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Date: 15 March 2021

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Frederick University
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** School of Business and Law
- **Department:** Maritime Transport and Commerce
- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme 1 – Bachelor

In Greek:

Ναυτιλιακές Σπουδές [4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BSc)]

In English:

Maritime Studies [4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc)]

Language(s) of instruction: English

Programme 2 – Master

In Greek:

Διεθνές Εμπόριο και Ναυτιλιακή Διοίκηση [3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (MSc)]

In English:

International Trade and Shipping Management [3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (MSc)]

Language(s) of instruction: English



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].



A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

2 March 2021

10:00 – 10:10

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

[10 minutes]

10:10 – 10:50

- A meeting with the Rector - Head of the Institution and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs – short presentation of the Institution

[20 minutes]

Participants: *The Rector, the Vice – President of the Council, the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Vice Rector of Research, Development and International Relations.*

- A meeting with the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee

[20 minutes]

Participants: *The Vice Rector, Chair of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IQC), the School of Business and Law representative in the IQC, the Chair of the Distance Learning Unit.*

10:50 – 11:50

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department.
Short presentation of the School's / Department's structure

[60 minutes]

Participants: *The Dean of School of Business and Law, the Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce, the BSc Maritime Studies Coordinator, the Vice Chair of the Department and members of the teaching staff*

11:50 – 12:00

- Coffee Break

[10 minutes]

12:00 – 12:50

Programme 1 (Bachelor): BSc Maritime Studies

- The programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programme's design and development

[50 minutes]

Participants: The BSc Maritime Studies Coordinator and the Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce

12:50 – 13:50

- Lunch Break

[60 minutes]

13:50 - 14:50

- A meeting with members of the teaching staff (Bachelor) on each course for all the years of study (QA session).
 - Discussion on 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.
 - Discussion on the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).
 - Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.
 - Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

[60 minutes]

Participants: The Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce, the BSc Maritime Studies Coordinator and all the members of the teaching staff.

14:50 - 15:00

- Coffee Break

[10 minutes]



15:00 – 15:40

- **A meeting with students and graduates only (5 – 15 participants - Bachelor).**

[40 minutes]

Participants: Students and graduates from the Bachelor programme

15:40 – 16:35

- **A meeting with members of the administrative staff and discussion on the virtual visit of the premises of the institution (i.e. library, computer labs, teaching rooms, research facilities).**

[55 minutes]

Participants: The Director of Administration and Finance, the Director of Studies and Student Welfare Service, the Director of Administration, the Director of Research and Interconnection, the Head Librarian

16:35 – 17:30

- **A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the programme's Coordinator - exit discussion (questions, clarifications).**

[55 minutes]

Participants: The Dean of the School of Business and Law, the Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce, the Vice Chair of the Department, the BSc Maritime Studies Coordinator

3 March 2021

10:00 – 10:10

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

[10 minutes]

10:10 – 11:50

Programme 2 (Master – Conventional): MSc International Trade and Shipping Management

&

Programme 3 (Master – Distance Learning): MSc International Trade and Shipping Management

- The programmes' standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programmes' design and development

[100 minutes]

Participants: The Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce, MSc Coordinator, the Dean of the School of Business and Law, the Vice Chair of the Department, the Chair of the Distance Learning Unit, the BSc Coordinator and members of the teaching staff

11:50 - 12:00

- Coffee Break

[10 minutes]

12:00 - 13:10

- A meeting with members of the teaching staff (Master) on each course for all the years of study (QA session).
 - Discussion on 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.
 - Discussion on the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).
 - Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their

compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.

- Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

[70 minutes]

Participants: All the members of the teaching staff

13:10 - 14:00

- A meeting with the distance learning committee.

[50 minutes]

Participants: The Chair and members of the Distance Learning Unit

14:00 – 15:00

- Lunch Break

[60 minutes]

15:00 – 15:40

- A meeting with students and graduates only (5 – 15 participants - Master).

[40 minutes]

Participants: Students and graduates from the MSc programmes

15:40 – 16:00

- EEC's meeting

[20 minutes]

16:00 – 16:45

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the programmes' Coordinators - exit discussion (questions, clarifications).

[45 minutes]

Participants: The Dean of the School of Business and Law, the Chair of the Department of Maritime Transport and Commerce, the BSc Maritime Studies Coordinator



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof Albert Veenstra	Professor	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Prof Nikos Nomikos	Professor of Shipping Finance and Risk Management	The Business School (formerly Cass), City, University of London
Prof Jens-Uwe Schroder-Hinrichs	Professor	The World Maritime University
Mrs Margarita Panagi	Student Representative	Cyprus University of Technology
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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:*
 - sub-areas*
 - standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - 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 each 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.

Findings for Bachelor

The BSc program in Maritime Studies is a well-established and well-organized program, that delivers students with a good level of knowledge and skills for the local shipping community. The program fulfills the standards for proper quality assurance.

