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Date: 20-02-2025

External Evaluation Report

(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
LARNACA COLLEGE
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** na
- **Department/ Sector:** na
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (1 Έτος/12 μήνες/3 Semesters/90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό).

Με καθορισμένη ειδίκευση

- Διοίκηση
- Διαχείριση πλούτου
- Διαχείριση Ακινήτων
- Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

In English:

**Business Administration (3 semesters, 90 ECTS,
MBA, E-Learning)**

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English and Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

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\]](#).

In Greek:
In English:
Management
Wealth Management
Real Estate Management

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The site visit at Larnaca College in Larnaca took place on February 18-19 February 2025. The members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met with Head of Institution Charalambos Neophytou, Director of Academic Affairs and Head of Internal Evaluation Committee Andreas Kirlappos, as well as representatives of the relevant Departments and the Coordination Committee. Presentations about Larnaca College as well as the programmes evaluated here were given by College representatives. The EEC members also met with a number of teaching staff, comprising both full-time and part-time teaching staff, covering both a variety of business core modules and general education modules.

After the lunch break, the EEC met with a group of external stakeholder representatives, managers in companies and the public sector and potential employers of graduates of Larnaca College. Furthermore, in the afternoon, the EEC met with four student representatives (three from the MBA and one from the BBA). Computer laboratories and the library were observed. The EEC also met with Head of Administration Elena Demetriou, Registrar Chryso Christofi, and Head of Admissions / International Office Anastasia Gidari. Before the site visit, the detailed Application for Evaluation – Accreditation Program of Study was shared and carefully reviewed by the EEC members.

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

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof Carole Elliott	Chair	University of St Andrews Business School
Prof Edgar Loew	Member	Frankfurt School of Finance & Management
Prof Christian Geisler Asmussen	Member	Copenhagen Business School
Dr Pantelis Papadopoulos	Member/ E-Learning Expert for the MBA E-Learning	University of Twente
Elina Mavrikiou	Student	University of Cyprus
Marina Constandinidou	Member from the Professional Association	Real Estate Agent

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:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
 - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
 - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

- The programme has not been offered yet, so there are no students to be involved in the development of the content. Nevertheless, this was also not mentioned at any point as a potential process in the future.

- The material is aligned with EQF. However, a statement that a full-time working person could still take full course load and finish on time raises concerns on how this would be possible and if indeed the ECTS represent an accurate measure of the workload for the students.
- The programme has not been offered yet, so there is no data for that. However, the programme does not foresee any limitation or plan to guide part-time students into an efficient plan. Instead the upper limit is what the regulations suggest (5 years).
- There is a preparatory session regarding digital skills in the programme. This is useful as digital skills can determine the experience students have in the programme and therefore their academic achievements. This needs to be enhanced and include information on what it means for the students to be active and engaged in an online format. Especially since the average student is expected to be older and working full-time, with limited if any experience in online education.
- The design of the programme's content is close to the College's conventional (face-to-face) MBA programme, with many of the same modules but also some differences. In particular, being targeted at an international audience, it deliberately emphasizes the international dimension. Hence, it has a new course called "Global Economy" which contains elements of international economics and other topics.

Strengths

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

- The College is small and therefore flexible in setting up and applying new processes.
- Quality assurance overall seems well thought out with various systems and routines, which are consistent across the various programmes run by the College.
- The programme contains core courses that would be expected in an MBA, in particular Strategic Management, and the Management specialization in addition covers operations and marketing. The specializations in Real Estate and Wealth Management are innovative and matched carefully to stakeholder inputs as well as the existing competences of College teaching staff.

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 emphasis on delegation means that teaching staff will be trusted to monitor the continued participation and engagement of the students. This can be good if the staff apply the same effort and standards, but there is also a risk of leaving these policies to the discretion of staff as it does not guarantee a certain standard and students might experience inconsistencies across courses and over time. For example, there are no programme-wide policies for how many lectures a student can miss before action is taken (and for which action to be taken). This is especially critical for a distance learning programme where the daily face-to-face contact with students is absent.
- Additional preparatory and training sessions need to be included in the programme for both teachers and students regarding their digital skills and their ability to work effectively/efficiently in an online learning setting (support self-regulation, planning, etc.).
- It is not always entirely clear what the overarching logic of the choice of courses in the programme is and why the included courses are chosen as opposed to alternatives. Examples are provide in the following.
- The programme has no course on finance and accounting, which is otherwise included in the College's conventional MBA programme (as "Financial Strategy") and would be expected to be covered in any MBA. Instead, all three specializations here have a module called "Credit and Lending" which from the description sounds like a mix of macroeconomics and finance, leaving it uncertain how (especially) accounting is covered. This omission is problematic since one of the learning objectives of the programme is "Skills in

numeracy to enable [students] to understand and use finance and accounting processes”, but accounting is not mentioned anywhere else in the application (except in the description of faculty profiles).

