

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Hospitality and Tourism
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διεύθυνση Επισιτιστικών Τεχνών (4 Χρόνια / 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

BA Culinary Arts Management (4 years, 240 ECTS, Degree)

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

- **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

On behalf of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, we the panel of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met on Thursday 1 June 2023 on campus to evaluate the full application of the American College for the provision of a BA Culinary Arts (Γαστρονομικές Τέχνες), provided through their Department of Hospitality and Tourism. The present agenda was followed, and we met at the premises of American College with the Head of the Institution and the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC), the Head of relevant departments and Programme Coordinator, Faculty Members, meeting with students and Administrative Staff. The EEC had the opportunity to have a tour at the facilities of the College. As a committee, we went through the application documents submitted individually and collectively to gain in-depth knowledge about the programme under discussion. Further the committee met pre-and post the evaluation meeting, to ensure objectivity of our decisions. The committee suggested changes for the Culinary Arts programme that the American College could implement to enhance the programme.

The site visit schedule was the following

- **9.30-10.00 Meeting with the Head of the Institution and the EEC met the following leaders**
 - Dr Marios Americanos Director
 - Dr Andreas Petasis Director of Academic Affairs
 - Dr Charalambos Louca Associate Professor in Economics and Business
- **10:15-13.00 Meeting with the Head of the relevant department and he programme Coordinator**

Short presentation of:

 - The School's Structure
 - The feasibility study of the programmes
 - The curriculum (i.e. philosophy, allocation of courses per semester, weekly content of each course, teaching methodologies, admission criteria for prospective students, student assessments, final exams)
 - Presenter Marios Charalambous (Associate Lecturer Hospitality)
- **11.00-12.10 Methodology and equipment used in teaching and learning (i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching materials, evaluation methods, projects, samples of written examination thesis)**

SWOT analysis and degree of compliance with the CYQAA standards

Participants

Dr Andreas Petasis

Ms Despina Kassianou (Programme coordinator)

Dr Canstandinos Iakovou

Ms Marios Charalambous

Dr Charalambos Louca

Dr Marios Americanos

- **12.00-13.00 Discussion on the content of each course**

Participants

Ms Despina Kassianou (Programme coordinator)

Ms Marios Charalambous

Dr Canstandinos Iakovou

Dr Andreas Petasis

Dr Charalambos Louca

Ms Margarita Shekkeri

Ms Thalia Malekou

- **13.00-14.00 (Working Lunch)**

- **14.00-14.50 Meeting with students**

The following were present (American College did not provide surnames)

Ambica (3rd year)

Selen (3rd year)

Daniel (4th year transfer from HHIC)

Stefanos (4th year transfer from HHIC)

Mattheus (4th year transfer from HHIC)

- **14.50-15.40 Meeting with members of the teaching staff of the course for all the years of study**

Participants

Mr Marios Charalambous

Ms Despina Kassianou

Dr Andreas Petasis

Dr Charalambos Louca

Dr Katerina Mantzouni

Dr Canstandinos Iakovou



- **15.40-15.50 Working Coffee break**
- **15.50-16.20 Meeting with members of the administrative staff**
Participants
Mr Tasos Anastasiou
Mr Vasilis Cleopa (Director of Admin)
Ms Elli Kounnas (student office)
- **16.20-17.00 On site visit to the premises of the institution (library, computer labs, research facilities)**
- **17.00-17.30 Briefing to the Directors of the findings**

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Amalia Tsiami	Associate Professor	University of West London
Lia Marinakou	Principal Lecturer	Bournemouth University
George Tsiamis	Associate Professor	University of Patras
Niki Makri	student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University



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

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and*

maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)

- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible*

information is published about:

- *selection criteria*
- *intended learning outcomes*
- *qualification awarded*
- *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- *pass rates*
- *learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*

- *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
-
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

Based on the application documentation, and the on-site visit, extensive discussions with the members of staff and students and administrators the programme of Culinary Arts meets the needs of the industry and the high demand of the profession in Cyprus and the tourism industry.

