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Date: January 22nd 2022

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** Mesoyios College
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Mesoyios College
- **Department/ Sector:** n/a
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In English: Business Administration (4y, 8 semesters, 240ECTS)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Registered but not evaluated
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In English: Marketing Direction and Hospitality Direction

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

A. Introduction

Agenda:

The site visit took place according to the following schedule of meetings:

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee
- A meeting with the Head of the Institution– short presentation of the Institution, mission and strategic planning, connecting with the society, development processes
- A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee- system and quality assurance strategy, ensuring quality for the programmes of study (QA session)
- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the programme(s) Coordinator(s).
with short presentations of the School's structure, the feasibility study of the programme(s), the curriculum (i.e. philosophy, the programme's standards, allocation of courses per semester, weekly content of each course, the learning outcomes and ECTS, teaching methodologies, admission criteria for prospective students, student assessment, final exams, the people involved in the programme's design and development) and the methodology and equipment used in teaching and learning (i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching material, evaluation methods, projects, samples of written examinations / thesis).
- A meeting only with members of the teaching staff on each course of the programme for all the years of study (QA session) discussing the CVs (i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, compliance with Staff ESG), on any other duties in the institution and teaching obligations in other programmes, the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG), the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF and the assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.
- A meeting with members of the administrative staff.
- A meeting with students (4 students, 3 (overseas students) from the unaccredited Business Administration programme, one (Cypriot student) taking the HM Diploma)
- A meeting with the Head of the Institution, the Head of the relevant department and the programme's Coordinator- exit discussion (questions, clarifications).

During the site visit, the EEC visited the library, teaching rooms, break-out rooms, classes, and the computer laboratories of the programme/study under evaluation and was able to look at a (pre-recorded (live) lecture.

The EEC confirms staff were available during the whole day of the site visit for queries and the institution provided very short presentations in the sessions needed, so that adequate time remained for questions by the EEC members and productive discussion.

General remarks

The EEC made it clear from the start of the visit that the purpose was not only confirmation of compliance with the required standards, but also to help the institution to further improve the program (content and delivery). The discussions that took place were hence in line with a “peer review”, i.e., very open, future-focused and in a broader context than just the standards. The context the EEC deemed relevant for this evaluation, was characterized by the (general) challenges of higher education. Some trends and evolutions in the world of HE have been accelerated by the pandemic (e.g., online delivery, hybrid learning, ...) and issues regarding globalization and internationalization, knowledge transfer and knowledge creation, impact of education and research, employability, ... were equally discussed to better frame the importance of the standards and of continuous improvement.

In general, the EEC found clear evidence of standard compliance, but more importantly, the EEC was impressed by the dynamic, young, highly motivated, and qualified faculty, and the close relationships (personal touch and individual attention) between staff/faculty and students at Mesoyios. This is, of course, due to the small number of students in the program, but it is also well “embedded” in the institution’s approach to HE, thereby establishing a competitive advantage and distinctive mission and vision.

The EEC commends Mesoyios College for having a direct impact on the local/regional economy (also referring to the Troodos program) and the support the College offers to business development by providing well-trained students in high demand on the “market”. The College has close connections to the business world and to HE partners in Europe (Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland) and in India and actively and effectively helps students to find jobs (direct career services) beyond the support it offers its students throughout the whole learning experience (work-study support). The EEC - and the Mesoyios College students - highly appreciate the “family” approach and connections between staff, faculty, and students: the College can be proud of the enthusiasm and the engagement of faculty and administrative staff.