- To further strengthen the programme’s focus, there is a need for more curriculum or courses on international management / international business, particularly for the Management specialization. Currently, only one week in the Strategic Management course is dedicated to these issues, and more such content would nicely complement and connect the courses of Strategic Management and Global Economy.
- The EEC believes the e-Learning MBA with the Real Estate specialization fulfills the provisions of the Estate Agents' Law and the requirements of the The Council of Registration of Estate Agents. In particular, if the diploma's modules include 50% + 1 of the subjects stipulated as 'examination material' in the Estate Agents' Regulations, which were produced in accordance with the Law, the diploma is considered fit for the Law's purposes.
- In terms of learning objectives, the application has a number of errors that make it difficult to assess its quality. For example, the course “Strategic Management” (which arguably is central in an MBA) has well described content, but its learning objectives (as well as the field “Presentation of the Course”) then apparently describes a different course, “Wealth Management”.
- Also, the learning objectives for most courses are generic in the sense that they take the form “identify and describe basic concepts related to [course title]”, “critically evaluate the basic notions and principles of [course title]”, etc. This suggests that these objectives have not been crafted by the prospective specialized teaching faculty, but rather generated in a more automatic fashion. This is especially surprising for a course like “Leadership and Innovation”, which already exists in the conventional MBA with specific learning objectives like “Give students an opportunity to develop a plan for how to improve and develop their own leadership style and competencies”. Such a learning objective is highly relevant for this course but is not mentioned in this (distance learning) MBA, even though the course description has role playing activities that would seem to relate to it. In short, it seems that the learning objectives of the courses have not been given sufficient development time.
- Language requirements need to be clarified before publishing the programme online. The application says that the instruction language is English and Greek, which is confusing as it might signal that students need to master both languages—while in reality they choose between an English and a Greek pathway (that are identical except for the language of instruction). It is well described how students’ English proficiency is assessed, but not clear how students’ Greek proficiency is assessed, although this was explained during the visit.

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	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
 - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *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.

- It is not clear what the e-learning methodology is for the programme. More emphasis is given to the technological infrastructure than the pedagogy, the instructional design, and the teachers'/students' skills in dealing with online education. Even though infrastructure is necessary, it is not enough for meaningful online education.
- The learning design is not geared toward social development or soft skills, in general. The inclusion of group work is there, but there is no standard provision on how to monitor and facilitate meaningful peer interaction. Again, it seems that this relies primarily on the individual experience of each teacher without a set training procedure.
- There was a repeated mention of waiting for feedback from the students to modify and tailor the programme accordingly. However, this approach is not sufficient. Indeed, a programme needs to adapt based on student

feedback, but first, there is a need for clear and practical guidelines on what the underlying pedagogy is, what is expected by teachers and students, and indeed when and how the goals of the programmes will be addressed at a course and programme level. At the moment, it seems that again this application is based on the individual experiences and skills of each teacher without a coherent picture of what the programme would/should look like.