The programme's purpose and objectives were clearly presented as well as the goals.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

The Quality Assurance Committee meets 4 times a year to discuss relevant issues. There is a quality assurance policy that demonstrates the purpose of the committee, its members, processes and other relevant information. There is clear evidence of processes to support the delivery of the courses, students and teaching staff.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The design of programmes of study is done following regular procedures, hence the market needs are explored, industry people are also involved to decide on the programme to offer, as well as on the curriculum design. A committee then finalizes the programme and is also responsible for the monitoring and the review.

The Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic committee meet every 2 years to discuss the programme and monitor it. If any changes are required, these are reported and then approved by the committees.

The culinary arts programme however in relation to subjects studied, needs up-dating to have stronger focus in culinary arts and related sciences, rather than general knowledge subjects.

1.3 Public information

The EEC committee has seen the relevant programme of study and all the information has been published on the site. The selection criteria, learning outcomes of the courses and qualifications awarded are available. More specifically the following are published

- *selection criteria*
- *learning outcomes*
- *qualification awarded*
- *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- *learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

Programme's purpose and objectives were clearly presented as well as the goals.

The website provided also employment opportunities within the culinary arts sector.

There were also testimonials from graduates.

1.4. Information management

All the information related to the effective management of the programme of the study was satisfactory. Students and staff are given the opportunity to get involved in providing and analysing information and planning activities. The College engages with external stakeholders for teaching and learning purposes as well as for quality assurance.

The College demonstrated the processes that followed for the student progression and success and the way that monitors student satisfaction with their programme, as well as access to the library resources and link with ProQuest provided to all students enabling them to access many electronic resources remotely.

Students are satisfied with the programme, although they find some courses not so relevant to culinary arts. They do not participate at various committees to express their views. There is evidence of students (top-up) who based on certain criteria have entered the programme to acquire the BA.

Strengths

- The College has links with the industry and will further develop the links with other professional bodies.
- They facilitate the professional development of the students and exposure to the industry. The opportunities that will be provided for the professional development are of paramount importance for the College. Guest speakers, participation at competitions are some of the engagement with the industry.
- Very good standards in their labs and student facilities.
- Established quality assurance processing as per other provisions.
- There is good evidence of emphasis on training and development for both academic and administration staff, usually based on various Erasmus+ programmes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The College should review the wording of the programme learning outcomes in order to reflect the level of the provision.
- The Learning outcomes of the courses should be revised to reflect the level of delivery, expectations from students and performance.
- The curriculum should be revised to have a culinary arts focus
- There are too many courses (more than 25%) of the programme in general studies, and/or general management without emphasis on culinary arts content.
- Emphasis on culinary arts could be given on these general courses to allow students to reflect on their own relevant context, i.e. French language to include terminology.
- The internship is not credited and should carry ECTS as well as a clear difference between the skills obtained at different academic levels
- The duration of the Internship should be reviewed to enable students to prepare for their resit period, ECTS could be added.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1	Policy for quality assurance	<i>Compliant</i>
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	<i>Compliant</i>
1.3	Public information	<i>Compliant</i>
1.4	Information management	<i>Compliant</i>

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Sub- areas

2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.3 Practical training

2.4 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

Findings

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

The programme being evaluated is at the level 6 of studies (240 ECTS) and will offer a degree. The EEC has determined that the learning outcomes of the programme align with those of standard qualifications for a degree. Based on this, the committee finds that the programme meets the requirements of level 6 of studies (240 ECTS). Nevertheless, the programme learning outcomes should be revised to clearly reflect on requirements in terms of the outcomes at level 6.