Points of discussion and areas for further improvement:

1. Mesoyios College’s growth strategy (both in terms of number of students (per programme) and number of programmes to be offered) and in terms of creating a university, call for a serious and not underestimated strategic planning, execution, and change management endeavour. The EEC recommends the College safeguards existing operations at existing quality levels during that transformation and ensures current operations will not suffer from the strain on time, human, financial and infrastructure resources such a transformation will undoubtedly entail;

2. The role of (active, practice-focused) research activities and experiential (practical) learning in the context of “blended” learning pedagogies: the College is recommended to further extend and continue to integrate the kind of research activities aligned with the mission and vision and to ensure faculty and staff have the necessary time and financial resources to successfully do so. Leveraging the (international) academic and business networks the College has built is a sensible strategy to

do so, certainly when the College is set to scale-up its operations, research time will become more crucial to achieve success;

3. Mesoyios College is also recommended to increase the number of homeland students to balance the very high proportion of international students (Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Moldavia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Russia). The Troodos initiative is proof of the College's intent to do so as this initiative (in cooperation with the Cyprus Government and with EU support) is focused on stimulating development in the more rural areas of the country;

4. The development of a clear strategy for (young) faculty to obtain a PhD is recommendable. The recruitment of PhD holding faculty will become necessary when the College starts master-level programmes. Being able to attract and compensate (international) faculty (competitive, cost-of-living adjusted wages) with the necessary qualifications for high quality delivery of such programmes and research (time & output) will be key to success (reputation & attractiveness) in the College's future.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| Name | Position | University |
|--|---|---|
| Prof. Dr. Philip Vergauwen, Chair | Professor Management Accounting & Control, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management | Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium |
| Prof. Dr. Anita Eves | Professor of Hospitality Management, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Faculty of Social and Social Sciences | University of Surrey, United Kingdom |
| Prof. Dr. Andreas Papatheodorou | Professor of Industrial and Spatial Economics with emphasis on Tourism, School of Business, Department of Business Administration | University of Aegean, Greece |
| Mr. Georgios Aristotelous | Student member | Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus |

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

The College has clear procedures for quality assurance, and these are laid out on the public-facing College website. Moreover, and in collaboration with QUALISYS CONSULTANTS LTD the College has developed and implemented ISO 9001:2015 and is in the process of certification for ISO14001. The regulations are appropriate and show what is required of staff and students in terms of behaviour and commitment. There is a clear organizational structure that supports quality assurance through Committees with specific remits and prescribed processes., e.g., the process to ensure assessment quality, from confirmation, by review of exam questions through to ratification of marks achieved.

A disciplinary process is in place to cover a range of disciplinary offences, including plagiarism. The nature and forms of plagiarism are laid out clearly in the regulations. Currently, plagiarism is detected manually by module leaders using on-line plagiarism checkers. Students are also encouraged to use free plagiarism detection software to check their work prior to submission.

1.2 Design, Approval, On-Going Monitoring and Review

The programme objectives align with the strategy of the College. Moreover, the programme has clearly articulated learning outcomes, at an appropriate level for the target qualification and in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The College has established relationships with industry partners to provide work opportunities, industry visits and inputs from the external stakeholders into the programme. The module learning outcomes are linked to the LOs and LGs of the programme, although not explicitly. In addition, in some cases the Module LOs comprise a very long list more akin to a content list. The EEC suggests that the College should further clarify and rationalize the LOs and LGs and, at the same time, make the different learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies it de facto uses, more visible in course descriptions and evaluations.

Student workloads are clear and allow students to undertake paid work if they wish/need to. Requirements for progressions are clearly stated in public-facing regulations and there is a mechanism to recognize prior learning and/or work experience, which may prove of value added, especially to mature students.

Based on the information provided for the BA programme, it is evident that students are involved in College Committees, including those approving modifications to modules. The procedure for change is through a formal Committee, which is appropriate to ensure the integrity of the programme of study. Modules are reviewed annually in-light of student feedback and advances in the discipline.

Students can undertake an internship. This is not compulsory as for overseas students securing a placement can be difficult. Nonetheless, as the College aims at increasing the number of Cypriot and EU students into the programme, making the internship compulsory at some stage may add to the credibility of the programme in the marketplace. The placement does include an assessment of performance.

1.3 Public Information

The College website provides comprehensive information about the programmes, admissions criteria, programme learning outcomes and aims.

