

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):** BUSINESS
- **Department/ Sector:** BUSINESS
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

## In Greek:

ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑ ΣΤΗ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ (2 χρόνια,  
120 ECTS)

## In English:

DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (2 years,  
120 ECTS)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** ENGLISH
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [[L.136\(I\)/2015 – L.132\(I\)/2021](#)].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The site visit at the American College in Nicosia took place on 26 November 2024. The members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met with Dr Marios Amerikanos, Head of the Institution, Dr Andreas Petasis, Director of Academic Affairs, and Dr Charalambos Louca, Head of Department and Chair of Internal Quality Assurance Committee, in the morning, as well as representatives of the relevant Departments and the Coordination Committee. Presentations about the American College as well as the Program evaluated here were given by College representatives. The EEC members also met with nine teaching staff, comprising both full-time and part-time teaching staff, covering both a variety of business core modules and general education modules, for example English.

After the lunch break, the EEC met with two external stakeholder representatives, both managers of companies and potential employers of graduates of the American College. Furthermore, in the afternoon, the EEC met with seven student representatives, all of them students of the four-year Bachelor in Business Administration program with two of them international students. A lesson was observed (MGT315 Business Research) as well as the College premises toured, including the computer laboratories and the library. The EEC also met with Mr Tasos Anastasiou, Director of Admissions, and Mr Vasilis Cleopa, Director of Administration, and Mrs Elli Kounnas, the Student Welfare Officer.

Before the site visit, the detailed Application for Evaluation – Accreditation Program of Study was shared and carefully reviewed by the EEC members.

Overall, the materials, the presentations in the morning, and the availability and willingness of a large number of College representatives to answer questions and provide clarification, enabled the EEC members to get a good picture of the structure, teaching approaches and policies, infrastructure, and facilities of the American College.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Christian Asmussen (chair)</b>	Professor of Strategic and International Management	Copenhagen Business School
<b>Johann Fortwengel</b>	Reader in International Management	King's College London
<b>Edgar Löw</b>	Professor of Accounting	Frankfurt School of Finance and Management
<b>Natasa Karletidou</b>	PhD Candidate in Business Administration	University of Cyprus
<b>Name</b>	Position	University
<b>Name</b>	Position	University

## 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**

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *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*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
  - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
  - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
  - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
  - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
  - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

### 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*

*In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that*

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

## 1.4 Information management

### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - *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*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*



- Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?
- Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?
- How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?
- How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?
- What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?
- How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?
- **How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?**
- What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?
- Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?
- How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?
- Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?
- What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?
- How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?
- How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?
- In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?
- How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?

## 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.*

Processes are in place to ensure internal quality assurance. There are some quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and management of the program of study.

Information about the programme's purpose, objectives, and intended learning outcomes, structure, and content is available online, as well as a list of teaching staff and their areas of expertise. There is also a description of admissions criteria and procedures, career prospects and access to further studies, as well as testimonials from alumni.

Internally, information is collected about student dropout rates after each year of the programme. These numbers are examined every two years and corrective action is taken if they deviate from certain benchmarks. Information is also collected on graduates, about how many go on to further studies, are employed full time, and are employed in a sector relevant to their studies.

There is correspondence between the ECTS of each course and the workload across different activities, such as lectures, coursework, exams, etc.

When it comes to the structure of the program and the electives, there are numerous very useful modules that are directly related to a degree program.

## Strengths

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

The American College has a long experience in delivering educational programs in business administration. Previous programs were also accredited by the Ministry's former accreditation process. Most of the faculty teaching staff has adequate practical experience (some of them working part time in industry in addition to teaching at the college) which ensures a good balance between theory and practice. The programme is managed by very dedicated and capable individuals, with long expertise and committed to the successful fulfilment of their roles. Public information about the programme is generally clear and comprehensive.

The qualities of the programme is closely linked to the strengths and weaknesses of the college as an institution. Compared to competing (often larger) institutions and programmes, the college benefits from its limited size and scope as well as its informal organizational culture. This is clearly a deliberate strategy that differentiates the college and its programmes from the competition. This enables the small class sizes (stimulating interactive learning) and facilitates active "caring" for students' welfare and educational experience. In that way, there is a close interaction between college administrative staff, faculty and students, who can easily bring up problems that can then be addressed quickly.