Each course outline includes a wealth of information to help students better understand the subject matter. In addition to providing details on ECTS credits, students can also learn about the course's aim, the responsible teacher, the topics included in content, bibliography and the learning outcomes. A detailed course content description is also provided, giving students a more in-depth understanding of what they can expect to learn throughout the semester. Moreover, students can familiarize themselves with the course's teaching methodology, bibliography, and assessment methods. These outlines are given to students within the first week of teaching in each semester and are also uploaded to the respective area of Moodle. Although there was discussion on student engagement with the delivery, this was not evident in the documentation.

To enhance the learning experience, teaching staff use a fully functional electronic training platform (Moodle) to upload course materials. They also communicate with students through Moodle. With an eye towards modernity, students have access to a wealth of learning resources, including

facilities and equipment, library, and online library materials. The student-centered approach to teaching is facilitated by the small class sizes, which is particularly important for laboratory work. Nevertheless, further emphasis on this approach should be highlighted in the relevant documentation.

2.2 Practical training

Theoretical and laboratory courses are relatively well-balanced, in those few courses that are culinary arts focused, but this balance is not reflected in the syllabus. Therefore, it is important to provide a more detailed description of the practical work that will be performed in each course. This description should include the specific skills that students will learn and the number of practicals that will be conducted. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include information on how the practical work will be documented and assessed. This will help ensure that students have a clear understanding of the expectations for each subject and that they are able to fully engage in the learning process. By providing a more detailed syllabus that emphasizes the importance of practical work and documentation, students will be better prepared to succeed in their courses and in their future careers. It has to be noted that the curriculum includes general knowledge subjects such as philosophy, psychology history of Cyprus, to name a few. The subjects might seem interesting for the students to accrue general knowledge; however the degree has to be focused in Culinary Arts and as such valuable teaching time is dedicated to other subjects. Those generic subjects could be very useful if they are contextualized for the culinary arts, as an example of the psychology module, could include conditions (anorexia, orthorexia) that are challenging and particularly useful for the culinary arts experts to know how to approach such challenging customers. The psychology of older adults could also be introduced and psychology in changing the lifestyle of people with difficult to manage chronic conditions (Type 2 diabetes). This type of information would be inline with the knowledge, skills and competences for the culinary arts students and graduates. There is a wealth of general subjects, however the culinary arts represents a small majority, as estimate the 25% of the ECTS gained are related to subjects that are not culinary arts management.

The module HOT103 ‘sanitation, hygiene and food safety’ should also include the food related pathogens that students should be aware of and know the condition of growth and how to destroy in order to monitor their practices. The module could include some practical classes in a lab or even a class to enhance student learning and the importance of food hygiene. As an example is to measure the microbial count in hands before and after washing. To test that the college does not need special equipment, and or to test the cleaning process for their working stations that can be achieved by swapping exercise and inoculation to agar plates. Such an approach will have an active engagement with the students as they better learn when using various methods of teaching (lab work).

The food science (CUL 300) includes only one module, further information could be placed for the food processing. The nutrition appears only in one module CUL401 Dietary Cuisine, which is rather limited considering the range of nutritional needs in different age groups that had to be covered for the culinary professionals. Those graduates might be employed to schools, to nursing homes, to hospitals and it is quite important to have the skills for such a demanding environment. As the

tourism industry develops, more people would arrive in Cyprus that have specific dietary needs, the vegan population triples in the last couple of years and so the requirements from the consumers. The culinary arts professionals should be ready to meet those needs and prepare a nationally balanced meal for those consumers.

As mentioned in the application, the programme includes internships which take place during the summer from June till September. Although they are monitored with visits and a log, they are not credited. Students expressed the view that this should be an integrated part of the curriculum and be well planned. The students were not aware that they could do a placement at restaurants. The college stated that they have issues with international students who are not allowed to work in Cyprus, however, there is evidence that this is possible. In this case the committee suggested to offer it as an elective if credited. It is recommended that the duration of each training be reduced to three months to allow the students to concentrate more on their examination process. It is also suggested to reflect the expectations at each level, what roles and duties students should perform in order to demonstrate the skills and competences they will develop and its relevant to the programme of study. The internships should also include levels in their learning outcomes and should be reflected at the level that the internship takes place.