1.4 Information Management

The College has established Key Performance Indicators in accordance also with its ISO certification(s). Our impression is that many students are eager to go on exchange, and currently there are several student mobility agreements, especially with Polish, Slovak, and Swiss institutions. Success and progression rates in other programmes are known and monitored, and students complete an end of module questionnaire for each module taken. The information from this is used to inform changes to modules; moreover, students use informal routes of feedback throughout their modules. The College may like to think about an end-of-programme evaluation to determine overall satisfaction at a programme-level.

The College is currently considering the introduction of an Alumni Office, which, given the projected rise in student numbers, could be extended to become a Careers and Alumni Office.

Findings

The EEC found ample evidence of compliance w.r.t. study programme and study programme design and development.

Strengths

The EEC commends the College for the following areas of strengths:

1. clearly presented public-facing website containing all information needed by prospective and current students;
 2. clearly articulated quality assurance procedures, supporting the requirements of ISO certification;
 3. involvement of students in key committees;
 4. exchange/mobility programs are already directed towards Europe which aligns with the new recruitment strategy;
 5. established collaborations with industry and academic partners; and
 6. industry experience of staff bringing context to learning.
7. Actively exploring additional plagiarism software for use by staff and students

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC identified the following areas of (continuous) improvement:

1. (ongoing) completion of development and implementation of KPIs;
2. To reduce the number LOs in some module outlines
3. To more explicitly link LOs from modules to Programme LOs and also link assessment methods to module LOs.

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

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

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Mesoyios College facilitates a student-centred learning environment via the provision of support to learners through various means and support services. This includes an academic adviser who is allocated to each student. The College's Registrar confirmed during a meeting with the EEC that each academic adviser is encouraged to meet with their student advisees twice a semester. While this is not mandatory, the measure would help to ensure that issues ranging from welfare to academics are picked up and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

It was also reiterated by the administrative team during their meeting with the EEC that, while complaints are few and far between, there are processes in place to ensure that these are documented and resolved in a timely fashion. It is also evident that several academic staff have relevant experience in their fields of delivery, and some are pursuing a doctorate in the field of tourism and hospitality. This allows the synthesis of theory and practice critical to a vocational and context specific programme.

Course outlines are mostly structured to be generic, indicating teaching and learning methods and concise assessment modes. During the EEC's meeting with teaching staff, it was evident that teaching sessions were interactive and student- centred, encouraging students to engage. At the EEC's meeting with students, the latter were expressly complementary of academic staff whom they felt were attentive and ever ready to help and advise.

The curriculum is consistent with similar programmes elsewhere and includes the key tenets of business and management. It allows specialisation from Year 2 with students choosing either a Hospitality or marketing direction. This is a positive element of the programme. In terms of the hospitality stream, it was suggested that some tourism modules could be added (which will be taught anyway in the new Casino Management programme) and also Revenue Management, which is a key function in contemporary hotel/hospitality management businesses.

2.2 Practical Training

Several academic staff with industry experience indicated how they incorporate practice into theory for the students. Students also have access to practical labs for rooms division and food and beverage management.

It was revealed to the EEC that several Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were recently signed with industrial partners (hotels) which would enable their students to visit and experience the operations first-hand. This is paramount to the students' learning experience.

2.3 Student Assessment

Assessments for each module are approved by internal review prior to use. Students are encouraged to prepare their assessments well in advance of deadlines. They are also aware of assessment requirements prior to submission. Assessment criteria and requirements are therefore transparent. Students can seek formative feedback throughout their programme, via in- class exercises and homework.

Findings

The EEC found ample evidence of compliance w.r.t. student-centered learning, teaching & assessment.

Strengths

The EEC identified the following areas of strength:

1. Moderation procedures in place to ensure consistency and fairness of marks
2. Access to Erasmus+ placements
3. The programme enabling specialisation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC suggests the College continues its continuous improvement efforts with respect to:

1. considering extending the online learning facilities for the primary purpose of enabling student e-learning and facilitating streamlined engagement with students;
2. considering the introduction of an Alumni Office, which, given the projected rise in student numbers, could be extended to become a Careers and Alumni Office;
3. adding tourism and Revenue management modules to the Hospitality/Hotel specialisation.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---|---|
| 2.1 | Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology | Compliant |
| 2.2 | Practical training | Compliant |
| 2.3 | Student assessment | Compliant |

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development.

