

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 28/06/24

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** CIM-Cyprus Business School
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek: Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (14 Μήνες πλήρης φοίτηση / 24 Μήνες μερική φοίτηση, Μεταπτυχιακό) (90 ECTS)

In English:

Business Administration (14 Months FT / 24 Months PT, Master) (90 ECTS)

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The site visit at the CIM campus in Limassol took place on the 26th June, 2024. The EEC met with members of the Governing and Academic Committees of CIM and CIM staff, and students (e.g., Yangos Hadjiyannis (CEO); Assoc. Prof Christos Hadjiyannis (Dean), Elena Makedona (Campus Manager), Jenny Charlambous (Academic Officer), Andreas Konstantinou (MBA student)).

The evaluation was conducted based on the “Application for Evaluation Accreditation Programme of Study” material received by the EEC prior to the visit, presentations by CIM, supporting documentation regarding the MBA programme, student numbers, and the websites of CIM. The EEC met (for the second time) with members of the senior management team, faculty and teaching staff, current students and alumni, administrative personnel related to admissions, registration, library facilities, IT and other administration support.

The evaluation visit included a tour of CIM facilities where the committee was able to view teaching areas, the library, student meeting rooms, staff offices and some open areas.

The internal evaluation “Application for Evaluation Accreditation Programme of Study” and associated documents, which were submitted by CIM and examined by the EEC were thoroughly prepared and provided enough insights for the EEC to effectively evaluate the programme under consideration. Finally, the interactions with all CIM representatives were open, positive and transparent, which helped greatly with the evaluation process.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met. The present assessment report describes how the standards are generally met and provides recommendations and suggestions for improving the program under evaluation.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof. Fergal O'Brien	Chair	University of Limerick
Prof. Dimitrios Spyridonidis	Member	University of Warwick
Prof. Andrea Ordanini	Member	Bocconi University
Elena Onisillou	Student Representative	University of Cyprus

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.

The MBA at CIM is designed for working professionals who attend classes twice a week between 18:00 and 22:00. It is a long-standing programme with a strong reputation, as reflected by discussions with current participants who were recommended the programme by family, friends, and Alumni.

The MBA programme is described as action-oriented and designed to accelerate the managerial and leadership development process of candidates. It is aimed at senior managers with relevant educational backgrounds, training and work experience who are required to make major contributions to strategic decisions in their organisations. The specific focus therefore is on enabling managers to operate at a strategic level and manage their organisations effectively in today's complex and uncertain business environment. Close industry links are a feature of the programme and these external stakeholders (many of whom sit on a CIM Advisory Board) play a significant role in the strategic direction of CIM and its programmes.

The programme appears well designed. The objectives are in line with the institution's strategy and have clearly specified learning outcomes. Overall, the purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes are clearly communicated and justified and the intended learning outcomes are informed by the mission statement of the programme. The structure and content include a blend of traditional courses and more innovative modules that are broadly comparable with Business Management degrees internationally.

The program includes 5 compulsory yearly courses, one of which is dedicated to a dissertation in the summer term and 2 elective yearly courses. These two electives can be selected in a set of four for the generic MBA concentration, and in a set of 3 for the entrepreneurship MBA concentration.

The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and effectively communicated to the students. The course content and the assessment system are uploaded to an online platform ("intranet") that was developed in-house. The assessment system for taught courses is aligned and includes 1 assignment and 1 group work assignment (jointly forming 40% of the total grade) and 1 final examination (weighed at 60%).

The expected learning outcomes of the programme are known to the students from the first week of the semester through the course syllabuses, the course outlines, the web site of the Institute, the online platform, and communication from faculty.

All the required quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of the programme are in place, with participation of all the relevant stakeholders. Quality assurance mechanisms are aligned with international standards. Both the administrative and teaching staff are capable, professional, and committed to the success of the programme.

Moreover, the programme reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe that is, 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.

Strengths

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

Design. First, the programme seems well designed, managed and implemented, being capable to provide a significant value-added to students and Cyprus at large. The students can leverage on a well-designed learning and teaching experience that is comparable at the international level.

Managerial orientation. The students have considerable exposure to different industries of Cyprus economy that allows them to gain first-hand knowledge of the workings of different firms and establish valuable industry contacts. There is also significant participation of industry leaders in the programme (invited speakers for the courses, networking events, and various others).

