

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

# External Evaluation Report (Programmatic)

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

## In Greek:

Διεύθυνση Ξενοδοχείων

## In English:

Hotel Management

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status**  
**New programme:** No  
**Currently operating:** Yes



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].



## A. Introduction

The evaluation of the Programme on Hotel Management of the KES College was based on the report produced by the institution. Evaluation meetings took place online on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September. The KES College did several presentations and, hence, further information was collected to complement the information available in the report.

The document prepared by the College is rich and clear in its contents and organisation, providing the necessary information to conduct a detailed evaluation. The management staff promptly answered all questions raised by the EEC, and was willing to implement the suggestions advanced by the EEC.



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Carlos Costa</b>	Full Professor	University of Aveiro
<b>Nevenka Cavlek</b>	Full Professor	University of Zagreb
<b>Theodoros A. Stavrinoudis</b>	Associate Professor	University of the Aegean
<b>Dimitris Hajisavvas</b>	Student	Cyprus University of Technology



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



## 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

The College has got a formal and objective Internal Quality Assurance (QA) system that takes into account ESG standards and national regulations (approved in May, 2015 by the Ministry of Higher Education). It consists of 7 College's staff members plus a student's representative. It operates within quality objectives set up and reviewed annually with the aim to establish a proper quality culture at the College, and the commitment to continual enhancement is clear. It supports teaching, administrative staff and students in their responsibilities in quality assurance. The programme regularly undergoes through annual internal and regular external reviews. The Programme Coordinator holds monthly meetings with the teaching staff and an effective delivery of the programme is constantly monitored. At the end of each semester the teaching staff provides suggestions for further improvements of the programme. An assessment of the quality of teaching is completed by the KES College Education Personnel and necessary actions are taken accordingly. The student voice is heard on a regular basis both informally and through formal QA process, including end of module questionnaires, student attendance at meetings, student mentorship. The College also claims that the stakeholders from outside of the College are included into the programme design and review process, but these inputs have not been formalised yet from the point of view of knowledge assimilation and procession. Measures are taken against plagiarism.

### 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The 3-year Higher Diploma in Hotel Management is a full-time vocational programme delivered in English language over 6 semesters (3 years) 180 ECTS, plus an optional foundation year. In 2019/2020 it had 150 students enrolled in the programme. The programme's aims are to prepare students to develop a career in hospitality and tourism at the local or international market by providing them with the necessary academic and technical skills. Having said that, it appears somehow strange that the College, which **aspires to become a leader in hotel management vocational education**, sends such a general message which does not emphasise their major competitive advantage (USP) over the main competitors. The curriculum is not streamlined towards tourism, but as is it should be – towards hotel management.

The programme of study is focusing on knowledge, skills and understanding of hotel industry business world. The course structure of the programme is divided into core courses and elective courses (foreign languages – French and Russian). The student internship is obligatory and takes place in summer months (before the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> semester) and is awarded by 8 ECTS in total. The internship responds closely to corporate needs and is a guarantee of *in situ* learning for the students. The programme also includes undergraduate assignment which consists of Final Project I (in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester) and Final Project II (in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester). This represents student's independent research paper on a subject of his/her interest and has to be approved by the programme Coordinator and under the direction of a teaching faculty member.

The programme design is up-to date and corporate needs are taken into account. However, the learning outcomes of the programme are too broad and do not specifically focus on *Hotel Management* but rather on the entire hospitality and tourism sector which does not correspond to the offered courses that actually support Hotel Management programme. The College runs also a programme in Hospitality and Tourism Management and with such set of LOs for the Hotel Management programme it actually *cannibalises* its other programme (please, see p. 10 of the Application for accreditation Report). Although the learning outcomes of the courses are specified, in some cases LOs are misleading or are not in line with the course content (for ex. Global Tourism and Leisure – one of the LOs states that the students will be able to apply concepts of sustainable tourism, but in the course content principles of sustainable tourism development are not mentioned at all. Actually, they are covered in another course). Some courses have a longer list of LOs than the specification of the entire course content. This implies to conclusion that the course coordinators/teaching faculty is not familiar with conceptualisation of the learning outcomes. Most of them do not understand how to formulate learning outcomes and therefore some of them mix learning outcomes with course objectives. However, in the most cases the course content corresponds to course objectives. Majority of courses do not include ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) which is crucial in a contemporary hotel management programme.

The corresponding literature for each particular course should be divided into two parts: compulsory reading and additional reading. None of instructors has listed any academic articles in their fields as a compulsory or suggested literature. In several cases instructors do not use contemporary literature. In courses "Food and Beverage Operations" and "Food and Beverage Cost Control" there are parts of repetition in the content. The course Business Ethics covers mostly environmental responsibility. The students should become aware of all aspects of ERS. Furthermore, the course title *Eco-tourism* does not correspond to the course content. It seems that the title Eco-tourism in rural areas would be more suitable title since it covers mainly eco-tourism in rural areas. Does eco-tourism relate only to rural areas? LOs of the course should be substantially corrected.

