Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 28.3.2025

External Evaluation Report
(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: City Unity College Nicosia**
- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty

- **Department/ Sector: Business Administration**

- **Programme of study- Master of Business Administration (MBA) (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
  1.5 Academic years, (90) ECTS

  In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακο στη Διοικηση Επιχειρησεων

  / 18 μηνες / 90 ECTS

Programme Name

  In English: Master (MBA)

- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek / English**

- **Programme's status: Currently Operating**
- **Concentrations (if any):**
  In Greek: Δημοσια Διοικηση/ Διαχειριση Μεταφορων και εφοδιαστικης Αλυσιδας (logistics) / Διοικηση Ξενοδοχειακων Μοναδων

In English: Public Administration/ Transport and Logistics Management / Hospitality Management

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A. Introduction

The site visit at City Unity College Nicosia (CUCN) took place on 26 April 2025. Christiana Maki, Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), coordinated the meeting. In addition to the material provided before, during, and after the site visit, five presentations were conducted, and the committee had the opportunity to interview all the above-mentioned participants. The panel included three academics from institutions from universities from Sweden (Christine Hölmstrom, Uppsala University), United Kingdom (Achilleas Boukis, University of Birmingham), and Belgium (Ernst Verwaal (Chair), KU Leuven), and a student representative (Elina Mavrikiou, University of Cyprus).

Documents provided prior to the site visit included an extensive 'Application for the Evaluation – Accreditation of Programme of Study' and appendices on compulsory and elective courses; course descriptions; detailed bibliographical notes; infrastructure; sample of the certificate; indicative list of publications and funded projects; quality standards and indicators; and study guides. The committee found that the documentation was well-structured and rich in relevant information.

The site visit for CUSN was well organized, and the EEC panel spent a full working day at the college's facilities in Nicosia. The panel also met with various internal and external stakeholders, including the CEO of the college, the director of academic affairs, teaching faculty and administrative staff, MBA students, and external stakeholders. All site visit participants were well-prepared, attentive, and open to dialogue.

The information and clarifications the EEC panel received at the site visit allowed the panel to better understand the structure, rationale, and changes made to the MBA program, as well as to understand the teaching and research culture of CUCN and the actions taken to maintain and enhance the quality assurance standards.

The EEC panel members were provided with extensive and analytical information on the processes and regulations that the college has adopted, and no additional information was needed from the side of the EEC panel at the end of the visit.

The site visit commenced with introducing the EEC panel members and the representatives of CUCN. The kickoff meeting included the senior management of CUCN (e.g. CEO, Director of Academic Affairs, etc.). They provided a clear overview of the CUCN, its strategic objectives, and the logic behind its MBA programme.

This session was informative and allowed the EEC panel to clarify procedural aspects and confirm the agenda for the visit. It also allowed the EEC panel to contextualize the positioning of the MBA programme in the market, as well as to understand its relevance to the broader mission and quality assurance framework of the institution. Thereafter, the EEC panel had consecutive meetings with various members of the teaching staff, course directors, the head of quality assurance, current MBA students and MBA graduates, three external college stakeholders, and members from the administrative and IT team.

Additionally, a visit to the premises of one of the CUCN buildings took place. The visit included a physical inspection of the various facilities for different courses, the computer labs, staff offices, and teaching rooms for students, as well as a virtual tour of their other facilities in other buildings. The EEC panel undertook a physical inspection of learning platforms touch boards and learned more

about the infrastructure, student support services, and technological integration and how they meet the learning needs of MBA and other students. The EEC panel had the chance to meet with current students from the MBA program and graduates who provided feedback on their experience with CUCN. Lastly, an exit discussion took place where some minor points from the visit were further clarified. Overall, the site visit was informative; the facilities were modern and well-maintained, and all documents for the EEC panel were easy to access and available.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
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Ernst Verwaal (Chair)	Professor	KU Leuven
Christine Holmström Lind	Associate Professor	Uppsala University
Achilleas Boukis	Associate Professor	University of Birmingham
Elina Mavrikiou	Student	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. The content of the report was good and it covered most of the necessary information needed for

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

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- *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.