Teaching engagement. The students may benefit from interacting with a set of motivated and skilled instructors, who show passion to teach and are eager to learn new techniques and teaching approaches. The highly interactive teaching style is for sure a distinguishing element of the programme.

Information transparency. The information related to the programme is easily available and effectively disseminated to the students. The assessment system and its criteria are also clear and well-communicated to them. The course syllabuses and course outlines clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches

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.

Based on conversations with students, teachers, stakeholders and our own assessment, we can propose a series of suggestions with the aim of improving the overall quality of the programme.

Research Methods Module. Since this course predominantly focuses on the practical application of statistics and data analysis, we suggest renaming it to better reflect its content. For instance, renaming it as "Data Analysis and Statistical Methods" or "Fundamentals of Statistics and Data Analysis" would provide a clearer description of its scope and objectives. Furthermore, based on our qualitative findings, we recommend restructuring the course delivery to a semester format instead of a yearly module. This adjustment is anticipated to enhance the effectiveness of the course by allowing for more concentrated learning and deeper engagement with the material, thereby optimizing student comprehension and mastery of essential statistical concepts and analytical techniques

Dissertation. While we acknowledge the need to maintain a dissertation at the end of the programme, we do not think it should be necessarily crafted with a research orientation for MBA students (this is what happens at the international level). Subject to meeting appropriate requirements, some students (individually or in groups) can be allowed to experience innovative (e.g., project-based) dissertation formats.

Entrepreneurship Focus. From different conversations, it seems one of the qualifying positioning elements of the programme is its tech/entrepreneurial drive. Currently, this is implemented only in two elective courses for those who select the concentration. If you think this positioning is key, you may consider making one of these electives as compulsory (maybe Entrepreneurship and Innovation), reducing one of the actual compulsory courses (e.g., OB and

change management) to a semester module. You may also consider renaming the course Digital Tools, whose label is somewhat loose and may not adequately convey its interesting content.

International Focus. The international dimension could be further improved with more visiting professors from abroad who could aid in the delivery of the programme, possible visits of foreign companies, and collaborations with foreign job markets for MBA graduates intending to work abroad.

Sustainability. Further emphasis is needed on embedding sustainability-related themes into the offerings of the program. This entails integrating comprehensive and structured modules or courses that specifically address sustainability challenges, principles, and practices across various disciplines. By embedding sustainability into the core curriculum, students can develop a deeper understanding of environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. This integration should not be limited to theoretical knowledge but should also include practical applications, case studies, and projects that allow students to engage actively with real-world sustainability issues.

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	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.

Based on the information in the documentation and the meetings carried out during the visit the EEC has found that the process of teaching and learning in place at CIM is appropriate for Higher Education and contributes in a complementary way to the topics addressed by the MBA, leveraging the areas of faculty expertise and industry links.

CIM provides a very supportive and encouraging learning environment to students, where students are supported academically by faculty members and by well-organised administrative services.

Grading systems, rubrics and quality control measures were evidenced very well in the documentation provided and during the site visit sessions with faculty and administrative staff.

During the meeting with the teaching staff the EEC found sufficient evidence of the good practices adopted in teaching and student assessment. During the visit, the EEC did not have the opportunity to observe a live lecture. However, the descriptions provided by faculty and their insights into “formative assessment” and “flipped classrooms”, for example, highlighted an appropriate approach to pedagogy and up-to-date teaching approaches. All of the teaching staff were acutely aware of the challenges associated with evening teaching and gave numerous examples of how they address these challenges.

The EEC verified that anonymous student feedback is collected and used for monitoring and improving all modules. There were some concerns around response rates.

The small class sizes naturally results in appropriate representation (formally and informally) in the programme committee.

Strengths

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

- Because the programme is delivered at two campus locations there are strong procedures in place to ensure consistency in assessment and grading. Appeal mechanisms are well understood and outlined to students. There are informal channels available also to students for feedback. This is achievable due to the small student cohorts and the EEC considers the formal and informal processes appropriate.
- The needs of students who are working full-time and are studying during the evening time are carefully considered and the teaching staff work hard to ensure that the classes are energetic and engaging.
- The EEC were impressed by how CIM is committed to linking theoretical studies to practice. This is at the core of CIM's identity.
- Dissertation topics were often based on "real-world" issues in the students' workplace. This is appropriate for an MBA programme being undertaken by professionals.