2.3 Student assessment

The students' assessment in various courses is determined using different methods of assessment, each with varying weights. These methods include, but are not limited to, written exams, oral presentations, group projects, and practical assessments. The formal procedures for student appeals regarding their assessment in individual courses have been established to ensure fairness and transparency in the assessment process. In addition, the students are given feedback on the effectiveness of the assessment, in order to continuously improve the quality of education provided and improve their T&L skills. Although attendance is monitored and assessed with 10% this is not included in the course descriptors.

Exams are not invigilated by the teaching team for transparency. There are procedures in place in case students want to appeal for a grade. Marking criteria are not provided, neither double marking as applied in UK. These practices are not followed in Greece as it is comparable education system. The teaching team discussed how they consider different student skills in teaching and learning and how they may adapt their delivery and assessment. For example, there is more time in exams for students with dyslexia.

Students are not involved in research in a formal way. They may collect some data for an assignment but they are not working on research that takes place at the college. There is a project in the final year which has 6 ECTS, however there is no course to cover research methods methodology. Projects were available in the library and were seen by the committee.

Strengths

- Application of participatory learning methods.
- Use of a functional educational platform in the delivery of the courses (Moodle).

- Provides hands-on experience in a professional kitchen environment.
- Offers opportunities for internships.
- Maintains relationships with industry professionals, providing networking opportunities for students and staff.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is strongly recommended to upgrade the learning outcomes of the programme to match level 6 requirements i.e. revise the programme of courses to enrich the curriculum with relevant scientific background, fine tune the subjects' sequence and reduce the elective courses.
- A subject on Fundamentals of Food Ingredients, which will familiarize students with the techno-functional properties and applications of elements such as the proteins, the emulsifiers and the thickening agents in food preparation, is deemed essential for the chefs.
- Subject such as sustainability, carbon zero practices, use of food waste for human consumption (up-cycling) should be introduced as well as circular economy
- Subjects such as nutrition, nutritional evaluation of meals to meet different consumer needs is under-represented and new modules should be introduced
- The general knowledge subjects that are not culinary arts related should be reduced and some such as psychology, should be contextualized to meet the skills and competences for the culinary arts management. As discussed above the behaviour change theories.
- Moreover, a course on the Technology and Quality Assessment of raw materials (dairy, fruits, fish, oil and fats, grains, meat) is also of essence. Some of those subjects are delivered as part of the practical, however the theory should stand on it's own.
- The content of each course should be proportional to the teaching hours and not too dense
- Care should be taken so that theoretical and laboratory courses are more well balanced.
- The participation in Internships of 3 summer periods should be revisited as explained above.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
2.2	Practical training	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
2.3	Student assessment	<i>Partially Compliant</i>

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

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *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.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

The Director along with the Department Heads, define the academic staff needs of the existing or new programs. By considering the academic staff needs, the existing academic staff resources, any academic staff departures, retirements, and promotions they estimate the College's specific recruitment needs.

The recruitment process is not clear, in comparison with staff promotion that the process is presented in a clear manner. The American College stipulate that promotion is not merely a matter of routine or seniority, but it is based primarily on merit. Promotional positions are filled based on competency, academic qualifications, experience, evidence of excellence in teaching and sustained commitment and dedication to the College, and advancement in rank depends upon the faculty member meeting specific criteria. Faculty members who consider themselves eligible for promotion must submit to the College Director a completed Faculty Application for Promotion accompanied by all necessary documents that demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria for appointment to rank and an up-to-date curriculum vitae inclusive of all the pertinent activities. The College Director forwards all completed applications to the members of the Faculty Promotion Committee who then hold one or more meetings for examining the application and all other related documents and decide for promotion with respect to the relevant criteria. The applicant may be interviewed by the committee if it considers this to be necessary. A written notice of the Faculty Promotion Committee's decision to award or deny a promotion must be given informing the applicant of the committee's decision. Promotions Faculty members have the right to appeal to a decision denying a promotion.

