students, and administrative personnel. Where additional information was necessary this was made available to the EEC after the evaluation.

Given the on-going pandemic restrictions, the evaluation took place online. As such, the EEC did not have the opportunity to visit the University and experience in-person the services and infrastructure. Still, a video was provided capturing the existing teaching, administration and social spaces were provided. Information was also made available about the new campus. The information provided was considered sufficient for the evaluating this program.

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, Greece
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

The program benefits from the quality assurance policies and systems that are in place. It was positive to note that internal stakeholders felt that they can express their voice and be heard when it came to the design and implementation of the program and its courses. Teaching staff has the responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation for the program and the assigned courses.

The admission criteria are sufficiently clear for a program of this nature.

Students are expected to complete 90 ECTS credits, with 78 out them being core and 12 elective. Effectively two electives are selected from one of the three concentration tracks (operations and management, entrepreneurship and innovation and finally financial services).

It was positive to see that the course content was mapped to the course learning objectives.

Each course is evaluated at the end with feedback used to inform future decision making.

Strengths

Overall, the existing intended learning outcomes, content, assignments and final exams meet CYQAA standards and comply with local legislation. Theory and practice are integrated in a balanced and effective way.

The University and resident staff have a number of local, national and international relationships that can be used for enriching the program.

Staff are open to exploring ways of improving existing quality assurance practices.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Documenting quality assurance meetings and decisions needs to be more comprehensively and systematically undertaken. An informal approach that revolves around coordinators may be effective when there is a small team in place. Considering the expected growth, more attention to processes and details will be needed.

The EEC recommends that the quality assurance process is carefully monitored, so that results meet CYQAA standards and so that a culture of quality is promoted. This particularly applies to mapping the course program outcome and assessment to the program learning objectives and competencies. Data on student performance can help

The quality assurance framework presented appears to touch on all aspects. Still certain areas need to be considered more carefully and thoroughly. For instance, the EEC recommends that external stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process in a structured and systematic way. This can help both inform the design and content of the program (e.g. when it comes to practice, case study materials, thesis projects etc.) but also employability.

The EEC enquired about employability stats. The response was that 100% of the MSc students are employed. Although this is excellent, it would have helped to have more detailed insights as to career prospects of the students in relation to the program. Put differently many students are already working so instead of just reporting if they do so, it may have been better to know if the program helped them secure a more relevant to their training job.

It will be useful to have a consistent implement to how class participation contributes to course marks (ideally it should not exceed 10% unless there is a clear rationale).

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 is used that is appropriate for each of the course.

The course structure and elective choices make it possible to give a more personalized feeling to the degree. Students also have an opportunity to focus on areas of interest via chosen for their assignment themes.

Assessment features a mix of summative and formative assessment types. The assessment of student performance meets the standards of CYQAA. Feedback appears to be sufficient. The policies for handling plagiarism, academic ethics and grade disputes are clear (and made available to student in the form of handbook) and effective. For instance, if there is evidence of plagiarism, the student will be referred to the Academic Committee.

The program lends itself to developing skills that are highly sought by industry.

Strengths

At the moment there is a relative small number of student in each cohort/class. This makes it possible to develop good working relationships between students and teachers. Going forward it will be useful to explore ways that these relationships can be supported when numbers (and wider workload demands) increase.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are opportunities to engage external stakeholders from local industry regularly as part of the course but also at program level. Considering that many students are already working locally there may be also an opportunity to use their relationships with employees to both benefit their learning experience but also the experience of the other students.

Assessment moderation could help add another level of quality assurance.

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

Teaching staff have the necessary qualification for teaching postgraduate modules. Teaching assignments are in areas relevant to the expertise of each member of staff as demonstrated by their qualifications and their research experience. Where necessary visiting staff contribute to the program. The block-teaching style adopted for postgraduate courses is conducive to engaging visiting staff. The ratio of resident to external staff is considered reasonable.

Sufficient number of staff have supported the programme so far. Considering the transformation of CIIM into the new University entity and the formation of a new Department that will also offer new programmes, new appointments are expected. The policies associated with regards to the recruitment of staff are in line with expectations. The new members of staff will be resident and research active. As such these appointment can have a direct and indirect positive effect when it comes to the programme, both in terms of contributions to teaching but also to the wider culture of the Department. A bigger team size can help scale up or organise existing activities (e.g. internal seminars, sharing of good practice etc) among a bigger pool of colleagues.