Despite the above remarks, the EEC formed the view that the programme delivers on its objective of preparing students to work as managers in hospitality field.

Although the teaching methods stated in the Report are almost the same for every course, during the discussion with the teaching staff it became clear that the teaching style, required academic rigour and depth throughout the programme appear appropriate as do the assessment methods and criteria. The standard of student work is appropriate for a Higher

Diploma in Hotel Management. There is a desired level of individual and student group assessment. The College has introduced MOODLE and Microsoft Teams to enrich the learning environment which is now especially important do to a necessary online teaching forced by COVID-19 measures.

The student cohort is predominantly Indian with a low number of domestic students. The College should pay more attention to a better distribution of nationalities within the programme for the benefit of necessary multicultural learning and networking environment. However, all the interviewed students expressed a very high satisfaction with their study programme, with learning support from faculty, student services and programme administration.

### **1.3 Public information**

Public information regarding the study programme is up-to date and readily accessible. Selection criteria are clear as well as student transfer to the College from another school and his/hers corresponding credit transfers. All students receive the Study Guide once they register at the Program which contains necessary information regarding the Program curriculum, the educational procedures implemented and the services of the College. Additionally, an Orientation Day is organised every year at the beginning of the academic year for all new-coming students to introduce them to the Program of Study, the activities included and the teaching staff.

### **1.4 Information management**

The College is run as a family business by a coherent and ambitious management. The management has a clear vision of how to satisfy the needs of the job market. The College manages its own faculty, programmes, student admissions and future research. The institution is tuition driven and the quality of their programmes, their students' employability and the College's image within the business community, distinguishes one college from the other. Student progression, success and drop-out rates are monitored by College's administration. Students satisfaction is acquired through a survey (questionnaires) distributed to all students in print form to gather information on their satisfaction with each course, each lecturer and the service offered by the College. The students are also encouraged to write comments and suggestions. The results of the data analysis are shared with the Program coordinator and the relevant services and officers and necessary actions are taken accordingly.

### Strengths

- Faculty committed to creation of a quality culture at the College
- Strong links with the industry
- Obligatory internship corresponding to the curriculum of the programme
- The undergraduate assignment which is in line with the educational ambitions of the programme
- Faculty providing very good individual support to students
- Opportunities for personal development of students
- Staff committed to creation of the overall good quality of the programme
- Flexibility in changing curriculum

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Raise the programme's profile more strongly on domestic and international scene to improve the programme positioning
- Develop additional promotion and recruitment strategy of the programme to foster a multicultural learning environment
- Introduce clear guidelines on syllabi writing and enforce them, as well as improving assessment of LOs.
- Revise the learning objectives. LOs must be institutionalised, anchored in the College, and developed and implemented with broad teaching staff involvement. This is an area which requires significant additional work at course level in order to make a necessary explicit link between programme LOs, course syllabi and assessment. The EEC is therefore of the opinion that the LOs need to be presented in a more consistent, compact and coherent manner and they should be institutionalised by involvement of all stakeholders.
- Create an Industry Advisory Board just for the programme and formalise and implement a systematic approach for inclusion of external stakeholders' feedback
- Ensure more explicit inclusion of ERS within course outline where appropriate

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<b><i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i></b>
<b>1.1</b>	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
<b>1.2</b>	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
<b>1.3</b>	Public information	Compliant
<b>1.4</b>	Information management	Compliant



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## 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-centered teaching methodology**

The program under evaluation offers students a successful and rather level-appropriate learning experience with a well-formed program of studies, supported by appropriate teaching staff. During the on-line presentations there was an obvious spirit of teamwork among staff members, which benefits the students. Along the same lines, the constant communication of students – teachers is very crucial, supported by the small size of the classrooms (twenty-five students on average) and the use of on-line learning platforms. The college emphasises on the overall social and personal development of the students (i.e. voluntary social activities, scholarships). The teaching techniques employed are satisfactory, safeguarding an interactive learning procedure. Students with different abilities or/and learning difficulties are provided with additional support by the teaching staff through regular meetings. The college's infrastructures are considered satisfactory by the students (having in mind the two shifts of lessons attendance). Also, the frequent (every semester) evaluation of the teachers and the courses by the students gives a valuable feedback to the college, allowing the improvement of the curriculum. The provision of resources, both physical and electronic, through the library within the existing resource availability is considered satisfactory by the students.

The College's reaction to the Covid-19 crisis and the subsequent postponement of the lessons, was satisfactory – allowing students to acquire more digital skills. The students along with the teachers were trained in order to continue the lessons on-line (an experience characterized as necessary and positive by the students).