- The programme will be open to everyone that meets the admission criteria, but more thought is needed on the target audience. The programme expects that most students will be older and full-time employees. At the same time, younger students that just finished their Bachelor's studies may also be admitted. It is not clear what the strategy or intention is of the programme on how to deal with group work and teaching of such a diverse audience. The issue is not that this is not possible, but the concern that the programme expects enrolls to happen to then decide what the approach will be.
- Assessment includes several items and opportunities throughout the courses. This is a positive aspect as it will allow for a more comprehensive view of student achievements. More attention is needed though on continuous and stealth assessment as online education allows for more space for students to be left behind or be carried on by peers' contributions to group work.
- The College uses a widely used and appropriate set of tools for online education. Perhaps more emphasis is given on tools that will help the teacher disseminate material and assignments and less on student-centered approaches that would allow the students to create a profile. Specifically, more emphasis is given to Microsoft Teams, which is primarily a content management system, and less on Moodle which is a learning management system.
- The College uses proctoring tools for written exams, which is a very positive aspect for online education. In addition, the presentation on IT support also mentioned the use of AI for plagiarism and student activity evaluation. While this can be useful, the College should also already work on AI compliance regulations based on the newly enforced EU's AI Act that dictates what can and cannot be done with AI in higher education.
- Learning objectives for the programme and the courses are provided, but it is not always clear though how they are going to be achieved. For example, the students should be able to develop their leadership, managerial, and soft skills within the programme, but at the same time online attendance is largely optional and the student groups are also free to self-organize, meaning that they can also turn opportunities of collaborative learning into divided individual work. The staff showed goodwill and intentions to address these concerns the approach, again, seems to be opportunistic and not based on how to design learning experiences online. Instead of expecting that students will be engaged because they would find the material interesting or because they are mature, therefore more self-aware, the learning design should take into account engagement theories and motivational design that are commonly used (e.g., Keller's ARCS model and Biggs and Tang constructive alignment approach). These and other instructional design theories are widely used in teacher training programmes, especially for online education and it is advised that the College either sets up in-house training for its teachers or supports them in getting training elsewhere.
- There are weekly interactive activities that students are expected to complete. However, these can be done online and the students could also opt to watch the recorded lectures instead of participating in the live sessions. While this is aligned with the regulations, the College does not have a specific process in place or a threshold for triggering reaching-out processes. Specifically, it was discussed that a student may be invisible to the teacher throughout the whole duration of the course. If the student participates in the interactive activities (offline) and submits the required assignment (offline), then the student could skip any synchronous interaction. This is alarming especially since it questions how the learning objectives regarding social skills and being part of a learning community are going to be met. Instead, the College is strongly advised to have a plan on how to keep the students active, create links with their fellow students and teachers, and consider

interaction a privilege and a necessity instead of something optional and time-consuming. Again, it seems that a lot of weight is put on the shoulders of the teachers without specific college-wide policies and processes.

- Regarding students' different abilities and learning needs, the College will have an intake interview with them individually. This is useful and could inform the teacher of special issues. This is though a snapshot of students' situation and does not take into account how the students' needs may change during the programme (e.g., stress, burnout, financial situation, work conditions, etc.). Study advisors are assigned to each student so that this information would eventually become available to the teacher.
- The students are involved in research activity only in their final project.

Strengths

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

- The teaching staff includes members with experience (at different degrees) in online education and with a positive attitude to further develop their teaching skills.
- The technical infrastructure is based on widely used and effective tools that when combined appropriately can offer meaningful learning experiences.
- Assessment includes several items allowing the opportunity for a more comprehensive view of student achievement.
- In general, e-learning is a good and helpful platform for both students and teachers. The recorded lectures can be watched whenever it is convenient for the student, making the process less stressful. At the beginning of the program, students are given clear instructions on how to use the various platforms and applications.

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.

- Training and support are needed for both teachers and students before and during the programme. For teachers, this goes beyond technical support. It is even more important to provide support on pedagogy and learning design for online education. Similarly, for students, the need is not only to provide a manual of the user interface but also to address misconceptions about what online education is and what is expected, especially since the majority of the audience envisioned is older people who may not be as comfortable with technology as younger ones and that will have limited availability due to work and family obligations.
- The impression of the EEC is that the e-learning competences of the College currently exist as tacit knowledge among certain highly experienced individuals. This creates a challenge for scalability and risk management, and we recommend that these are to a higher extent codified as processes and diffused to other teaching staff.
- The College needs to spend a significant amount of time considering the teaching approach, the underlying pedagogy, the cohesion of the learning experience for the students, the overall learning objective and where and how they will be met. At this point, it seems, as described above that a lot is based on teachers' individual experiences and abilities to deal with problems as they come. The College must be proactive and not reactive on issues that deal with the good functioning of its staff and the learning experiences of its students.
- The e-learning programme does not institutionalize the possibility of internships or other practical training modes, which contradicts the emphasis on "practical and transferable skills" suggested in the description of programme outcomes.