For development of teaching staff, the College supports attendance of conferences, membership of professional bodies and travel expenses for fieldwork with 2% of academic revenues to be spent annually for such staff development activities (for both academic and support staff). From discussion with teaching staff, it has emerged that the College is supportive of those undertaking doctoral degrees and teaching and administrative tasks are usually planned around the PhD commitments. To incentivise members of staff the College operates a 2% increase on direct payroll.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Out of the seventeen (17) members of academic staff currently working in the College (note: potential number of members of staff is 23 according to the documentation provided), 11 work as full-timers and six (6) as part-timers. Moreover, all members of staff are at the level of Lecturer. The College has two (2) PhD holders and five (5) PhD candidates - the remaining academics hold only Masters' degrees. Very few people in the College have solid research aspirations. The EEC strongly advises that the College should undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree.

3.3. Synergies between research and teaching

The College invests an amount of €28,000 with an annual increase of 30% from other funds to be obtained through EU/Cyprus Government and other research funding sources. So far, the College has been able to attract some faculty from other schools and countries such as Poland, India, and Switzerland. There is a Research Committee in place, but it is the impression of this EEC that this Committee might not be too active or with a set of well-defined portfolios at this stage. The research activity of the College is, however, in a nascent stage.

Findings

The EEC found evidence of overall compliance w.r.t. teaching staff (faculty).

Strengths

The EEC commends Mesoyios college with respect to:

1. the forward-facing approach: the College is focused on further development including sensible international collaborations and industry connections. Particularly, the collaboration with the Glion and Les Roches Hotel Management Schools plays an important role in their current activities of linking students with institutions abroad where they can continue their vocational courses at Bachelor (and future Master) level.
2. Collaborations with institutes like Glion Institute of Higher Education and Les Roches Global Hospitality Education (members of SOMMET Education Group, Switzerland) add credibility and reputation: both of these institutes recognize all courses of the College's hospitality and business programmes of study and their graduates can transfer credits and continue their studies in Switzerland to obtain a Bachelor's degree in their relevant programs of study, either hospitality or business (1 year + 4-6 months internship).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC strongly advises the College:

1. to undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree. In this context, the EEC would welcome an increased visibility of advertised positions in academic platforms such as the Trinet tourism and hospitality community <https://tim.hawaii.edu/about-values-vision-mission-accreditation/trinet/>, or internationally or academic job fora such as www.jobs.ac.uk, www.timeshighereducations.com, www.akadeus.com;
2. to increase attention to Affirmative Action policies in staff recruitment and development;
3. to support the Research Centre to co-ordinate research activities and encourage publication in peer-reviewed journals.



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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|--|---|
| 3.1. | Teaching staff recruitment and development | Compliant |
| 3.2 | Teaching staff number and status | Partially Compliant |
| 3.3 | Synergies of teaching and research | Compliant |

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

The College follows a non-discrimination student admission policy whilst evaluating each candidate regardless of their race, religion, sex, disability, or nationality. Students are asked to declare their needs on admission so that the College can be prepared to support students. The College has also engaged in a work: study arrangement with local hotels to widen access to those of lower incomes. This allows students to work and earn as they study. Typically, the hotels also provide accommodation and food, albeit this is taken from wages. This is a very important initiative in the widening participation agenda. The wide variety of student backgrounds and experiences means that students can share with each other and develop a cultural heritage promotion attitude in the student community of the College. Related processes are carried out and implemented in a transparent manner and based on students' previous records and high school grades.