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.

- CIM should leverage its "where theory meets practice" identity. This might even be one of its key unique selling points in a crowded market.
- Dissertation topics should continue to be applied. This will ensure a continuing connection with industry and provide impactful outcomes in the local economy.
- CIM should consider showcasing the applied research being undertaken by MBA 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

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.

We are pleased to confirm that the faculty members involved in the program not only possess the requisite academic and professional qualifications but also demonstrate a strong commitment and enthusiasm for teaching. These educators, who include seasoned practitioners as well as accomplished academics, bring a wealth of real-world experience and hold advanced degrees, with the majority having earned a PhD. This blend of practical expertise and scholarly excellence enriches the learning experience for students, ensuring that they receive a well-rounded and high-quality education.

The recruitment process for teaching staff is both transparent and equitable, adhering to rigorous standards that ensure only the most qualified and dedicated professionals join the team. Once on board, faculty members are afforded ample opportunities for professional growth, including access to continuous training and development programs. This commitment to ongoing education helps them stay at the forefront of their fields and equips them with the latest knowledge and skills to deliver cutting-edge instruction.

Moreover, there is a concerted effort to integrate research-led teaching into the curriculum, reflecting a forward-thinking approach to education that aligns with previous recommendations. This is evidenced by the faculty's active involvement in research initiatives spearheaded by the CIM. An outcome of this research orientation is the establishment of a new academic journal, Market: International Journal of Business, which has recently published its inaugural issue.

Overall, these efforts reflect a robust commitment to academic and professional excellence, ensuring that students benefit from an education that is both comprehensive and contemporary. The integration of experienced professionals and PhD-qualified faculty, combined with a focus on research-led teaching and professional development, positions the program as a beacon of quality and innovation in the educational landscape.

Strengths

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

The faculty at CIM exhibit an extraordinary commitment to delivering high-quality business education. Our discussions with students confirmed that the faculty are not only highly dedicated but also approachable and supportive, fostering an environment where students feel encouraged and valued. This level of engagement and accessibility greatly enhances the learning experience, contributing to a supportive and dynamic educational community.

CIM has demonstrated a remarkable level of support for its staff, ensuring that their needs are carefully considered and addressed amid the evolving challenges of the new pedagogical landscape. Faculty members have received comprehensive backing, enabling them to adapt effectively to the demands of high quality teaching. This support has been critical in maintaining educational quality and continuity during an unprecedented period of disruption.

CIM's efforts in this regard are commendable and highlight the institution's commitment to educational excellence and faculty well-being. In doing so, CIM has set a high standard for how institutions can adapt to and thrive in this space. This approach not only supports the immediate needs of the faculty and students but also positions the institution to continue leading in the realm of business education in the future.

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.

CIM's proactive approach in embracing the latest innovations in online education is particularly noteworthy. The institution should carry on its investment on cutting-edge educational technologies alongside the extensive training for faculty members to ensure they are well-equipped to leverage these tools effectively. This commitment to continuous professional development could enable the faculty to carry on delivering engaging and high-quality online instruction, which has been crucial in maintaining academic standards and student engagement during the pandemic.

Importantly, the transition to new teaching modalities has not posed any significant challenges to the pedagogical process, even with the involvement of part-time and adjunct faculty. These staff members are critical for the translation of the institution's vision and it is recommended the institution embraces this practice to continually seamlessly integrate them into the program, by offering the same level of support and training as their full-time counterparts. This will ensure the institution maintains and enhances its consistent and cohesive teaching experience across the board, with all faculty members contributing to the program's success.