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Findings

Based on the application, the presentations, and the various dialogues at the site visit we got a very clear understanding of the proposed study programme. The CUCN offers an MBA with three concentrations: 1) Public Administration, 2) Transport and Logistics Management, and 3) Hospitality Management. The programme is offered both in Greek and English.

The application provides clear information about the learning outcomes and the aim of the programme, as well as the changes made within the programme and the underlying reasons for these changes. The proposed changes are: The concentration "Customs and Excise Duties" will be replaced by a new concentration in "Transport Logistics Management"; The module "Economic Decision Making" will be replaced by "Operations Management"; Sustainability and ethics will be more clearly integrated in all modules of the programme. These changes are based on sources such as feedback for course evaluations, faculty, an internal committee, recommendations of the external advisory committee, and in-depth market analysis as well as stakeholder input and industry contacts.

The programme is designed with an industry focus in combination with a strong intention to integrate theory and practice in all modules. It was clear from the presentations at the site visit that there is a strong focus on research activities among the teaching staff, and the programme makes impressive efforts to provide students will theoretical knowledge and skills alongside the practical knowledge and skills. It is very clear that there is great enthusiasm about the programme and the improvements made to the programme are done in thorough consideration with the need for advanced learning, future employment and the latest trends and demands in the industry.

Strengths

- The goals of the programme and the learning outcomes are well described.
- The concentrations build on the latest international and societal trends as well as national industry demands.
- The programme builds on strong involvement of both students and external stakeholders.
- The issue of sustainability is clearly integrated in the concentration modules.
- There is a strong stakeholder-orientation, and they have developed formal structures for stakeholder interactions through e.g. stakeholder committees.
- The programme is run by qualified faculty members and incorporates the knowledge and expertise from visiting professors from abroad as well as through engaging in international cooperation.
- The assignments and examinations are well aligned with the stated learning outcomes and correspond well to a master level.
- All core modules and concentrations are well-structured, and the content is very well explained and has a logical rationale.

- The faculty members within the college department demonstrate a high level of commitment to developing research initiatives and actively fosters opportunities for student involvement in these scholarly endeavors.
- The quality of the programme is monitored by extensive quality assurance processes, which are well documented in written handbooks and very well presented at the site visit.
- The programme is based on a strong emphasis on the integration of students from different nationalities and cultures.
- The program is designed to enable student progression in knowledge, learning and skills.
- The strong effort put on technological develop in teaching methods give rise to new opportunities for enhanced student learning and experiences.
- The programme and the announced changes are well aligned with the increased demand of managerial professionals in Cyprus.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

Given the strong demand from the industry, as suggested in the dialogue with external stakeholders at the site visit, for strategic management and the development of strong strategic and managerial skills one option is to include more specific strategic management learning in one of the core courses. With this in mind, we recommend that CUCN consider the explicit integration of strategic management and its international dimension more explicitly in the first core course in the programme.

In the application as well as during the site visit it was clear that there is an intention to integrate sustainability in all modules. From the way that the courses are designed it is somewhat unclear how the issue of sustainability is covered in the core courses and to what extent the students are given in-depth knowledge about sustainable management and practices, which was strongly emphasized as a critical competence among future managers among the invited industry representatives at the site visit.

We also recommend CUCN to consider the way in which the students are offered some interaction with industry and external stakeholders during the programme, such as guest lectures, site visits at specific companies/organisations, and internships.

1.5 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - *selection criteria*

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

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

1.6 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:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*
  - o *industry trend analysis.*
  - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - o *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - o *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?*

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Findings

CUCD provided an analytical overview of the programme learning objectives and criteria, the requirements for admission, the student selection criteria, and the grading standards. At the college's website, there is clear information about learning opportunities and such opportunities are also communicated to students via the newsletter and the learning platform (e-class). A range of faculty are involved in the quality assurance committee.