In terms of regulations and admission criteria, the College's policies are identical to those of other tertiary education establishments in Cyprus; these include a Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate and Proficiency in English language. For non-Higher-Secondary-Certificate holders, candidates may submit an equivalent qualification of Higher Secondary Education from their country of origin which can be evaluated accordingly. English language requirements are set at an appropriate level and those falling short of admissions criteria can join English language programmes prior to starting their programme. In addition, all students take English language courses as part of their programme. Students can also transfer credits from other institutions.

Currently, potential students are given the opportunity to apply for admission at any time, from the beginning of fall semester to the beginning of spring semester. This means that those unable to join the programme in October can join later rather than missing a full academic year. Whilst there are advantages to this practice, it does mean duplicate teaching adding to staff teaching workloads. Operating a single-entry point (unless credits are transferred that cover semester 1 content) will make the operation of the programme more efficient, especially as student numbers increase.

4.2 Student Progression

There is adequate monitoring of the students' progress during their studies, and more specifically their participation in the educational process through daily observation of class attendance. In addition, different forms of formative evaluations are carried out throughout the semester to determine student progression in a continuous manner. Teaching staff are always available when it comes to inquiries and are ready to answer any questions in advance as well as provide feedback; this is recognized and appreciated by students as discussed in their meeting with the EEC.

Student work is marked against generic grade descriptors, which should provide consistency, and are internally moderated to ensure appropriateness and fairness. The moderation is currently undertaken by the Programme lead. Whilst this works with current intake numbers, as intakes increase this role could become too onerous for one person and could be shared amongst academic staff. One generic Grade Descriptor currently covers all academic years. It is suggested that a separate descriptor is devised for each level of study to better guide staff marking work and inform students of the changing requirements over their years of study.

As discussed previously in this report, student services and support teams are provided and include academic advising, student's affairs office, student welfare, career support, personal support, counselling services, financial advice and mobility office. The Student Affairs Office is dedicated to assisting students in their personal and academic development as well as progression. Moreover, students are also allocated to an academic advisor, all of whom operate an open-door policy for students, meaning he or she is available at any time. As stated in the official website, the Academic Advisor meets each student twice every semester to review and discuss the student's academic performance and progression. As student numbers increase, it would be beneficial for academic staff to have office space on site to conduct student consultations in a confidential environment.

An Appeal Procedure is in place for students who feel their work has been marked unfairly. Appeals are investigated and adjustments made where appropriate. There was evidence during discussions of this process working well. The process is documented by the lecturer completing a "Change of Grades" form which explains the reason for changing the grade.

Furthermore, Erasmus+ is also implemented and aims to give students a lifetime experience of working or studying abroad. Erasmus is designed especially for academic institutions and students and provides beneficial support to all of them. The scheme is widely used by the College with students taking up this opportunity every year. The College has developed partnerships with colleges and employers overseas to facilitate this scheme.

4.3 Student recognition

When students arrive at the College with prior qualifications, an evaluation of their prior learning is made (in relation to ECTS credits and topics covered) which may exempt them from attending certain modules. This is a task undertaken by the Academic Committee and

the Module Leader, who are responsible for evaluating and ensuring comparability. The recognition process is always performed transparently by examining and comparing the module in regards with ECTS, content and level.

Academic credits earned in one programme may be transferred into another programme in the same or another College, subject to credits from other sources being acknowledged and that the process follows the accumulation of ECTS Key Documents, which include course catalogue, student application form, learning agreement and transcript of records.

To enhance their understanding and career prospects students can choose an optional internship as part of their studies.

4.4 Student certification

The criteria that must be met upon graduation include the completion of the programme requirements as indicated in the study guide, completion of all credits in each programme as specified in the study guide, a CPA of > 2.0 and a settlement of all financial obligations to the College. Then, the application for the issuance is laid out at the Office of the Registrar.

The process of final grading is thoroughly and carefully assessed through moderation by the relevant department and finally ratified by the Academic Committee. Marks are then authorised and approved by the Registrar with complete transparency.

