

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

In Greek:

Δίπλωμα στη Διοίκηση Τουρισμού

In English:

Diploma in Tourism Management

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Pending accreditation



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





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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

- **Introduction**

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

In preparation for the visit, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had reviewed the documentation supplied and the publicly available information provided on the College’s web site.

The visit took place virtually and specifically through a Zoom meeting on the 4th of March 2021. We were welcomed by Dr. Marios Amerikanos, the Director of the College alongside Tourism, Hotel Management and Business Faculty members. The American College members introduced themselves and with a brief presentation shared information on the institution’s general procedures, research and academic activities and exchange programmes.

The discussions encompassed the programme’s standards, admission criteria for prospective students such as the high school certifications that differ in every country and how the college maintains its standards. Finally, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programme’s design and development were discussed to complete the morning sessions.

The second half of the visit began with a discussion with several students of the College’s Tourism Diploma. This provided valuable insight but there was some disquiet at students being physically present at the institution and that there were staff within earshot of what was intended to be a private meeting.

The EEC met a selection of administrative staff followed by a meeting with the Librarian and the Information Technology Officer. The visit concluded with further discussions with senior college staff.

Throughout the conversations, the personnel of American College were candid in their answers and provided additional information on request.

- **External Evaluation Committee (EEC)**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Alexander Josiasson	Director of Tourism Center and Professor	Copenhagen Business School
Dagmar Lund-Durlacher	Professor, Department of Tourism and Service Management	Modul University Vienna
Rhodri Thomas	Dean of School and Professor	Leeds Beckett University
Andreas Polykarpou	Undergraduate	University Of Cyprus

- **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:*
 - *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.*

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?*

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.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

The College has a formal policy on quality assurance. The relevant policy document supplied prior to our visit explains the 'principles, procedures and administrative practice upon which the College's academic quality mechanisms are based'. Although helpful in some matters, the document's brevity means that key aspects of the quality assurance processes that would be expected are absent e.g. assessment regulations, committee and reporting structures and details of how reviews will be undertaken. We were assured the College engaged in many activities associated with quality assurance in an informal and, perhaps at times, *ad hoc* manner. The Organization, Administration and Faculty Handbook suggests a more systematic approach. We were furnished with sample minutes of meetings but these are very brief which makes it difficult to evaluate the breadth and depth of staff engagement on some aspects

As the College does not require students to submit their work electronically, they do not operate a related system for checking the authenticity of work. They appear to rely on individual tutor vigilance. A more formal and technologically based approach to academic integrity is desirable. The College has a policy concerning disabled students but has no disabled student enrolled at the moment. We found no evidence of associated monitoring of applications or offers/ acceptances from past years. We found minimal evidence of external stakeholder involvement in the design, delivery or quality monitoring of this course.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

There were vague responses to questions concerning the design of this course. Notwithstanding the general statements in the supporting documentation about learning from other institutions and stakeholders, we could find no evidence of the collation of this information or specific examples. The

course learning outcomes as currently expressed are problematic in four ways. First, they vary in their level of generality/ specificity. Secondly, some refinement of the language leading into each learning outcome is desirable; perhaps revising the initial statement ('Upon successful completion...' so that it either ends with 'will be able to:' or 'will have gained' or similar). Thirdly, they do not reflect the breadth of aspiration identified during our visit; they do not, for example, reflect the interests of various stakeholders (notwithstanding claims about the promotion of sustainable tourism). Finally, it would be possible for a student to avoid courses that would then prevent them from achieving the overall learning outcomes. Each of these should be reviewed with a view to revision.

We found some evidence of periodic assessment of the programme but cannot vouch for the thoroughness of such a process in the absence of documentary (or verbal) evidence.

Typically study programs like this would have a mandatory thesis, internship and stronger engagement with the industry. Nowadays it is surprising to find a degree program in tourism management which isn't inflected with the concerns of sustainability.

1.3 Public Information

The University's website offers very basic information on the university, admissions, the study programs, student affairs, research of faculty members, the ERASMUS mobility program and certification. While admissions criteria and process are outlined well including the provision of application forms, the study program's outline lacks comprehensiveness and clarity and only provides a limited overview about the program's structure. The section "Academic affairs" provides a rough guidance to students on the organization of the study program, assessment regulations etc., issues which should be regulated clearly in official documents mentioned in 1.1. Information on career prospects for students as well as cooperation with the tourism industry are not available on the website. Although mentioned as a 'Strongpoint', there is no further information provided on the career office.

There is no downloadable information brochure with further information on the study program available (such as the brochure of the Master in Business Administration downloadable from the 'Admission' section).

1.4 Information management

The approach to the management information lacks the sophistication that might reasonably be expected of a college of this kind. There appears to be little systematic gathering and analysis of key data relating to student performance. Similarly, although students evaluate courses, we were not granted access to the formal collation of results (if they exist) or examples of how practice improved as a result. It might be that as the college is small, higher levels of informal evaluation takes place. This should be reviewed because there are dangers of discriminatory practices, for example, being overlooked.