Regarding the mechanisms of dealing with various student and quality assurance issues at CUCD, the process of dealing with student complaints seems to be well-organized, and clear roles are assigned to academic faculty and administrative personnel in this process so that they promptly deal with students' issues that arise. Also, there was adequate clarity regarding the policy for recording lectures in the delivery of the MBA program. This is particularly important for some students who have disabilities or other challenges. Based on the validation documents and the presentation of the management team during the site visit, quality assurance seems to have a central role in CUCD's strategy and there are clear and well-designed mechanisms in place to ensure high quality assurance in their programs.

Strengths

- Based on the validation documents and the presentation of the CUCD team during the site visit, there is a formal committee for quality assurance, which includes several faculty members from various departments that deal with quality assurance challenges and assess new admissions. This is an appropriate monitoring mechanism for quality assurance for areas of interest (e.g. admissions, student complaints).
- The MBA program director and several senior-, middle-level faculty and programme directors are involved in the changes made in the program. There is strong evidence of external stakeholders' involvement, who commented on previous drafts of the proposed program. External stakeholders emphasized the dynamic nature of their collaboration with CUCD. They mentioned the ongoing recruitment from CUCD graduates at managerial positions and the frequent interactions with CUCD's management team in the delivery of the programme. The external stakeholders commented positively on the impact of the MBA on the local municipality and commended the dissertation project structure and content of the MBA.
- The CUCD committee also commented on student progress, highlighting in-class discussions and compulsory attendance as an informal mechanism for attending student progress. The CUCD committee provided evidence of student satisfaction survey results and feedback for various modules, supporting their case for strong quality assurance mechanisms.
- From the student meeting, it appears that MBA students are actively engaged in providing feedback on the course quality and their experiences with the programme are well considered.
- There is strong evidence of past and ongoing development of research collaborations with various funding bodies and international/ EU research teams. Additionally, examples of

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students' participation in research projects and activities led by college faculty were presented. On several occasions, students were enabled not only to gain research expertise by engaging in primary research but also to participate in international conferences and publish book chapters as part of their dissertation projects.

- The program remains largely consistent with developments in society, the labour market, and the need for more MBA graduates in Cyprus in certain areas of the economy (e.g. logistics, tourism). The concentrations offered by the modules are relevant and meet the needs of the national and local industry.

- Overall, the program's content and delivery meet and remain well-aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Notwithstanding the high-quality standards of CUCN, some additional actions and improvements can be made. The research unit of CUCN can be further marketed and branded. As CUCN nurtures a strong applied research culture at the core of the college's offering, creating a stronger brand and vision for the research unit would help in this direction. Research centre names, for example, could be endorsed by industry stakeholders if they conduct research in an area of their interest, and a research vision could be created and aligned with the college's central vision.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

   1.7 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
   1.8 Practical training
   1.9 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 isexplicitly 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?*

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- *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?***

2 *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*

- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***

3 *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their stus?*

- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

The CUCN demonstrated a very high standard regarding appropriate teaching and learning processes for an MBA program. At the site visit, it became clear that there is a high level of knowledge and expertise in teaching methods and a strong focus on theoretical practice-integrated and interactive learning. There is a good mix of individual and group work. There is a strong focus on developing managerial knowledge, skills, and critical thinking.

There is strong evidence of an educational approach characterized by student-centered teaching and learning, which includes active learning through discussions, group work, and problem-solving activities; instructions tailored to accommodate individual learning preferences when needed; teachers taking on a role as facilitators and supporters; and the development of reflective practices where the students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning.

Assessments are developed and consistent with the required quality standards and are transparent, objective, and fair. The students at the site visit emphasized that there is very open communication and an atmosphere with faculty members and staff. The administrative team seems very flexible and student-oriented, and there is strong evidence that there are systems in place for feedback and student complaints.

To date, they are aware of and actively work with the issue of generative AI, but there is no written assessment policy regarding the use of generative AI presented to students, similarly to plagiarism checks.

Strengths

- The programme and the design of teaching and learning encourage students to engage in research and scholarly activities and provide them with specialized knowledge and skills

within their chosen concentration. CUCN offers an open, collaborative, and interactive learning environment that encourages learning, networking, and socialization.