The students (of the bachelor's programme) found that the college systems are supportive, and the programme is flexible and comfortable. For example, they found the admission process to be relatively easy.

In general, the delivery of education in the programme seems to work smoothly and effectively and with good quality.

### 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 following are suggestions for further improvement of the programme.

Stakeholders are included in the programme design in terms of providing occasional input, but it could be an advantage to further formalize this process by, for example, establishing an advisory board of practitioners who regularly take stock of the fit of the programme with employer needs. Also, one could include alumni more actively and strategically such that the students are exposed to them and can draw on their experience.

It could be more clearly communicated which courses are actually compulsory (i.e. courses that all students have to take). One might get the impression that students can freely mix and match in each of the course categories to get a certain number of ECTS, but since some courses serve as prerequisites for others, there are unarticulated constraints on this choice (which is not a bad thing).

The limited scale and informal culture of the college (see strengths) also has potential risks, as the lack of formalized processes makes the outcomes highly reliant on some very competent and dedicated individuals. Hence, formalizing certain things could be useful next steps. One example is the management of overlap, synergies, and progression between courses: the students do not perceive this as a problem, but there may be unexploited opportunities to increase the cohesion between the courses, for example having an annual workshop with teaching staff where linkages between courses are explicitly identified and developed. Another example is to give the students “feedback on their feedback”, so that they have an idea how their input into the programme is being used by faculty and programme coordinators, thereby enhancing the motivation to give detailed and constructive feedback.

Also, the flipside of the limited size is that the programme does not enjoy the scale economies that a larger programme would. Hence, with increased student numbers, the college could finance more services and facilities (for example, digital services, software, upgraded library facilities, sports, etc.). As there is also unexploited capacity at the college, aiming for a modest growth in students (for example with geographically targeted marketing of the programme) might generate additional resources (see also section 5) while mitigating risks from the changing competitive landscape faced by the college.

On a more detailed level, the structure of the program objectives could be reconsidered. The program is aimed at students aiming to getting a diploma and prepares them for the labor market or to continue studying a bachelor programme, which is why objective (2) on “principles, policies, and theories” (and practical implementation) in this field could well be given first place.

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

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

### **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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

### **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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

## 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.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*



- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

### 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.*

The program is aligned with the learning objectives, and the modules offered have a wide variety of teaching methods and learning resources, such as slides, videos, and interactive elements. The materials shared with students are comprehensive and accessible, and they support the learning effectively. Where appropriate, insights from research and practice are used to design and deliver the modules. In that sense, research-based teaching falls on teaching staff, and the programme coordinators allow and urge staff to use research in their teaching. There is variation across courses in the sense that some teaching staff bring research into the classroom, and others more practical experience.

The American College applies the ECTS system, and modules are generally given 6 ECTS, which helps students to navigate the program and administrators to manage it. The learning materials are provided to students via the Moodle learning platform.

The assessment is appropriate and comprises both formative and summative assessment. Modules generally have multiple forms of summative assessment, which helps reduce student anxiety because the final grade is not solely determined by the performance in one assessment. A typical assessment structure in a module comprises coursework (with a 50% weighting) and a final exam (again, 50% weighting). Students reported that they receive information and guidance on the assessment in a timely and appropriate fashion, and that they are generally content with the grading process and feel that the outcomes are fair.

### Strengths

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

Commendable are the clearly laid out learning objectives, the student-centered teaching, and the generally high level of enthusiasm and commitment of the teaching staff. Teaching staff enjoys a high degree of academic freedom

in the way they plan, deliver, and assess their content. The Director of Academic Affairs ensures that the assessment patterns are appropriate and that they are balanced across modules at program level. The students receive high level of support, both in terms of their teaching and learning experience, as well as outside of the College, for example, the College provides assistance with finding accommodation and helps navigate the visa process for international students. Where appropriate, students are involved in small research projects and invited to attend local and even international conferences. Students also have advisors which provide guidance on academic matters, for example module selection. Students are invited to evaluate modules and teaching staff, which is an important quality control mechanism of the American College. The College also offers training for teaching as part of its personal development offering to staff, bringing in external instructors.