There appeared to be robust administrative system for maintaining student records.

Strengths

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

Small class sizes.

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.

- Documentation relating to quality assurance is fragmented. Development of a more comprehensive policy document on quality assurance, that is separate from the staff handbook.
- How learning outcomes are expressed should be consistent and reflect the core aspirations of the programme more effectively. Further, learning outcomes may not be achieved if students make certain choices. Review and revise learning outcomes so that there is a consistent level of specificity/ generality, and to ensure that the initial statement ('Upon successful completion...' either ends with 'will be able to:' or 'will have gained').
- Academic staff did not always know all aspects of the College's approach to quality assurance. An on-going programme of staff development that ensures full understanding and implementation of quality assurance processes.
- Study programme should be reviewed.
- Improvement of the university website. In particular more information on the study program (downloadable brochure including information on program structure, content, organization, student body, internship and exchange opportunities, career prospects etc.) and career opportunities should be provided.

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	<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

- 2.1 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.*

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.*

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.

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

The approach to teaching appeared to be very traditional with little evidence of innovative methods. We found little evidence of student-centred approaches to teaching and learning or a significant emphasis on developing independent learners. The class videos with which we were supplied suggested competence and the familiarity with relevant material that would be expected.

Based on interviews with students, it was clear that some site visits take place. It did not appear that any visiting academics had been used to provide guest lectures.

Comment was made, however, that more activities were needed for students in class. The fact that class sizes are quite small provides a base for a more personalised learning experience.

All modules announced in the online semester schedule were based on 3 hour teaching blocks with a 15 minute break in the middle. There has been a move away from such long teaching blocks at many institutions in order to maintain greater student attention.

Offering other opportunities for work-based learning would be advantageous. Emerging strategic partnerships and improving relations with employers which have been discussed during the presentations might be a way of facilitating such developments.

2.2 Practical training

Practical training is limited as there are no work-based courses. Moreover, we found only rare examples of integrating practice into the learning of students. This tended to be limited to guest speakers, visits and some classroom-based case study material.

2.3 Student assessment

Student assessment reflected what we understand to be legal requirements. Each course followed a standard pattern of course work and examination with the final exam carrying a weight of 50%. This leads to significant time spent on assessment. We found little evidence of 'authentic' (ie tied to real-world practice) assessment. Although the Committee were assured that assessment criteria were used, we were not supplied with any as part of the evaluation. We also understand that a process of moderation/ sample double-marking has recently been introduced.

We have been provided with three copies of written exams containing multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. The assessments that were viewed seemed of a relatively low quality, providing a somewhat simplistic overview of the topic. The feedback provided was sound.

Strengths

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

Excellent class sizes.

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 programme is traditionally taught with no identifiable examples of the adoption of progressive or innovative approaches. This in turn makes it questionable how student centered the teaching approach is. Consideration should be given to moving away from the traditional didactic approach to teaching to a more interactive teaching style.
- Consideration should also be given to varying activities in the 3-hour teaching blocks (even with a break in the middle).
- More variety in assessment techniques would be of benefit. The exams viewed were all multiple-choice format or open-ended questions, which is only appropriate for testing some dimensions of knowledge. The topics on the assignments that were viewed seemed quite descriptive.
- Based on the assignments viewed, more training on report writing would be appropriate.
- There appears to be a heavy reliance on exams throughout the program. There is increasing concern globally that exams are not the best way to assess student knowledge but it is recognised that the use of exams in all modules may reflect rules and cultural issues.
- In order to align the programme with contemporary practice, we recommend a programme of intelligence gathering (practice in highly regarded schools or departments) and training for staff. In addition, the production of a standard approach to assessment criteria is recommended, consideration of more innovative teaching and assessment methods, the introduction of teaching and assessment linked to practical situations.

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	<i>Compliant</i>
2.2	Practical training	<i>Not applicable</i>
2.3	Student assessment	<i>Compliant</i>

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.

There are 28 full-time staff and 19 part-time teaching faculty members. Of these 32 have a PhD and 15 have a Masters. In general, teaching seems to be considered the main focus with the reward system set up to promote this. Other tasks of staff are research, service and administration. Our impression is that teaching is mainly undertaken using classroom lectures.

Strengths

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

It is encouraging that there is an awareness of the benefits to be gained by ensuring a link between research specialty and courses taught.

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.

- In terms of promotion, it was our impression that seniority and length of service is important (perhaps also for cultural reasons). We recommend greater focus on merit demonstrated against a set of transparent criteria.
- The EEC recommends that teaching becomes research-driven to a higher degree, and to support this it is important that research is particularly recognized.
- Consideration should be given to how teacher training could become institutionalised.

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

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

- Admission practices for students are consistent, transparent and publicised on the website. The required English language proficiency level is at the lower end (IELTS 5.0). If students fail the College's own English Language Placement test, they can take the foundation course.