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	Non-compliant
2.2	Practical training	Non-compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially 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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *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 met several teaching/faculty members during our visit. Most of the faculty members we met had a tenure of many years. The majority of them holds PhD degrees, and many of them hold these and other degrees from foreign institutions. They all seem engaged and professional and have very good English language skills.
- In addition, they seem to be pleased with working conditions and the overall College working environment. They appear to take teaching seriously and are supportive of the initiatives regarding research. Most of them are still involved in business outside the College which provides them with even more practical experience.
- The College generally encourages research by individual teaching faculty. At our visit, examples were given of faculty doing presentations and workshops in other countries and in collaboration with other universities (underlined by a list of current articles of faculty members in practice-oriented and other journals). The staff has freedom to design their own research agenda and are supported with a research budget and the possibility for more to be granted ad hoc. The teaching load is 4 courses per semester, and one course release associated with being research active. Research output varies across teaching faculty, which is to be expected.
- It seems, and it was also admitted by the programme, that dealing with the particularities of online education is on the shoulders of each teacher. This also poses the question of coherence and a seamless learning experience for the students. More experienced teachers may be ready to switch to online education, but we did not find set processes and procedures at a college level on how to train and prepare students and teachers.
- The teaching staff is willing to learn more and be trained in online education, also agreeing that additional training should be organized at the college level. As an example, members of the teacher staff have attended external training seminars or visited other universities. These are great first steps, but more is needed. As an

indication, the seminar mentioned was 13 hours, while a teaching qualification certificate in Northern Europe is 150 hours for basic and 300 hours for senior teachers.

Strengths

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

- The experienced faculty have been with Larnaca College for a long time. Therefore, there seems to be a good work environment that is beneficial to the MBA program.
- Furthermore, it seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. The small size of the College facilitates frequent communication among teaching staff and with programme coordinators.
- The course release for research activity is a good policy.

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 recognizes that it is financially challenging to facilitate research in the context of a small private college and we do not suggest that this needs to be in top journals (e.g. as described by the AJG 2024). However, especially with the ambition of becoming a university, thinking about further institutionalization of research production would be useful.
- On that note, it is not entirely clear what constitutes “sufficient” research activity for the course release, or how research output in general is evaluated institutionally and how it is rewarded (except for being encouraged). It would be a logical next step to categorize research outlets and associate them with a number of points (e.g. one point for the lowest-ranked journals, two for the next level, etc.). This would allow the College to quantitatively assess research faculty research output.
- We would encourage faculty members to continue with the research process, attend conferences, and even organize actual research seminars at the College in which faculty would present research papers to others in order to discuss these, a practice that may improve the quality of the research.
- Faculty research activities could be further promoted and integrated into the classroom in a consistent way. Most of the articles listed by the College do not deal with the core content of the respective concentrations. Therefore, we recommend to actively research in the fields of the programme as well (even if it is just visiting respective conferences). We also propose to include topics related to ESG from an accounting and reporting perspective. Especially in that area, it is not obvious whether the necessary know-how is already available in the faculty or how further training will take place.
- Generally, the number of teaching staff seems to be appropriate. However, regarding this specific programme we have serious doubts.
- It is not clear if students are involved in research. In the thesis, they have the option to do a literature review, theory development, business plan or consultancy project. The first two do not specify any practical relevance (which is a problem in an MBA) while the last two do not relate to research. Rather than these options, it should be clear that the students’ theses should simultaneously fulfill the requirements of being (1) research-based and (2) practically applicable.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Non-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.

- Larnaca College has transparent regulations, policies, processes and criteria for student admission, incl. transfer students. Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression are in place.
- The College ensures that students benefit from their knowledge from practice as well as apply the gained knowledge in practical settings through-out the study.
- Students are provided with certificates that clearly acknowledge the knowledge they have gained during their studies.
- Since age differences can be a significant factor in the program, students have the opportunity to be grouped based on common characteristics and join different groups to complete their assignments.

Strengths

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

- The College is transparent about admission procedures and about progress monitoring.
- The admission requirements and the registration process are precisely described in the application form over some pages and were well explained during the visit.
- It offers students opportunities to achieve supplementary knowledge, experiences and recognition.
- Larnaca College's administrative staff are very knowledgeable, and clearly demonstrated their expertise to us about all admission and registration procedures during our meeting with them, and throughout the visit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- The processes are well established for all programmes including this one. However, since this is a proposed programme that is not currently running, we cannot evaluate whether these processes work adequately in the context of this programme.

- We have concerns as to the policies when it comes to attendance, as mentioned above. If someone misses classes for a whole month and only then does the administration reach out to check what is going on, it might already be too late. This is unfair for other students who attend the class and should ideally happen after two or three consecutive absences.
- Accordingly, we recommend the College begin to institutionalize and codify its procedures with regard to policies on: student attendance expectations; criteria for late submission of assignments and possible penalties. While the processes for the College's other programmes are in place, learner requirements and support are qualitatively different on part-time e-learning programmes and require more explicit criteria.
- Since the programme is not currently running, we cannot assess the effectiveness of the processes so have marked the sub-areas below non-compliant.

