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Date: 14th October 2023

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Paphos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Economics, Business and Computer Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Economics and Business
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Τουριστικών Επιχειρήσεων (1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)

In English:

Business Administration in Tourism (1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, Master- MBA in Tourism)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating



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

The site visit took place on Thursday 12th October, comprising the following:

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC).
- A meeting with the Rector and Vice Rector of the University and members of the Internal Evaluation Committee. This included a short presentation and subsequent discussion and Q&A about the University, its mission, structure, and development planning; its quality assurance processes and strategy; and its relations with the society, the industry, and other external stakeholders.
- A meeting with the Head of the Department of Economics and Business, and the coordinator of the MBA in Tourism which included a short presentation and subsequent discussion on the mission and strategic plan, connecting with society and the development process action plan.
- A meeting with the Head of the Department of Economics and Business, and the coordinator of the MBA in Tourism (both conventional and distance learning). This included the feasibility of the programme, its management and structure, its 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, student centred learning, admission criteria for prospective students, student assessment, final exams, the stakeholders 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).
- A meeting with the Head/Coordinator and members responsible for the E-Learning unit, including a detailed presentation and a Q&A session. This included the course philosophy and methodology, learning material in relation to the EQF, study guides, interaction plan and weekly activities, and a presentation of the E-Learning platform.
- A meeting with members of the teaching staff only on each course of the programme (Q&A session) discussing their CVs (i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, continuous professional development, compliance with staff development goals), on any other duties in the University and teaching obligations in other programmes, the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with learning and teaching objectives), the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the European Qualifications Framework and the assessment criteria, as well as other teaching material and resources.
- A meeting with students and graduates only from the e-learning programme (as conventional mode currently not running) of the University regarding their impressions of the University, the staff - student relations, the quality of the studies, the employability prospects, Erasmus+ mobility issues and the overall support provided by the University to its students and graduates.

- A meeting with members of the administrative and library staff regarding the administrative policies of the University, including student admission, progression, recognition and certification, learning resources and student support. This included a short presentation by the library staff.
- During the site visit, the EEC visited the library, teaching rooms, computer laboratories and student social space.
- The EEC did not have the opportunity to attend a live lecture at the University, but were given access to online courses.
- An exit discussion with the senior management team where members of the EEC had the opportunity to ask further questions and clarify any pending issues.

The EEC confirms that staff were available during the whole day of the site visit for queries and short presentations in the sessions were given. Adequate time remained for questions by the EEC members and productive discussions were held. The team were well prepared for the visit and were open to questioning, with additional materials being provided upon request.

The team should be commended for the amount of work they had undertaken to prepare for the visit. The EEC were made to feel welcome, and the discussions were open and collegiate.

The EEC communicated at the beginning of the visit that the purpose was not only confirmation of compliance with the required standards, but also to assist in developing and continuous improvement. Therefore, the discussions that took place were commensurate to a peer review, were future focussed, and took into account the trends in higher education more broadly.

In general, the EEC found evidence of standard compliance of the programme under evaluation. Further detail is provided in the following sections of this report.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Adele Ladkin	Professor, EEC Chairperson	Bournemouth University, UK
Nevenka Čavlek	Professor, EEC Member	University of Zagreb, Croatia
Irini Dimou	Professor, EEC Member	Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece
Emilia Shelegeda	Student, EEC Member	Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
Name		
Name	Position	University

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.*

Findings

The University has well laid-out policies to ensure quality assurance (QA). These are publicly available on the University website. There is a clear Committee structure supporting QA and students are involved in these where appropriate. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the writing and utilisation of the handbook for quality assurance of the University.

Staff were clear on their responsibilities in these processes in terms of module design, modification, and moderation of assessments. There is a clear statement of student responsibilities and their rights, e.g., to appeal marks. There is also a clear disciplinary policy, including possible penalties.

The University is a member of the PROSE system, a programme for the evaluation and the management of quality in organisations, based on questionnaires.

The University has clear statements of non-discrimination, including on admission. The University is committed to upholding EDI, and the policy pertaining to this is available on the website.

There is a plagiarism policy, and the University uses Turnitin to check for plagiarism. Staff are aware of and consider issues relating to artificial intelligence as it relates to student work.

The programme is designed for those seeking or already in senior management position in tourism. The curriculum is designed to equip current and future tourism company leaders with the skills, knowledge and tools they need to manage tourism business successfully. However, the course content **must** be revised to reflect contemporary issues in tourism studies. Currently course content does not comply with programme outcomes, and implies a lower level of studies. Course bibliographies are outdated. Special emphasis should be put in each course on (SDG)s, Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) **throughout all the courses**.

The programme reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe. The MBA in Tourism encompasses eight compulsory courses and a dissertation. Four of the courses are from the generic MBA, and four related to tourism.

Publicly available information is readily found on the University website covering regulations, selection criteria, qualifications awarded, programmes and their learning outcomes, assessment, student rights and expectations of students, learning resources and support services available to students.

Key Performance Indicators are collected. The EEC was not able to view the profile of the student population as the programme is not currently operating. There are procedures for assessing student satisfaction for each course but not the overall programme at the end. There is an Alumni Association, which is useful to track the career paths of graduates.