Findings

The EEC finds overall compliance with the standards related to Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

Strengths

The EEC identified the following areas of strength of Mesoyios College:

1. all incoming students are given an English test upon entry to identify any weakness as English is the main language of the course. In this way, the College can recommend appropriate English language courses. For certificate holders of IELTS and IGCSE at the level required for admission, the test may not be mandatory;
2. The College has implemented a work: study option, allowing those normally unable to access further/higher education opportunities to engage. The college also supports those with visible and invisible disabilities to ensure programmes are accessible to as wide a population as possible;

3. the small student cohort means a personalised service to students from both academic and administrative staff;
4. adequate use of forms of on-going formative evaluation such as questionnaires, tests and quizzes are used and are helpful for students to monitor their progress and determine any weakness that should be rectified;
5. Erasmus internships and exchange programs are available and used, giving students experience of the wider world and expanding their career opportunities;
6. the College has an active appeal process allowing students to request review of marks that they perceive as unfair;
7. the College has a growing number of strategic partnerships with other academic institutions and industry enabling students to continue their studies in another institution or to take up internships;
8. pre-defined and published regulations in the official website regarding student certification are in place. The certification is accompanied by a diploma supplement, in line with the European and International standards.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends the College:

1. to consider making the internship a compulsory module: this would ensure all students benefit from work experience to complement their programme of study and improve their employment opportunities;
2. to develop generic grade descriptors for each year of study (see above);
3. to consider sharing the moderation task across the academic staff as student numbers will increase;
4. to consider moving to a single-entry point, with a second point only for students bringing credits that compensate for material (and ECTS) in semester 1 (see above).

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---|---|
| 4.1 | Student admission, processes and criteria | Compliant |
| 4.2 | Student progression | Compliant |
| 4.3 | Student recognition | Compliant |
| 4.4 | Student certification | Compliant |

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning Resources

Based on the tour of the College premises, the teaching and learning environment is adequate and readily accessible for students in their current numbers. The mock-up of guest rooms and a dining facility are adequate to support the achievement of the programme's objectives but may need expansion if numbers increase considerably.

The College provides students and staff with infrastructure and facilities suitable to the functioning of the programme. The College has relied on the Microsoft Teams platform to deal with both asynchronous and synchronous learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. A sample lecture was provided to the panel as an example of provision. It was suggested that ZOOM may be a better platform as it had additional functions to enable engaging classes. It was also noted that students did not have cameras on in the example lecture. This is not ideal, making it difficult for the lecturer to judge level of understanding and engagement. A 'cameras on' policy could help here.

The College has access to a variety of Plagiarism Checking software, and a clear Plagiarism Policy and Procedure.

The College subscribes to EBSCOhost allowing students to access a wide variety of academic sources. In addition, materials can be accessed from other Universities in Cyprus. This should mean students have access to ample sources to support their studies. The Library's stock of books is small, and somewhat random, but access to journals is more important at this level and is thus not seen as overly problematic. It may, however, be beneficial to ensure adequate copies of core texts or to arrange for these in digital form – especially for those unable to buy the books themselves.

5.2 Physical Resources

Based on the tour of the college premises, the physical resources, i.e., premises, library, classrooms, study facilities and availability of computers appear to be adequate in the

support of the study programme. The expansion of the College may put pressure on these resources in the future, albeit the technical capacity is over 700.

Available resources appear to be fit for purpose and students are aware of the services available.

Physical resources were accessible to those with disabilities – for instance ramp access and a stair lift to upper floors.

5.3 Human Support Resources

The College operates a mentoring system where each student is allocated an academic member of staff as an academic advisor. The EEC observed that the administrative staff are enthusiastic and motivated, as they regaled the panel with examples of how they ensure that students receive the support required, also evidenced by students who had need to use the services. These include counselling services that are outsourced to a professional external provider and careers advice. The College also assured the EEC that provisions are in place to identify and support students with additional learning needs. In accordance with CYQAA regulations, the College has also ensured compliance in accommodating students with physical disabilities. Students appear to be aware of the range of services provided and provided.