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	Not applicable
4.2	Student progression	Not applicable
4.3	Student recognition	Not applicable
4.4	Student certification	Not applicable

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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*

- *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
- *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
- *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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.*

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.

- Each course has a detailed description of goals and activities. There is not always enough information on what the interactive activity will be, but at least there is a provision that each course will have one each week.
- The learning material includes text, images, and videos. Additional, more innovative tools, such as serious games, simulations, and sandboxes have not been seen or discussed.
- The e-learning unit is primarily focused on the technical infrastructure and not on the “pedagogical planning unit for e-learning” as described in this form. The support is more on what tools are there and not on how to use them in a pedagogically meaningful way to provide a range of learning experiences.
- The technology used can deal with fluctuations in student numbers.
- Much of the learning design is geared towards a teacher-centered approach (see previous comments in section 2).
- There is an introductory session for the students on how to use the tools provided. As mentioned earlier, this is focused primarily on user manuals and not on a pedagogical approach.
- The EEC has not seen recording facilities such as a studio, a green screen, or high-definition microphones that could ensure a high-quality learning material (e.g., recorded lectures).

- Each student is assigned a study advisor. However, there was no mention of mentors or counselors.
- There is no particular plan for addressing the needs of a diverse student population. On the contrary, as described in Section 2, most of the weight seems to be placed on the teachers' shoulders who will have to deal with issues on an ad hoc basis.
- No specific support is provided to students regarding self-regulation, planning, goal setting, etc. This is important in any kind of learning setting, but it is crucial in online education where there is a higher probability of disengagement and dropout, while there is space for people to be left behind or hide behind their peers' contributions.

Strengths

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

- The learning material includes text, images, and videos for a richer learning experience.
- The technology used (Microsoft Teams and Moodle) is widely used and robust and able to support online education.
- There is an introductory session for the students on the user interface.
- Each student is assigned a study advisor.
- The students have remote access to library resources including comprehensive databases with the most important and relevant scientific journals.

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.

- More thought is needed on how each weekly activity will address the learning objectives of the course and the overall learning objective of the programme. The mapping seen seems to have gaps in it.
- More engaging and innovative tools could be included to further support students' development.
- Pedagogical support for teachers and students needs to be established within the college or outsourced.
- Mentors for teachers and students could provide additional support and increase engagement.
- The College needs to develop a clear idea on the audience it wants to attract and how to deal with their needs and prior experiences.
- In the end of the programme, the students should be capable self-learners able to self-organize, plan, set their own goals and monitor and evaluate their learning trajectories. The college should provide tools, guidance, and continuous support for that.
- Since the quality of the material can dictate its effectiveness, investing in audiovisual equipment to allow for the production of high quality recorded lectures is advised.

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

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

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

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.

In this evaluation report, we have assessed the proposed distance learning MBA. Some of our comments relate to the renewed emphasis of the content on the global economy, which we find promising, but also on the omitted aspects such as accounting and international business content.

The EEC was impressed by the overall robust nature of student support mechanisms for the standard programmes offered by the College. However, we are recommending that further consideration be given to the distinct nature of the learner experience on a part-time e-learning programme that requires more explicit and standardised processes. We therefore recommend the College spend more time considering the teaching approach, the underlying pedagogy, the cohesion of the learning experience for the students, the overall learning objectives and where and how they will be met.

We had some concerns about the systematic development of distance learning competencies among teaching staff and the institutionalization of routines and policies for this new mode of teaching. Finally, we would encourage a strategic dialogue among College leadership about the optimal scale, scope and growth of the programme portfolio. The e-Learning MBA adds additional variation to the existing offerings of the College, for example with new specializations and courses that deviate from the already existing conventional MBA, and in addition introduces a distance learning element that requires new processes and teaching approaches. At the same time, many of the existing programmes run with a limited number of students and would benefit from increased scale economies. Hence, it is an open question whether it would be advantageous to resource the scaling up of existing programmes over the introduction of new ones.

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof Carole Elliott	
Prof Edgar Loew	
Prof Christian Geisler Asmussen	
Dr Pantelis Papadopoulos	
Elina Mavrikiou	
Marina Constandinidou	

Date: 20-02-2025