- CUCN clearly has a student-centered learning environment and a focus on individual professional development and life-long learning. During the site visit, we received information and insights into the ongoing upgrading of teaching methods, tools, and equipment to use highly modern educational technologies. The program also offers a variety of pedagogical methods and tools.
- Theoretical- and practical knowledge and skills studies are well interconnected in the programme and the organisation and content of practical training in the third concentration "Hospitality Management" meets the learning outcomes as well as the needs of the stakeholders.
- The students are provided with clear and comprehensive information and instructions on the assessment policies, procedures, and regulations, as well as well-formulated assessment criteria in each course.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

To date, there are no explicit written instructions for the students regarding the ethical and responsible use of generative AI when conducting group- or individual written assignments. Therefore, we recommend the development of some formal policies for the use of AI in teaching and examinations. If the use of generative AI is restricted during teaching and/or examination, this should be clearly stated in written information and provided to the students at the start of the programme and at the start of each course when applicable.

To provide state-of-the-art knowledge, the ongoing work to accelerate the integration of research at the CUCN, as well as teaching, is highly appreciated by the committee. Hence, we encourage increased efforts to enhance the research competence among all faculty staff. This could be done through e.g. mentorship programs, fostering research collaboration opportunities, allocating specific resources and time for research activities, and internal grants, to mention a few.

With regards to the intended research acceleration, the CUCN could also put effort into establishing structured initiatives, such as internal research-focused internships, mentorship programs, and specialized coursework, to cultivate theoretical research skills among students who aspire to an academic- or investigative route rather than an industry-focused career.

During the site visit it was revealed among both faculty staff and students that more effort should be put on developing verbal communication skills among the students. This could be done through e.g. role-play exercises involving interview situations and negotiations, and verbal communication training.

In the dialogue with the students, it was indicated that a closer contact with external stakeholder would be appreciated. We thus welcome possibilities for collaborative inter-sector initiatives to develop e.g. internship opportunities.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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 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)?*

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Findings

Currently, there are thirteen full-time and part-time faculty to support the delivery of the MBA. Based on the available documentation provided for this evaluation, there is wide range of knowledge areas, research expertise and industry experience among the faculty delivering the various modules. The course leaders seem relevant to the modules they deliver and the EEC members really enjoyed the diverse backgrounds and expertise of the faculty. The faculty members are encouraged to engage in collaborations with industry partners and further engage students in these activities, which is a direction can further build in their offering.

The lecturers engage in various research activities and their research activity and publications are relevant to their discipline. Many of them are actively seeking research collaborations and publication opportunities as they have contributed to various national-level and international conferences and outlets.

One of the most interesting college practices is the weekly sessions for skill development that they run which is compulsory for all full-time staff while part-time faculty are encouraged to participate. Such sessions have both a research and teaching skill development orientation and add significantly to the upgrade of teaching and research skills.

Visiting staff members from various countries play a role in the college's research and daily life through their participation in teaching and research activities. The majority of the staff have PhDs relevant to the courses they deliver. A relatively small number of part-time faculty appear to teach at the MBA programme. There is survey-based feedback for lecturers' in-class performance on a regular basis.

Strengths

- The majority of the faculty has strong educational experience at teaching courses at the MBA level and several of the lecturers have expertise from various cultural contexts and levels. Given the number of faculty at the MBA, a good student-staff ratio exists, which might be a bit over 1:8. The number of visiting staff does not exceed the number of the permanent staff. Based on the information provided, the process for recruitment and development of the teaching staff seems fair and straightforward.
- The industry expertise of several of the faculty members (e.g., in logistics, accounting), along with their industry qualifications (e.g., chartered accountants), seem to add important value to the delivery of the MBA modules.
- Some policies are also in place for supporting/ endorsing research collaborations with other EU and international universities. In this vein, a research unit is a positive addition to the college's vision implementation. Another advantage of the college's research approach is the collaboration with MBA students on research projects that can be published in international conferences and journals. The changes proposed by the college committee for the MBA program are reasonable and can be supported by the expertise of the lecturer's team.