Aligning Teaching Efforts with Institutional Identity:

CIM's success in business education is deeply rooted in its core identity, which is centred on a few fundamental principles:

Commitment to Excellence: CIM's teaching staff embody the institution's unwavering commitment to academic and professional excellence. By employing educators who are not only academically qualified but also experienced practitioners, CIM ensures that the education provided is both theoretically robust and practically relevant. This dual emphasis aligns perfectly with CIM's mission to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world application, a core aspect of its identity. While academic research is a cornerstone of higher education, CIM recognizes that its unique strength lies in delivering practical, industry-relevant education. This does not undermine the value of research but rather places it in a context where the primary goal is to enhance business practices and solve real-world problems. This approach aligns with CIM's core identity, which is centred on providing education that is directly applicable to the business world. CIM should focus their efforts on business education, which is evident in its curriculum, which integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application. The emphasis is on equipping students with skills and insights that are immediately transferable to their professional lives. This pragmatic approach ensures that CIM graduates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying their learning in ways that drive business success. This focus on applied learning reinforces CIM's identity as a leading institution in business education.

Innovation and Tradition: While CIM has a rich history in marketing education, it continuously innovates to stay at the forefront of the field. This is evident in its expansion into the MBA teaching space. This balance between tradition and innovation is a hallmark of CIM's identity and is crucial for maintaining its leading position in the industry.

Focus beyond Marketing: Marketing is undeniably a foundational element of CIM's identity, embodying its historical roots and continuing influence. However, while marketing remains a significant cornerstone, the institution's mission and curriculum are expanding to reflect a broader spectrum of business education. This expansion includes specialized MBA programs in areas such as entrepreneurship, shipping, and more. It is crucial that these programs not only complement but also enhance CIM's core strengths and branding, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive education aligned with the institution's evolving focus and identity. The inclusion of specialized MBA programs in areas like entrepreneurship and shipping signifies CIM's strategic expansion beyond traditional marketing boundaries. This diversification allows the institution to attract a wider range of students with varied interests and career aspirations, while still maintaining a coherent and unified educational philosophy. By offering a robust, interdisciplinary approach, CIM ensures that students are well-prepared for the complexities of the modern business world.

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	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.

The evaluation committee met with a number of current MBA students who were approaching the end of their studies. All had significant work experience in varying fields, were highly motivated, and indicated their satisfaction with their MBA experience.

There is a very “hands-on” and personal approach with students from the moment they express an interest in attending CIM, all the way through to graduation. This is possible given the small numbers involved in the programme. The application and admission process is managed by the administrative staff through the customised “intranet” platform at CIM, and they provide significant support and guidance for each applicant, e.g., follow up on missing application data, tailored financial plans, etc. Interviews with students prior to admission are also a feature of the process. All of this ensures that CIM converts a large proportion of its applicants into registrations (CIM representatives indicated that they convert 75% of applications into enrolments).

CIM indicated that their strategy for the programme is one of consolidation with modest growth targets for the most part. The committee considers this appropriate in the context of CIM’s capacity for growth and its values around student experience and industry focus. We note that growth might be achieved through CIM’s planned online MBA.

Students can choose to pursue the MBA on a full-time or (extended) part-time basis. In meetings with students, they indicated that it was challenging from a time management perspective but that they understood this when they enrolled on the programme. They were very complimentary of the teaching staff and the support provided by CIM.

Assessment and grading processes are appropriate. There are quality assurance processes in place to ensure consistent assessment and grading across the Nicosia and Limassol campuses (the MBA is delivered at both locations). Student progression processes are in line with international best practice and are clearly documented. There are clear rules and regulations around deficient grades, progression and graduation.

Finally, students have a voice through student representative roles. In the case of CIM, the student voice is naturally strong due to the small numbers on the programmes and the close relationships with administrative staff and faculty.

Strengths

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

- The admission processes are very student friendly, which is possible given the small numbers of the programme. Conversion rates from application to enrolment are high as a result.
- Regulations governing student progression are clear and the documentation provided and conversations during the site visit evidences practices that are in line with international best practice.
- The tailored financial plans are an admirable feature of CIM's operations as it allows broader access for students to pursue their education goals.

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.

- Provide guidelines to what extent students can use artificial intelligence (AI) to avoid plagiarism and keep creativity and innovation in academic writing
- To have a specific alumni group to provide contact details to new students (upon their confirmation) and improve their networking
- Consideration should be given to some networking opportunities for MBA students across the Nicosia and Limassol campuses. We acknowledge that the students are time-poor already but such opportunities are common on MBA programmes globally. Industry partnerships are already strong and these could be leveraged to provide such opportunities.
- From a graduating student perspective it was clear that students in Nicosia were attending "CIM", but students in Limassol were "CIM/Cyprus Business School". This is something that needs further consideration to ensure strong brand recognition and Alumni identity in the future.