- Proper performance appraisal system is in place. This takes place once a year and the process is detailed in the handbook. Further needs for training and development may be

identified and actions are taken accordingly. Teaching staff are evaluated based on their performance in the classroom, their research and their service to the college.

- Teaching staff are given training on teaching and learning techniques, assessment, diversity among others.
- There is also a process of classroom observation, clearly explained in the handbook.
- The department heads are evaluated by other department heads.
- Teaching staff are also evaluated by students at the end of the semester on their knowledge, skills, delivery etc.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

The number of teaching staff is barely adequate for the programme and new personnel are needed so that a broad range of expertise is available throughout the programme. There is only one FT academic that teaches all culinary related subjects and one staff member employed for couple of hours per week to teach the subjects related to food science. The workload was found to be adequately reasonable for those who are not involved in any research projects.

The number of PT teaching staff outnumbers the FT. However, many of the PT staff are working on a fixed term contract (8 months).

- Teaching staff qualifications are up to date and in line with the training needs for the local labour market as they have professional experience in culinary arts.
- Recognised industrial representatives are included in the teaching of various courses in the programme to provide more industry-related knowledge.
- The teaching staff are regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development. Chef Lecturers are actively involved in projects such as competitions, delivering training to industry
- The main concern is that the teaching staff has limited qualifications to teach at higher level in the programme (i.e. Final/fourth year) where further research should be incorporated in the teaching and learning.
- There is no clear evidence that the number of teaching staff of culinary arts related courses is adequate.
- There is a clear and transparent system on how the workload is allocated based on teaching staff involvement in teaching and research.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Teaching staff with a PhD degree appear active with research publications, however the American College did not present any research activities that take place in relation to Culinary Arts Management. There are impressive publications within the scope of finance, management economics.

From the publication list only two articles were published at the national journal of Science that were food/culinary arts related (see below)

Charalambous, M. and Iacovou, C. (2021). Environmental and Sustainability Development in International Tourism and Hospitality Industry, The Cyprus Journal of Sciences, 19, pp. 3-14. (could not be accessed through google scholar or through the site of the journal)

Charalambous, M. and Iacovou, C. (2021). Healthy and Organic Foods and Drinks, The Cyprus Journal of Sciences, 19, pp. 15-26. (could not be accessed through google scholar or through the site of the journal)

The EEC would expect that the Culinary arts staff would be involved on those publications (opinion papers)

This is seen as a crucial aspect of their professional development, as well as a means to keep up-to-date with the latest findings and developments in their field. As such, staff should be provided with opportunities to engage in research activities, both during and outside of their regular work hours. To facilitate their research, teaching staff should be given several incentives. This could include additional hours in their workload, which can be used to conduct research or attend research-related meetings. Furthermore, teaching staff are offered support to attend and present at national and international conferences, as well as publish their research in journals, newspapers, or trade magazines. This support can come in the form of financial assistance to cover expenses such as travel, accommodation, and conference fees, as well as administrative support for preparing research papers for publication.

In short, teaching staff should be provided with further opportunities and incentives to engage with research. These opportunities not only benefit the staff themselves, but also have the potential to positively impact their students and the wider academic community.