5.4 Student Support

The College has a process for the Recognition of Prior Learning enabling student mobility across different tertiary education institutions. The students who met with the EEC (3 overseas, one Cypriot) confirmed that the College provided highly satisfactory student support services that were readily accessible and responsive when they needed advice or help.

The College operates a Student Affairs office with a dedicated student affairs officer and careers officer (a relatively new appointment). The following services are provided by the student affairs office: personal development, student welfare services, Erasmus+ advice, academic/ personal counselling services and career placement.

The College has established articulation arrangements with various overseas institutions. One student had undertaken an internship in Poland and expressed their satisfaction with the experience, which was arranged by the College under the Erasmus+ scheme. Students who had financial difficulties were permitted to pay their tuition fees over several instalments. Scholarships are also offered based on academic merit. Students' mobility

within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported. The College assists students arriving from overseas with their search for accommodation and visas.

Findings

The EEC finds compliance with respect to the standards related to Learning Resources and student Support

Strengths

The EEC commends the College for:

1. the use of a structured support system for international students;
2. the availability of professional counselling services;
3. enabling access to students with both visible and invisible disabilities;
4. The responsiveness of support services

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC proposes the following recommendations for further development and continuous improvement:

1. to monitor adequacy of physical and other resources and their method of provision as student numbers grow;
2. to consider development of a 'cameras on' policy, in collaboration with students.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 5.1 | Teaching and Learning resources | Compliant |
| 5.2 | Physical resources | Compliant |
| 5.3 | Human support resources | Compliant |
| 5.4 | Student support | Compliant |

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 6.1. | Selection criteria and requirements | n/a |
| 6.2 | Proposal and dissertation | n/a |
| 6.3 | Supervision and committees | n/a |

D. Conclusions and Final Remarks

The EEC confirms the evidence of standard compliance at current levels of faculty and students.

The EEC specifically commends the College:

1. for having a direct impact on the local/regional economy (also referring to the Troodos program);
2. for its close connections to the business world and to HE partners in Europe and Asia (India);
3. for its efforts to actively and effectively help students to find jobs (direct career services) beyond the support it offers its students throughout the whole learning experience (work-study support);
4. for its highly appreciated “family” approach and direct, personal connections between staff, faculty and students.

The EEC discussed the following points of improvement and/or concern:

1. Mesoyios College’s growth strategy (both in terms of number of students (per programme) and number of programmes to be offered) and in terms of institutional transformation (creating a university);
2. The role of (active, practice-focused) research (academic output-oriented) activities and experiential (practical) learning;
3. Mesoyios College is also recommended to increase the number of homeland students to balance the high proportion of international students;
4. The development of a clear strategy that will effectively enable the College to attract and compensate (international) faculty (competitive, cost-of-living adjusted wages) with the necessary qualifications for high quality delivery of such programmes and research (time & output).

More specifically (programme level), the EEC recommends the College to:

5. formalize and to explicitly identify how the different learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies link to LOs, of which there was ample (informal) proof: rationalize the number of learning goals and objectives, while at the same time more explicitly linking those LOs and LGs with respect to sustainability, diversity, inclusion, etc. (in short, the UN’s SDGs) would do justice to what the College de facto delivers.
6. The College should also rationalize the delivery of its programmes as the current practice to deliver all modules twice per academic year results in a loss of scale economies and denies valuable time from academic staff that can be invested towards reading for a PhD degree and/or producing solid, peer-reviewed research outputs and/or participating in bids for external funding. The projected scaling-up of operations risks consuming additional staff resources to the detriment of research undertakings; therefore, the College should develop a plan to deal with this important challenge (see point 4).



E. Signatures of the EEC

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Signature</i> |
|--|------------------|
| Prof. Dr. Philip Vergauwen, Chair | |
| Prof. Dr. Anita Eves | |
| Prof. Dr. Andreas Papatheodorou | |
| Mr. Georgios Aristotelous | |

Date: January 22nd 2022