- The existing teaching staff qualifications fully meet the high-quality assurance standards to achieve the current learning outcomes of the MBA programme and to ensure a good quality of teaching and learning. The faculty participates in commercial as well as research collaborations and projects. Based on the presentations at the site visit, CUCN undertakes valuable developmental activities for faculty.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

CUCN can further enhance the resource support for research activities, potentially dedicate resources for engagement in research projects among all faculty members, and explore ways to increase research and teaching synergies. The research unit's further integration into the daily life of the college and in the MBA program can be a step forward that can include a range of research-related activities such as research talks and collaboration with various external partners for commercial projects and grant applications.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

   3.2 Student admission, processes and criteria
   3.3 Student progression
   3.4 Student recognition
   3.5 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

CUCN has clear and transparent criteria, regulations, and policies for student admission.

Applicants must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of English language (e.g. via TOEFL, IELTS, GCSE, IGCSE, Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or equivalent). The minimum level of English proficiency is the legal minimum, which is the upper level of B1, the lower intermediate level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It refers to a good language skill, however, it is below the level to comprehend the main ideas of complex texts.

Faculty members are entrusted with providing guidance and support to the students, and minimum levels are set for meetings. This ensures that faculty members have sufficient contact with the students. Processes to monitor student progression and support are well organized and in place. Student certification follows pre-defined and published regulations.

Strengths

- Admission procedures and progress monitoring are explicit and clear.
- Support of the students in almost every area is extensive and well organized.
- Faculty members provide systematic guidance and support.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

CUCN is a very well-organized college with high-quality teaching. This high quality also requires talented students who have the potential to develop strong capabilities at the MBA level. Currently, the language requirements of the college for the MBA programme are set at upper B1, which is compliant with the legal minimum for higher education in Cyprus. However, this legal minimum does not consider the requirements of higher-level management education and the needs of the industry.

The level B1 in the CEFR is a level of language where students are not yet capable of understanding the main ideas of complex texts. The external stakeholders of CUCN clearly stated that they expect a high level of command of the English language from MBAs in their employment, regardless of the language of instruction of the programme.

Considering the educational need for students to understand the ideas of complex texts, considering that the Cyprus economy depends 30% on tourism, and considering that with its strategic location and ports, Cyprus economy is developing into an international trade and logistics hub, and considering the high quality of the educational services of CUCN, we strongly recommend raising the entry requirements for the MBA programme to at least B2 for both the Greek and English versions of the MBA (IELTS 5.5). Even if the language of instruction of the MBA programme is Greek, MBA students should have the competence to read complex texts in English that are included in the bibliography lists of the courses. It would also better align the quality of the students with the quality of the CUCN programme.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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**
>   **3.6 Teaching and Learning resources**
>   **3.7 Physical resources**
>   **3.8 Human support resources**
> **6   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

The College provides the 90 ECTS MBA programme to students in 3 semesters. The College uses a well-maintained, secured, and highly available integrated digital learning management system that integrates different synchronous and asynchronous communication facilities and digital resources. Students are offered professional high-quality smart boards in classrooms, audio-visual laboratories, and multimedia recording, and they also have access to a broad range of proprietary software that is used in courses. The College uses anti-plagiarism software (Turnitin), which is integrated into all assignments across all courses. Systematic and generous personal support to students in various areas is provided.

The College puts strong effort into selecting and training highly qualified lecturers; most have a PhD qualification or are nearing the conclusion of their PhD, and there is a serious effort to integrate research skills into the curriculum and student experience. The school supports industry-college collaboration and a scope-indexed internationally refereed academic journal. Access to an online library is available to all students.