Strengths

- Clear and publicly available policies covering quality assurance, student rights, expectations of students, etc.
- Involvement of students in appropriate Committees.
- Assessment of student satisfaction with courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends:

- that all study guides be revised to be **accurate** and current even though the course is not currently operating,
- the evaluation of student satisfaction of the programme as a whole at the end of their studies,
- as appropriate, revise the course learning outcomes to be consistent with the programme learning outcomes,
- courses need to be reviewed for content and level of study to correspond to post graduate level,
- ensure the relevance of the courses offered, using regular market analysis and stakeholder involvement,
- due to the heavy workload, re-consider the total workload of the students across the courses in terms of assessment strategies and deadlines,
- where possible to include reading specifically in relation to tourism as part of the four generic MBA courses,
- consider ways to internationalise the programme to foster a multi-cultural environment and give exposure to international tourism business environment. For example, organising online or face to face guest lectures from scholars and industry, perhaps capitalising on the departments international partnerships,
- undertake a competitor analysis to assess the feasibility and sustainability of the programme.

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	Non-compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
- 2.2 Practical training
- 2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

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

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

Findings

The programme consists of eight compulsory courses and a dissertation. It includes the expected pillars of a management degree (marketing, research methods, finance/accounting and organisational behaviour/human resources management). The industry specific topics are tour operating management, strategic destination management, hospitality management and tourism economics.

There are currently no electives offered.

A student complaint process was in place linked to module delivery and assessment appeals. In addition, the University has the Erasmus+ Charter allowing both staff and student mobility. This has been taken up by staff.

Assessment is clearly laid out and largely follows a 40% continuous assessment and 60% final written exam format.

Assessment criteria are clear and work is marked by the course leader. The dissertation is defended in front of and marked by three committee members to ensure consistency and fairness. There is a process allowing students to defer exams/assessments where there is a verifiable issue preventing the student completing at the normal time.

Strengths

- The induction programme in week 0 is a good way to prepare the students for study.
- The training for staff and students on distance learning methodology.

Areas of improvement and recommendations.

The EEC recommends:

- consider offering electives to increase the options for students,
- communicate the meaning of soft skills to students,
- harmonise the programme learning outcomes with the course learning outcomes, paying specifically attention to the course content that do not reflect contemporary issues in tourism studies,
- update bibliographies which are outdated.

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	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

Out of the eighteen members of academic staff in the Department, all are full time and all are PhD holders. There are five full time staff and three visiting staff teaching on the conventional Programme. For the five full time staff, two are at the level of Lecturer, one Assistant Professor and one Professor. The staff recruitment policies are clear and transparent, as are the promotion criteria which takes account teaching, research and administrative responsibilities. Staff have the opportunity and are encouraged to undertake development courses.

There is a low staff to student ratio, and speaking to the staff indicates they have a manageable workload. Typically teaching may be on two or three units per semester.

All staff are active in research, producing a range of academic outputs. Their research expertise informs teaching and is embedded in class activities as appropriate. There is an active research community, evidenced for example by departmental research seminars, online speakers and research events and conference organisation. Staff are supported by a department budget that allows applications to be made for a range of activities including conference attendance and research output dissemination. Staff also have the opportunity for international mobility through Erasmus + programmes.

There is not a formal research mentoring process within the Department, but staff make use of the regional and international partnerships to develop and enhance their research activities and profiles.

Strengths

- The EEC commends the department for financially supporting its members of staff to attend conferences and undertake research activities to develop their research careers.
- The competence of the teaching staff in terms of their qualifications and expertise.
- Their engagement and commitment to the students, the department and University.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends:

- staff be encouraged to publish in peer-reviewed academic high quality open access journals,
- encourage visiting staff to the department for both research and teaching purposes.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

Findings

The University does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, disability, or national origin when admitting students. Clear policies are provided for the admissions criteria, with the departmental committee taking the final decisions. Systems are in place to monitor progression, and staff and students are aware of progression policies.

Strengths

- Non-discriminatory policies and transparency.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends:

- students could be enrolled from different backgrounds and clear policies should be in place to ensure they are assisted in bridging gaps in skills and knowledge,
- to encourage applications from a broader geographical area.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

Findings

The University provides a range of learning resources and student support services to its students. These include a library with various materials and online databases, Moodle for virtual learning, tutoring services, and administrative services. The University also has a student mentor's scheme and a Student Affairs Department to address student needs and concerns by offering counselling, problem-solving, accommodation assistance, and complaint handling. The University participates in the Erasmus+ programme for student mobility. Other services offered to student include Wi-Fi and library access.

General classrooms were well equipped and sockets are available for student laptops. Further campus facilities are under construction with a new campus site proposed for future development.

Overall, the student support at the University appears to be comprehensive and aimed at addressing a wide range of student needs.

Strengths

- Online resources (databases, library etc.)
- The extensive training for staff and students provided by the e-learning unit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- to facilitate more computer laboratory and social spaces if student numbers grow.

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

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC was disappointed with the quality of the submitted application and documentation for the conventional programme. There were many inconsistencies in the program description, curriculum design and also mixing up their data with the data of Civil Engineering department. The whole program needs a thorough rewriting and updating.

The EEC notes that improvements should be made to establish the sustainability and competitive advantage of the proposed programme over the coming years, considering recent developments in the area.

The department should take into serious consideration the recommendations made throughout the report.

The EEC would like to thank all involved in the evaluation for the high engagement throughout the evaluation process - and for providing the set of supporting documents before and during the site visit.

We would like to express our gratitude to Mrs Emily Alexandridou for organising and facilitating the evaluation process.

D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Dr Adele Ladkin, Chairperson, EEC	
Professor Dr Nevenka Čavlek, Member, EEC	
Professor Dr Irimi Dimou, Member, EEC	
Emilia Shelegeda, Member, EEC	

Date: 14th October 2023