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.

Students in this program are full-time professionals with already busy lives. Therefore, classes are delivered in the evening time to allow students to pursue their MBA either on a full-time basis over 14 months, or on a part-time basis over 24 months.

In general, appropriate student study spaces and common areas are offered by the university. After taking a tour of the CIM facilities, it was evident that the teaching spaces were appropriate for the class size on the MBA programme. The Limassol campus is well resourced for the planned sustainable growth in numbers.

The library facilities and physical resources provided by CIM meet the expectations a student might have from the school and the programme under evaluation. Students can access the programme learning materials (lectures, case studies, etc.) through the CIM custom-built “intranet” platform and can access other learning resources online (i.e., CIM subscription based access) or through the physical library on the Limassol campus (which although limited in size, has textbooks that are appropriate in number and quality). The physical set-up in the library could be altered to give students personal space to study, although many students are not on the campus regularly to study due to their work commitments.

During the site visit discussions, CIM staff outlined mechanisms they provide for student support. Faculty members and student advisors are always available to guide and offer any help necessary to all the students of the university. The committee considers the level of supports adequate and sustainable given the small numbers on the programme.

Students with disabilities are asked to declare them at application stage and reasonable accommodations are available as required. There might be a need to formalise this process as it was not entirely clear if there were formal independent evaluations/validations of student conditions/issues.

Strengths

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

- The educational approach adopted by CIM is student oriented, for busy professionals seeking an MBA qualification.
- The staff-student ratio means that students have easy access to faculty and administrative support.
- There are excellent supports in place due to the “hands-on” nature of the faculty and administrative staff, who know their students very well and understand their circumstances.
- Students are given the opportunity to provide feedback to faculty through surveys. It is clear that faculty value this feedback

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.

- Response rates on student feedback to faculty are low. Incentives have been offered to try to improve this.
- Perhaps CIM could consider making them compulsory, e.g., students will not receive their grade until they complete the feedback forms.
- CIM should ensure that subscription to online resources are maintained and expanded so that students have access to highly ranked journals and other online resources.

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	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	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.

N/A

Strengths

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	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 EEC reviewed and examined the materials provided on the MBA at CIM (Limassol). The one-day site visit was held on 26/06/2024 at which the EEC was presented with detailed information about the degree programme. During the site visit, the EEC met the School leadership team, the academic staff, the administrative staff, and students.

Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards for accreditation are generally met.

The EEC identified the following key strengths:

- The program has a long history and continues to attract quality participants who are working in middle to senior management roles.
- The programme is well designed, managed and implemented, and is capable of providing significant value-added to students and Cyprus at large. The students can leverage a well-designed learning and teaching experience that is comparable at the international level. CIM staff acknowledge that continually reviewing the programme will identify gaps as they emerge across time (e.g., more explicit focus on analytics, sustainability, etc.)
- Students have considerable exposure to different industries of the Cyprus economy that allows them to gain first-hand knowledge of the workings of different firms and establish valuable industry contacts. There is also significant participation of industry leaders in the programme (invited speakers for the courses, networking events, and various others).
- The teaching staff and the administrative support function are highly commended by the students for their particularly collaborative and supportive approach.

The EEC also identified a number of key areas for improvement and therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- The packaging of the programme could be made more attractive:
 - Module titles can be reimagined to better reflect what they actually do
 - Year long modules might be better delivered as shorter semester modules. Students can handle shorter courses better. It would also allow for less confusing titles where disciplines are combined.
- Sustainability could be more explicitly surfaced in the programme structure and learning outcomes with specific initiatives and dedicated actions.
- More training and development opportunities should be provided to teaching staff in particular to ensure that their skills are up-to-date. There is an appetite for this from this cohort.
- To have a specific alumni group to provide contact details to new students (upon their confirmation) and improve their networking.



- The EEC perceives a risk attached to the in-house “intranet” platform. In the first instance, this should not depend on any single person, and in the second instance, cyber security must be a top priority with respect to this.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Fergal O'Brien	
Prof. Dimitrios Spyridonidis	
Prof. Andrea Ordanini	
Elena Onisillou	

Date: 28/06/2024