4.2. Student progression

- Students receive an orientation programme at the beginning of each semester. Also a student orientation handbook is available.
- The assigned academic advisor plays a central role in monitoring and supporting students progress. Academic advisors provide individual support to plan students' course schedule in order to fulfil the graduation requirements and assist students in setting educational and career goals.

- Student progress is monitored by mainly three types of assessments: coursework, homework and a final exam with a weight of 50% (due to national law). There are basic feedback loops with for example discussions of assignments in class.
- Student performance is monitored and discussed in the Academic Committee meeting.
- Some effort is made to track the performance of graduates and an alumni network is in place.
- Special needs of students are taken into consideration and students have the opportunity to provide feedback on the module and teacher performance.
- Only a very small percentage of students drop out from the programme.

4.3. Student recognition

- Clear processes are in place to recognise prior learning and to give appropriate credit transfers (Director of Admission, Website).

4.4. Student certification

- The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS is in place. Syllabi, and transcripts indicate the ECTS credits. A diploma supplement is issued together with the certificate.

Strengths

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

- The programme participates in Erasmus+, which enables student mobility.
- Individual study support is provided by academic advisors.

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Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Increase the English Language Proficiency level at least to IELTS 5.5.

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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)

Findings

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

We were of the view that the college has adequate resources to deliver this programme. This includes the physical environment (incorporating computer laboratories and other technical spaces). The library is inevitably limited but access is provided to online learning resources as would be expected. As teaching appears to be approached in a traditional face-to-face classroom format, this puts little strain on the more innovative and costly ICT infrastructure and learning resources. It is probable that the College will need to review its investment in learning technology if it is to stay in step with international practice. At the moment, it emphasises the role of tourism-related technology in one or two modules.

We were provided with an instrument (a form) for measuring student satisfaction with facilities and services and one set of results. We were not shown examples of changed practice as a result of feedback.

5.2 Physical resources

It was difficult to judge the quality of the physical resources because our evaluation involved a virtual tour. From what we saw, however, the physical space appeared to be of an appropriate standard. This included classrooms, a computer and other miscellaneous parts of the estate.

5.3 Human support resources

The college has a stable base of academics who appear to have their activities calibrated by a workload model that incorporates teaching, service and research. This allows for the professional development of employees via research and employer engagement activities which are, in turn, likely to invigorate various courses. Staff were generally well qualified with a substantial number at doctoral level. Tourism-related research outputs tended not to be of an international standard but that is not necessarily unusual for small or niche providers of this kind. Some conference participation is funded by the college.

There appeared to be staff resources available to support the pastoral and academic needs of students. Similarly, we were assured that there was sufficient resource to support the delivery and evaluation of this programme.

5.4 Student support

Students are supported via a network of academic tutors who are available for individual students. Our impression was that individual course tutors were helpful and supportive. We could not identify, however, evidence of a systematic assessment and resultant provision of support to address the potentially diverse needs of their student population. We found little evidence of formalised support associated with mental health, disability or anything more than routine pastoral needs of students. It is our understanding that formal evaluation from students is confined to individual courses and not support services.

We found some - albeit limited - evidence of support for students' mobility across higher education services.

Strengths

We did not find substantial evidence of innovation or good practice in terms of learning resources apart from our sense of an attempt to create an informal and approachable learning environment associated with small courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

We found limited evidence of activities associated with innovation in teaching, learning and assessment. We recommend that a systematic programme is introduced so that tutors become more acquainted with new techniques and find ways of applying them on this programme.

The identification of factors influencing, and perhaps impeding, the learning of students relies on informal processes and limited student representation on an academic committee. The issues considered are likely to be constrained by such an approach. We recommend that a more expansive system of student consultation and support be adopted.

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>Compliant</i>
5.2	Physical resources	<i>Compliant</i>
5.3	Human support resources	<i>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	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

7. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement
- 7.2 The joint programme

7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
 - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*

- *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
- *Admission and selection procedures for students*
- *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
- *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
- *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

7.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*



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>
7	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Choose answer
7.2	The joint programme	Choose answer

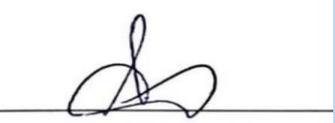
● **Conclusions and final remarks**

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 EEC welcomed the enthusiasm and commitment to students shown by the college. In order to improve the quality of provision and to ensure that it remains relevant, we urge them to adopt the recommendations made in this report and the College should, in particular:

- Develop a more comprehensive policy document on quality assurance that is separate from the staff handbook.
- Review and revise programme learning outcomes.
- Inculcate a culture whereby quality assurance and innovations in education are more evident.
- enhance the information available on the website for the benefit of potential students and current students.
- Adopt modern teaching methods.
- Become an active member of the Erasmus programme for both staff and students.

- **Signatures of the EEC**

Name	Signature
Alexander Josiasson	
Dagmar Lund-Durlacher	
Rhodri Thomas	
Andreas Polykarpou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 10/3-2021