A significant proportion of existing Faculty is research active, periodically publishing work in relevant peer-reviewed journals and other outlets. There are a number of resources (e.g. funding for projects of attending conferences) and policies to encourage and support research.

Student evaluation and feedback is part of the quality assurance process.

Strengths

Staff appear to be engaged with the Institution, teaching team/programme and their duties. There is a good basis to develop things upon that builds on a wealth of experience of running programmes like the one evaluated.

The Staff Handbook was very comprehensive document covering all expected areas, including expectations and responsibilities, workload and performance evaluation.

It is positive to see that there is an EDI strategy that can help shape the recruitment strategy for this program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The 2022/23 handbook provided, states that resident academic faculty members have a teaching load of 40 ECTS and the following teaching, examination and final project supervision responsibilities. Considering that these ECTs can be delivered twice (in two different sites) this can result in a significant workload balance that is likely to exceed the expected 30%. In the short/medium term thing, there will be also additional demands with the regards to the Institutional transformation, new program launches, the move to a new campus etc. Consequently, it is important that staff recruitment takes place with more urgency to ensure that workloads remain manageable and do not impact teaching continuity and quality.

Similarly, the workload policy should not be only a set of guidelines. Activities undertaken should be measured and actual workloads associated with the delivered activities are captured. This will ensure a fair and transparent balancing of duties among staff.

Activities related to continuous pedagogic training and innovation are organized. It will be useful though to systematize these in order to support colleagues' development (e.g. by organizing regular T&L workshops and seminars) and the spread of good practice (e.g. via peer-observation in teaching).

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

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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 External Evaluation Committee has the opportunity to meet with a number of students. Among them were current student and graduates. They were satisfied with the program and the opportunities for developing their skills. They felt that the program enhanced their employability prospects. Students mentioned that there was ample opportunity to interact with staff and get feedback on their work.

Strengths

The student handbook was very comprehensive and covered all important aspects of student matters. This includes regulations related to progression, academic expectations, ethics,

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A more granular and systematic data collection about student matters (especially employability and diversity) can help feed into future iteration of the program (e.g. criteria, links to practice, courses to include etc).

Admissions include interviews with students. It will be useful to potentially make admissions criteria more specific or at least provide guidelines as to the expected level of certain knowledge and competencies (especially when it comes to statistics and programming). This will help make final admissions decisions more consistent.

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

Student induction that helps student familiarize themselves with the University, its culture, its environment and its people. This can help student make the most of the services on-offer.

The virtual tour and the feedback from staff and students suggest that current resources such as building facilities, library, theoretical and practical teaching rooms, technological infrastructure meet expectations.

The library is part of the Cyprus Libraries Consortium. It offers online and onsite services that are in line with the EEC expectations. It has access to 32 Research Databases and 5 eBook collections by subscription updated annually. The research databases provide access to full text, peer - reviewed, both non open access and open access academic journals. Moodle is used as the VLE. There is a computer lab that is accessible most of the day. Students on the program are likely to use their own machines for practice and assignments.

Student diversity is handled appropriately. Student mentoring is offered. Students are assigned advisors and they can seek support from the program directors through an open-door policy. Tutoring is available in the context of course delivery and final projects.

Strengths

The program has sufficient financial resources to support its operation. The new facilities that will become available as part of the new campus and the investment in academic and administrative recruitment will provide a solid basis for the program to run.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Student numbers are likely to grow for what is a program that has already seen much demand. Concentrating activities in one location will mean that balancing available resources per student may not be as effective as it was in the past. There are plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs which will remove the need for students to use their own machines (although the EEC notes that this for this program this may not be as much of an issue). Such plans need to be more specific taking into account student increases.

Collections are updated following an annual acquisition plan. Such updates can feature up-to-date text in what is a fast-evolving area.

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)*

This is not a doctoral program. Hence this 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	N/A
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	N/A
6.3	Supervision and committees	N/A

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Overall, the EEC concludes that the currently running MSc program in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics that was under evaluation has the potential to deliver quality education of the expected standards that complies with the standards of the CYQAA.

In this report the EEC has provided constructive feedback 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 in due course.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Savvas Papagiannidis	
Christina Lioma	
Christina Boutsouki	
Pantelitsa Leonidou	

Date: 07/06/2022