### **2.2 Practical training**

The practical training procedures offered to the students are adequate, well planned and implemented, allowing the provision of a satisfactory learning experience to an international students' audience (the majority of the students are Asians with very few Cypriots – only 4 or 5 students in a total number of 183). The eight months practical training is enhanced by the geographical proximity of the college to major tourism destinations and a great number of well-established tourist enterprises, allowing a competitive, training on the job, experience and the interaction with industry executives.

**2.3 Student assessment** The students' assessment is consistent and to a great extent supported by the college's procedures. The students were aware of the assessment procedures, they were well informed, and they felt that feedback has been offered in a constructive way.

### Strengths

- the existence of good networking with business world which supports the offering of an eight months compulsory internship and the industrial placement of the students. The students consider the internship satisfactory and well-paid (about 650 euros plus accommodation per month). Along the same lines, guest speakers (mainly executives or businessmen) enrich the learning activities offered
- adaption and use of an electronic learning management system along with the existence of a sufficient number of well-defined management and teaching procedures
- strict deadlines for the teaching staff in fulfilling their teaching duties (assignments correction, delivery of feedback to the students etc.)
- engagement with the students is underpinned by a strong culture of cooperation and interactive learning. It is worth mentioning that students are “*very satisfied*” with the communication with the teachers (they mentioned the “*easy access to the teachers and the department head as well*”). Above all, they underline the immediate satisfaction of their needs
- existence of a clearly defined procedure to support students with insufficient academic performance, and the presence of an attitude of helping all students to achieve their goals and vision
- the existence of certain procedures against plagiarism by the use of specialized software by the teachers
- the participation of students in research projects is very crucial towards acquiring more knowledge – experiences and developing a research culture.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered:

- practical training offered is rather inadequately recognised in the curriculum (8 out of 180 ECTS for a period of eight months) compared to the professional “nature” of the program and the college. Internship should be a credit-bearing module (with ECTS offering) in order to encourage actual students’ participation
- a compulsory assignment during the students’ internship could be associated with more ECTS offering for the practical training
- the research culture of the program needs further development – empowerment, in order to enhance synergies between research and teaching, thus benefiting the students
- the college should invest further on simulation programs relevant to Tourism and Hospitality (e.g. Amadeus GDS) to enhance teaching and student experience
- the establishment of a new mechanism, ensuring consistency in marking across the program will be in favour of the students and the program as well
- double grading could be useful towards a fairer and more comprehensive grade procedure for the students
- the international profile of the students requires more and better-defined actions and mainly procedures on encouraging a vibrant and multicultural learning space

- the presence and contribution of education officer is crucial towards improving the qualifications and knowledge of the teachers and further to the students.

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**

The report provided by the KES College is clear about the staff affected to the Hotel Management degree. The document provides a list of 21 lecturers that will be in charge of the degree. Most of them have proper academic background to teach in the degree. Many concluded their degrees abroad at reputed universities. Their international experience and fluency in languages makes the staff adjusted to support the programme. The staff is recruited following clear and publicised procedures.

### 3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The number and the academic background of the teaching staff is adjusted to the degree.

### 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

The KES has a research centre. The director of the centre has a significant number of publications and experience. He has a background in biology and MSc and PhD gained from the University of Patras (Greece).

Only 3 members of the staff publish. Two of them have publications outside tourism and hospitality management, and one publishes in the area on food and culinary management.

It is not clear how the link between research and teaching is established, a situation that has to be sorted out in the future.

The EEC has also found that the College subscribes to some databases. However, none of them cover indexed sources on hotel management and tourism. The EEC recommends that indexed databases covering the subjects of the programme ought to be acquired.

#### Summary

. The KES College has a variety of teaching staff, covering several areas. The background of the staff is in tune with the programme. Most of them gained degrees from abroad in specialised schools and are fluent in languages.

. The teaching staff showed to be engaged in the programme and willing to innovate.

#### Strengths

- . Qualified staff
- . International experience

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- . The school should purchase indexed databases in hotel management and tourism
- . The research centre should create a scientific plan containing details about objectives, outputs, and allocation of resources.
- . The College should also set up a plan explaining how tourism research may be linked to improve the quality of the taught programme.



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>Partially compliant</i>

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

##### Sub-areas

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

##### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

After examining the College's site, the application of the HEI and the opinions and attitudes of the students, the EEC concluded that, generally, the students are very satisfied with their overall educational experience, they are well informed and they are aware of the main procedures applied concerning their admission in the College. The main admission criteria are transparent and their presentation on the college's website is helpful for the active and prospective students as well.