Strengths

- The College has several staff that are well qualified in terms of their professional experience with background that covers the management needs of the underpinning programme. The staff engage with the industry and have current professional experience in the industry.
- Research is evident and encouraged within the staff group where they take part in conferences and seminars.
- There is good evidence of management support to professional development activities as team members already undertake further studies i.e. PG or PhDs and/or participate at Erasmus programme or undertake training on pedagogy.
- Student evaluation of academic staff is in place, with proper processes to use the data.
- There is evidence of motivation to conduct research as it is part of the evaluation process.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- If the Culinary Arts programme has full intakes over the year the staff may find that they are overloaded with teaching and coordination responsibilities. This will need support in managing and delivering the programme.
- There is limited staff that teaches modules for the culinary and food science, microbiology part of the course. More food science should be included, and specific subjects related to fish, meat science and also the emphasis should be placed on plant base diets, vegan dishes and also the nutrition of those diet choices.
- Nutrition as a subject that does not appear at the curriculum, this should be encouraged, other subjects such as circular economy, management of food waste and sustainable food resources should also be introduced.
- Most research is conducted by other members of staff that specialize in areas such as entrepreneurship, marketing. Even the journal is more generic and is not clearly linked to culinary arts research, however its existence is good as it encourages research. Research should be encouraged and supported for the food related subjects
- Academics teaching in the programme should be encouraged to conduct research relevant to their specialisation.
- Academic staff members should be encouraged to undertake further postgraduate studies in culinary arts management.

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	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	<i>Partially Compliant</i>

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

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*

- o *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

Findings

4.1. Student admission

Student admission requirements are effective and are publicly available. It is not clear whether a scoring system will be applied in the case of excess applications, which is not an issue currently. Admissions criteria are fair and consistent with other institutions offering level 6 degrees. There are also criteria for international students, including criteria for the English language skills.

4.2. Student progression

Keeping of digital records of the performance of students and graduates is done in a systematic way by the Secretariat. The pass grade is 60%.

Counseling is in place as there is an academic advising system in place. Academic advisors are responsible for monitoring students' performance and reporting any concerns or issues to the programme coordinator who offers such support to students as well. Discussion is also provided by individual course leaders who provide feedback to students on their performance and student experience. There are also mechanisms to offer social support.

Different committees are in place such as the Student Affairs Committee which includes student representatives (however the students could not identify such roles). Programme Committee meetings are also organised to discuss the programmes, their content, their delivery as well as any other issues raised by students and staff. All items are recorded and actions are taken when required.

4.3. Student recognition

The level of education offered corresponds to the (European) level 6 and full-time study of 8 semesters with 13 weeks of teaching per semester with 240 ECTS in total (European system of transfer and accumulation of credits).

Prior learning is recognized by the ECTS system applied, as there are top-up students who based on certain criteria are admitted to the programme.

4.4. Student certification

An example of a degree was available to the committee, its Greek-language version is missing.

Strengths

- The admission system is well defined aiming to select the most qualified students by establishing clear and effective admission criteria that consider academic performance, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and personal characteristics.
- The institution has put in place a variety of processes and tools for monitoring the progression of students. These tools and processes range from the use of student performance data to identify areas of concern, to the implementation of instructional interventions to address these concerns.
- Additionally, the institution has developed mechanisms for collecting and analyzing feedback from students and staff members in order to continuously improve these processes and tools. As a result, the institution is able to provide targeted support to students who are struggling and ensure that all students are progressing towards their academic goals.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is recommended to establish a system of incentives and rewards for students who consistently demonstrate exceptional academic performance. Such a system can have a significant positive impact on student motivation, engagement, and overall academic achievement. Rewards can take many forms, such as certificates of achievement, medals, scholarships, or special recognition at university events. By providing students with tangible and meaningful rewards for their hard work and dedication, we can help create a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.
- To promote excellence and continuous improvement, establish a system to improve grades in a few select subjects. Students could choose 2-3 subjects at the end of the spring semester that will reseat the September exams to improve grades. Ultimately, the goal is to help students reach their academic potential and foster a culture of academic excellence.

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	<i>Compliant</i>
4.2	Student progression	<i>Compliant</i>
4.3	Student recognition	<i>Compliant</i>
4.4	Student certification	<i>Compliant</i>

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

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible 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.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

Findings

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

- American College uses Moodle as a platform to upload teaching material, and ability to communicate with the students.
- All resources are fit for purpose, academic and administrative staff follow the approach of student-centered learning and providing flexible modes of learning and teaching, focusing on practical skills required for the profession.
- The list of books on culinary arts is limited. Further resources on culinary arts management and marketing could be added.
- Students are provided with notes, further reading and other sources via the VLE (moodle).
- The students have access to the library, which provides computers and books, as well as access to ProQuest (accessible only on campus).