A strength of the program is its small size, which enables a decentralized, flexible, and more informal way of running the program. It also facilitates the creation of a cohesive student cohort.

### 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.*

Given the small size of the program, formal processes and systems are not appropriate, but the EEC would recommend considering the implementation of more informal fora where teaching staff and administrators could share information and good practice examples.

The links of the College to the local industry / market could be further improved, for example, by bringing in external guest speakers. This would help substantiate the links to practice of the content delivered, and it would also help students find internships and employment after their graduation.

The material shared with the EEC includes short biographies of the teaching staff. However, it appears that not all teaching staff were mentioned, for example in the areas of accounting and auditing. Also, for others it might be helpful – in case these short biographies are offered to (potential) students as well – to highlight the connection to business administration of those lecturers where the relationship is not obvious (or the connection to the respective module is not seen from previous business experience or research interests).

There are quite a few extra-curricular activities offered, and because of the relatively small size of the College it is difficult to offer much more here, such as sports clubs. However, students could be encouraged to contribute to volunteering activities, for example helping children with their homework. This might be one additional mechanism for the College to contribute to society.

Finally, the EEC encourages the College to strengthen the relationship to alumni of the program. Alumni could be invited to give guest talks to current students, and they might also help find employment of graduates and overall help further strengthen the reputation of the American College and the program.

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



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

#### 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.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

### 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.*

Full-time staff has adequate qualifications. Most of them hold PhD degrees from foreign institutions and some are active in practice-oriented research (also in attending conferences, and have a good understanding of the value of doing research for an educational institution). The staff have good English language skills.

In addition, they seem to be pleased with their working conditions and the overall College working environment. They all appear to take teaching seriously. The staff is categorized into the standard four academic ranks and promotion is based on teaching performance, research performance and administrative work. The college is supportive to research and offers initiatives for faculty members in case of research performance, (reduction of teaching load, recognition etc.).

Faculty research activity varies, but is facilitated by several initiatives. The college has research collaboration and faculty exchange with the University of Aegean. Visiting faculty has been brought into the classroom from this

university, as well as from the Hellenic Army Academy, and from some universities in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the college publishes the "Cyprus Journal of Sciences" which is a peer-reviewed academic journal and faculty members are encouraged to submit their research for publication to the journal.

### Strengths

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

There appears to be a good balance between young and experienced faculty members. The faculty seems to be well-integrated and on good working terms. The experienced faculty have been with the College for a long time, which implies a good working environment that is beneficial to the program.

Furthermore, it seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. There is also a good process of evaluation of the faculty by both students and the Head of the Department. Moreover, faculty members are asked to evaluate their own courses and revise their teaching material. This was often reported and mentioned during our field visit.

### 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.*

Although the teaching is monitored (and evaluated by students) it might be fruitful to implement an instructor conference once a year as mentioned also in section 1. That might increase the understanding of the general program and slight changes over time and avoid potential overlaps. It also increases the team spirit of the instructors of the program.

Faculty research activities could be further promoted and integrated into the classroom in a consistent way.

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	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

#### 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

##### Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

##### 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*
  - *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.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

##### 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.*

Members of the EEC met with seven students, all of which were students in the four-year Bachelor in Business Administration program (no students from the degree programme), and we asked them about their motivations to come to American College, their experience, what they liked and disliked, and any ideas for further improvement. We noticed that the students, local students and two international students, were quite responsive, engaged, and willing to share their views openly.

The American College has clearly defined admission standards and criteria for this program. Student progression is monitored and data collected, for example on drop-out / withdrawal numbers across years. Students are supported in a variety of ways, including through the student advisor system, and international students receive significant support during the application and admission process, including navigating medical, visa, and housing processes. International students are also one primary beneficiary group of scholarships and financial aid provisions.'

##### Strengths

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

A consistent observation is that the American College is very student oriented. For example, classes are offered at different times during the day and in the evening, in order to accommodate the preferences and schedules of

students (due for example to work commitments), and students reported that they very much appreciate this flexibility, and that it was one of the reasons for them to apply to the American College in the first place.

More specifically, a strength in this area is the system of student advisors, which facilitates the provision of individualized and targeted advice given to students as they navigate their studies.