##### 4.2 Student progression

The learning objectives set by the college are well communicated for the students' academic progress. The students' progression policies and regulations are transparent allowing students to monitor their progress and making the necessary adjustment, always with the assistance of their teachers and mentors. The Erasmus+ program provides opportunities for the students to travel, to have more experiences and to engage with other international institutions, but students' participation is rather disappointing. To be fair, this mostly has to do with the students' nationality (mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh etc.) and the European Union's restrictions.

##### 4.3 Student recognition & 4.4 Student certification

The students' recognition and certification procedures are in place. The students' are provided with analytic certificates offering a clear acknowledge of the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies. The students are aware of the recognition and certification procedures.

##### Strengths

- the consulting services and the student support services offered are very satisfactory and crucial towards advising and supporting students in their educational and social progression
- the staff is adequately supporting the students academically as well as pastorally. According to the students' comments "*teachers are close to the students*" in order to satisfy their needs

and support them in an educational and social level. As one of the teachers commented “*there are no time frames in our cooperation – communication with the students*”

- the offering of mentoring support; every student has a teacher – mentor and there is also a “mentor rotation” on a yearly basis
- the admission requirements and criteria are sufficient and clearly presented on the College’s website. Students were well informed. The same applies as far as the knowledge of students on the certification offered
- the students’ assessment criteria and their contribution in the final assessment in every course are well established and very clear, although pretty much the same for every course offered
- a student-centered approach is adapted helping students re-examine and improve their work and effort accordingly
- the textbooks suggested for the modules are appropriate for the students’ profile as far as their content is concerned, but they should be updated
- the offering of the foundation year is very helpful to prospective students, especially for Asian students
- the teachers/students ratio as well as administrative staff/students ratio is very good
- the tuition fees are considered rather low, affordable and very competitive by the students
- the College has established a good brand and a very positive word of mouth. According to the students’ comments, they heard about the College from friends or/and relatives and they decided to attend the course after a positive recommendation from them
- the students can choose to attend the courses either full time or part time, thus having greater flexibility towards the lesson’s attendance and their studies.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered:

- the College’s site should offer more info on students’ recognition issues
- the students’ participation in Erasmus+ projects is an opportunity for them and must be further developed in the future
- the teachers could participate in the admission – selection of the students and according to their comment “*they would love to*”
- the mentoring procedures offered must be official and not rely only on the good will and the good cooperation between individual teachers and students.

**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	Partially compliant

4.4	Student certification	Compliant
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## 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

The report made available by the College and the virtual tour, allow to conclude that, overall, the KES College provides students and staff with an infrastructure and facilities adjusted to the functioning of the programme. During the meetings it was mentioned by the Directors that another building could even be hired in the future, in case that was necessary.

The methods of teaching follow international standards. However, it should be highlighted that the school should improve student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching. In nowadays' world, and bearing in mind an increasing volatile and changing society, such methods may prepare students better for the future.

### 5.2 Physical resources

The report discloses information that allow to conclude that the premises and the IT infrastructure is adjusted to run the Hotel Management programme.

The library also offers good conditions, but it is recommended that more books on hospitality & tourism should be acquired by the college. Also, KES should buy databases where students could find indexed publications (e.g. SCOPUS and Web of Science), and tourism documents (UNWTO database). Such information will also be important to support the expansion and qualification of the research centre.

### 5.3 Human support resources

*The College allocate students a tutor.*

*The number and qualifications of the administrative staff is adjusted to the needs. Staff perform both academic and integrative functions, which are critical for overseas students to adjust to the island.*

### 5.4 Student support

*The College offers students welcome sessions that allow them to gain knowledge about the services available and the way they can accommodate outside the school. During the meetings it was found that students are highly satisfied with the support provided by the College.*

*Some members of the staff organize students' trips abroad.*

*Even if the teaching methodologies include modern approaches (electronic platforms, power points and videos), student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, should be utilised more frequently in the future.*

#### Strengths

- . Suitable infrastructure and IT
- . Students are allocated a tutor

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- . More international exchange mobility programmes should be offered by the College
- . Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, should be utilised more frequently in the future

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>5.1</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Partially compliant



<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	Student support	Compliant

## 6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

**DO NOT APPLY**

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

**DO NOT APPLY**

## 8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

**DO NOT APPLY**

## 9. Conclusions and final remarks

The KES College submitted a document and made several presentations during the virtual visit of the EEC, that, overall, answered all areas of analysis concerning the infrastructure, facilities, teaching programme, students, teaching staff and research.

**The EEC is of the opinion that the Programme should be approved.**

Nevertheless, the EEC report contains a number of observations and recommendations that should be followed by the management directors. It is strongly recommended that those suggestions are implemented by the institution.



### C. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Carlos Costa	
Nevenka Cavlek	
Theodoros Stavrinoudis	
Dimitros Hadjisavva	

**Date:** 2020.09.18