5.2 Physical resources

- The department provides computer rooms and lecture rooms fitted with appropriate links to computers and opportunities for recordings.

- There is a gym and other facilities for students such as cafeteria, game room etc.
- The restaurant is used only for teaching purposes which does not allow students to experience real working environments.
- There are computer rooms, one room that used as pastry and cooking kitchen.
- The pastry kitchen facilities are compromised as marble benches are not provided and are quite essential for the tempering of chocolate or to prepare other foods for the party.
- The room is not under temperature control which is required for the pastry kitchen. In many colleges and education providers for the culinary arts the rooms between kitchen/larder and pastry are separated. One of the important elements to separate them is the temperature that the two practices need, the pastry kitchen needs air-conditioning and marble surfaces to keep the ingredients cool (puff pastry). Another element it is the microbial cross contamination that could occur, as the kitchen/larder includes ingredients that carry high number of pathogens (i.e. raw chicken), which is not an issue as those ingredients are cooked before their consumption. At the pastry kitchen the microbial load is rather small, and many dishes do not require cooking to reduce the microbial count, making the final product to be high risk a could cause food poisoning. It is important to make sure that the kitchen should be cleaned thoroughly after use to avoid cross contamination. It is important though to demonstrate to the students' good hygiene practice, as the kitchens and benches at the restaurant should also follow the hygiene rules and should be kept separate. The EEC would suggest that the American college to re-install the kitchen that was converted to the classroom and be the pastry kitchen to act as an 'example to follow' for good hygiene practices. The EEC understand that the needs of the College might have changed, however the needs of the culinary arts should also be prioritized.

5.3 Human support resources

- All human support resources, practices, policies are in place.
- There is very good support system for students' wellbeing, academic experience, student life and academic learning.
- There is very good engagement in volunteerism.

5.4 Student support

- Students are informed about all the existing policies in the student handbook as well as at events that are organized by admin support staff with emphasis on the beginning of the semester via an orientation. Similar support is offered to international students, with additional support to go through immigration processes, accommodation etc.

Strengths

- The group is well resourced financially, and supports the welfare of the students.

- The future plans of the College are also ambitious and in line with current governments’ projections in relation to number of tourists and targets and graduate employment skills.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The work in the restaurant, pastry and bakery is embedded in the curriculum to integrate further the practical with the theoretical aspect of the programme and its delivery. However, there is emphasis on the practical aspect and skills development rather than theoretical underpinning and the business/management element of such programmes.
- The facilities and equipment for the practical aspect of the courses could be updated
- The pastry kitchen can be separated at a place of it’s own rights as there are specific requirements for those to be separate and enhance student experience as well as to demonstrate good practice for their future professionals
- There can be more evidence of how the practicals are organized and managed.

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	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
5.2	Physical resources	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
5.3	Human support resources	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
5.4	Student support	<i>Compliant</i>

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

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*
 - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
 - *support for writing research papers*
 - *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

D. Conclusions and final remarks

- The programme has to culinary arts focused, using less general modules (courses, such as Principles of Sociology, history of Cyprus, Advanced English and advanced French. Those subjects are not related, neither contextualized
- Extra modules specific related to culinary arts could be introduced i.e. nutrition, food science further, processing, sustainability, food waste, plant base diets and plant based proteins
- The internship should carry ECTs and the learning outcomes should be related to the level that the internship take place
- The LO could be reviewed to reflect the academic level offered
- Specialized staff could be included to fit the needs of the new modules offered
- The facilities and kitchen/pastry should be reviewed to re-introduce equipment (marble tops) or separate the facilities (pastry and kitchen/larder)
- Research should be encouraged and supported to include the food element



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Amalia Tsiami	
Lia Marinakou	
George Tsiamis	
Niki Makri	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 06/06/2023