Strengths

- The resources expected from a college or university are overall strong at CUCN.
- What is specifically innovative and differentiating in the programme is the high level of integration of applied research into the curriculum in connection with local industry where students report their findings on conferences and contribute to academic publications.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The most critical area of improvement at CUCN is what students are offered after graduation. Currently, there is no well-organized alumni network for CUCN graduates. However, the social capital from an MBA alumni network can be significant, particularly when the student body is highly international, such as is the case for CUCN. The external stakeholders of CUCN supported this observation. We therefore strongly recommend that CUCN organise and activate its alumni network and integrate it into its overall activities.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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*

- o   *the examinations*
- o   *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
- o   *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:*
  - o   *the chapters that are contained*
  - o   *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - o   *the minimum word limit*
  - o   *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:*
  - o   *regular meetings*
  - o   *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o   *support for writing research papers*
  - o   *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC would like to thank the board and all stakeholders at CUCN for the high engagement throughout the evaluation process - and for providing a rich set of supporting documents before, during, and after the site visit. In addition, we appreciate the positive and constructive spirit during the visit, as well as the commitment to continuous improvement of learning, research, and academic excellence clearly expressed by the various representatives of CUCN. The preceding sections of this report point to the many strengths of CUCN and some areas for improvement of the programme.

Strengths include:

- There is a very clear and well-described governance structure, both in general and at the departmental, programme, and courses levels.

- Extensive quality assurance (internally and externally) is in place. Many internal and external stakeholders are involved.
- Management, faculty, and administrative staff are highly professional and very committed to the program.
- The structure, contents, and learning goals of the programme are very clearly described.
- Valuable electronic sources for students and faculty are available in the library.
- A unique focus on applied research that is well integrated into the curriculum and the MBA thesis, incl. a course on research methodology, strong connections with the industry, and a multi-facetted assessment. This allows students to develop an exceptional capability for creative and critical thinking that is crucial for the personal effectiveness of the MBA in his/her employment and ultimately for the contribution of CUCN to the economic development of Cyprus.

Areas for improvement include:

The strength of CUCN always has been its international orientation. However, an increased focus on recruiting local students may enhance the embeddedness of CUCN in local culture, institutions, and industry. Students at CUCN benefit from excellent resources and facilities. However, after graduation, there is no alumni network for the graduates at CUCN. The social capital from an alumni network can be significant for alumni and the college, particularly when the student body is highly diverse, as is the case at CUCN. This observation was supported by the external stakeholders of CUCN. We therefore strongly recommend to organise and activate the alumni network of CUCN and to integrate it in its overall activities.

A high-quality college such as CUCN also needs talented students. Currently, the language requirements of the college for the MBA programme are set at upper B1, which is compliant with the legal minimum for higher education in Cyprus. However, this legal minimum does not consider the requirements of higher-level management education and the needs of the industry. The level B1 in the CEFR is a level of language where students are not yet capable of understanding the main ideas of complex texts. The external stakeholders of CUCN clearly stated that they expect a high level of demand of the English language from MBAs in their employment, regardless of the language of instruction of the programme. Managers, for example in the public sector, need to understand the many developments on EU directives that apply in Cyprus but they also can learn from how they are implemented in other countries of the EU. This institutional learning occurs in discussions and reports mainly published in English. Considering the educational need for students to understand the ideas of complex texts, considering that the Cyprus economy depends 30% on tourism, and considering that with its strategic location and ports, Cyprus is developing into an international trade and logistics hub, we strongly recommend raising the entry requirements for the CUCN MBA programme above the legal level to at least B2 (IELTS 5.5), which is consistent with CYQAA standards. This will strengthen the quality of the student experience and the academic reputation of CUCN.

The committee believes that the CUCN MBA programme will bring high benefits for students, their coming employers, and other stakeholders. This could further be enhanced by building structural cross-sectional collaborations and partnerships (e.g., government-college/university-industry collaboration and partnerships), for example, around sustainable development goals as formulated by SDG 17 of the UN 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, of which Cyprus is also a signatory. Research shows that such cross-sector partnerships and collaborations can foster significant benefits for sustainable development that lead to the effective contribution to societal needs at minimal planetary resources while simultaneously a stronger competitive advantage for the industry and resources for universities and colleges. Notably, the innovative integrated research approach developed at CUCN in the MBA programme offers many opportunities that may benefit sustainable economic regional development and all stakeholders involved.

E. Signatures of the EEC

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Name	Signature
Professor Ernst Verwaal (Chair)	
Associate Professor Christine Holmström Lind	
Associate Professor Achilleas Boukis	
Elina Mavrikiou	

Date: 28-03-2025