The recognition of prior learning and credentials is based on a sound system. Furthermore, students have different mechanisms available to them to communicate their feedback to the College. There are more formal mechanisms, such as the module teaching evaluations, as well as more informal mechanisms, including via the College's Marketing Manager, who is very approachable and happy to pass on student feedback to College representatives for actioning.

### 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 would recommend that the American College actively tries to increase the number of applications. Currently, the College is not very selective in making offers and generally admits students as long as they pass the minimum requirements and standards, as is necessary to reach the target number of enrolled students. As the College is considering modest growth over the next few years, and with possible regulatory changes that may increase competition in the space, it would be advisable to slowly build up a buffer as a risk management strategy by trying to attract more applicants. This would help ensure the long-term viability and provision of the program.

Furthermore, the EEC would recommend the College to consider monitoring the success and employment outcomes of the graduates after their graduation. This would also help build an alumni cohort, which could support teaching via guest lectures, employment outcomes via the provision of internships and jobs, as well as the gradual build-up of reputation and standing of the American College in the local community.

Another recommendation, also mentioned in section 1, would be to feedback to students what actions have been taken, if any, in response to student evaluations of the teaching provided. Even if no actions were necessary because of positive evaluations, it might be nice for students to have evidence that the feedback they give and student voice more generally is taken seriously and acted on, to the extent necessary and as appropriate.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant



## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

### **Sub-areas**

#### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **5.2 Physical resources**

#### **5.3 Human support resources**

#### **5.4 Student support**

### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **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.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

### 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.*

During our visit to the College, the EEC had the opportunity to visit several facilities, including two cafeterias, three computer labs, the library and classrooms. One of the computer labs was in use, and the students appeared highly engaged, suggesting that the equipment in that lab is functional and meets their needs.

The students can access the e-library, this access is currently limited to the College's premises. Additionally, the College's fitness centre is a valuable resource for promoting students' health and well-being. The College also participates in the Erasmus student mobility program, collaborating with 40 partner institutions. Also, a teaching staff member and three students had the opportunity to visit Lisbon for a project. According to a student, all students were equally informed about this opportunity and student were selected with no evidence of discrimination. Students are allowed to use AI in their work.

**Strengths**

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

The College has a publication list with staff publications, presenting their academic contributions. During the interview, it was mentioned that new equipment was installed, and the computer lab was recently updated. There are key documents including the student compliance policy, student orientation handbook, disability handbook, student marking policy and faculty portfolios. It is very important that there are Erasmus collaborations and partnerships with other institutions and that the College enables other students to study at the college as Erasmus students (who are not required to pay tuition fees). This promotes international collaborations and cultural exchange. Teaching staff use 'Moodle' to upload resources while one member of staff mentioned a variety of resources are used to enhance teaching and learning as well as engagement, such as videos and crosswords.

**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.*

Although the use of AI in students work is promoted, there is no official policy on this. Therefore, a policy needs to be put in place to ensure any risks of misuse while maintaining academic integrity. Furthermore, students expressed a desire for improvement to the cafeteria and suggested the possibility of free parking. Also, students suggested the introduction of sports clubs.

We also noted that the library's book collection requires regular updates, with resources/books suggested from tutors to ensure it remains relevant and up to date with current knowledge. Also, expanding remote access to the e-library would greatly benefit students by providing more flexibility and convenience in their studies.

**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	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### **Sub-areas**

#### **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**

#### **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**

#### **6.3 Supervision and committees**

### **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**

#### **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?
- Are the criteria reflected in 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		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

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

The program at the American College is mostly compliant with the requirements in the assessment of the EEC. In a changing competitive landscape, it has unique strengths from its small size and informal organizational culture, but this also creates challenges in terms of scale economies and reliance on individuals rather than formal processes. We recognize the limitations and the tradeoffs faced by college and do not recommend that the college deviates dramatically from its deliberate strategy, which seems to be working well currently. Our recommendations rather reflect ways to mitigate risks within the current strategy and strive for a bit more scale, coordination, and socialization to complement the high degree of decentralization.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Christian Asmussen	
Johann Fortwengel	
Edgar Löw	
Natasa Karletidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

**Date:** November 27, 2024