The BSc program is designed to fit the demand of industry and offers a good combination of theoretical and applied shipping knowledge. We have verified that the standards for design, approval, monitoring and review are met for this program.

Public information standards for the program are met. We have also established that the standards for information management are met for this program.

Findings for Master

The MSc program in International Trade and Shipping Management is a 90 ECTS program.

The design of the program is again a reflection of the needs of industry. Students have very good prospects in terms of being absorbed by local shipping businesses.

Information management standards and public information standards for the program are good. The university provides a good level of learning resources, access to library and shipping databases, and support for the career paths of the students.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The program delivers students with a good level of knowledge and skills for the local shipping industry. Another strong point is that the teaching staff are largely engaged with the industry which strengthens the links with the local shipping community. The program as a whole is well designed and organized and fulfils all standards that one might expect from comparable study programs in other universities. The fact that the program is offered in English is seen as a competitive advantage by students and graduates.

Strengths for Master

The connection to the industry of the program content, as well as links offered by the staff of the program can be considered a strong point of this program. Alumni are also very positive about this aspect of the program. The fact that the program is offered in English is seen as a competitive advantage by students and graduates.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

The evaluation committee expressed some concern about the lack of dedicated research modules in this program. In addition, the committee has some concerns on the entry levels of the students in this program. Admission criteria are based on English language and school leaving certificate. This means that a (small) part of the student population may not be able to finish the program in four years and partly explains why a part of the student population takes more time than the designated four years; the other reason being that most students work during their studies.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Master

The committee observed that the intake of the own BSc students into the MSc is limited. Nevertheless, the BSc students should be a relevant stream in the intake of the MSc program, even if this is after a few years in the industry.

The committee would also like to point out that the viability and potential of the MSc program will be greatly enhanced with the increase in the research content. After all, this is an MSc degree and the research part should be at the core of the curriculum. This will also enhance the skillset of graduates and will enable them to progress to higher level managerial positions.

Finally, the learning outcomes in the module specifications need to be streamlined and modified to reflect the learnings objectives of an MSc degree. It is recommended to revise the entire structure of intended learning outcomes for the program as a whole and all the underlying courses, stick to a hierarchical taxonomy, and reduce the number of ILOs overall.

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

The bachelor program is designed to introduce the students into the global world of shipping. Therefore there is a focus on instructional learning. In addition, the program is tied strongly to the needs of the Cypriot shipping industry. This is reflected in the teaching material and the topics discussed in class.

The committee also has established that assessment is done according to university and international standards. The program as such fulfils the standards of student assessment.

Findings for Master

The MSc covers similar content as the BSc, but in a much smaller time, and with a much stronger problem solving and managerial orientation. This is reflected in the teaching material and also in the variation of assessment methods. Case studies and other problem-oriented material plays a much greater role.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

A general strength of the BSc is the close relationship between the faculty and the industry, which ensures that the program and its courses reflect relevant knowledge and insights from the industry. This also results in the crucial role the faculty plays in steering students to jobs in the industry. This is greatly appreciated by students in the program. The students consider the teaching qualities of the faculty very positively.

Strengths for Master

The MSc goes more in-depth and prepares students for managerial positions in the industry. The teaching materials and assessment methods reflect this. Again here, the staff plays an important role in guiding the students to jobs in the industry.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

The teaching approach and assessment methods in the BSc could be modernized and expanded in terms of variety. It is recommended to tie this to an overhaul of the intended learning outcomes, we have recommended elsewhere.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Master

The committee recommends giving a greater role to the research that is carried out by students in their theses. Various teaching faculty have indicated they use some of this material in their

classes, but this has an informal character. We recommend that the course management team provides an annual review of thesis topics and research results achieved in MSc thesis projects that should be made available at Departmental level.

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

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

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

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

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

Findings for Bachelor

The teaching staff of the BSc is a well-balanced group of teachers that are appreciated by students and are sufficiently knowledgeable in their various fields of teaching. We find that the balance between faculty and visiting and special teaching staff is appropriate.

Findings for Master

The teaching staff of the MSc is a well-balanced group of teachers that are appreciated by students and are sufficiently knowledgeable in their various field of teaching. We find that the balance between faculty and visiting and special teaching staff is appropriate.

For the MSc we observed that the teaching staff has a limited involvement in research. We have made recommendations on this elsewhere in this report.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The teaching by the faculty and the guidance this faculty provides in guiding the students towards jobs in the industry is very highly spoken of by students. The teachers attempt to accommodate the students, who are mostly working, by scheduling classes at appropriate times, and carefully controlling student's workload.

Strengths for Master

The faculty has been involved in a process of differentiating their teaching and assessment methods for the MSc from the BSc, tailoring the program to the expectations of the industry for Masters level graduates. The teaching methods involve case studies and practical exercises and are, as such, appropriate for this program of study.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

Given the importance of practitioners in the program, their upcoming retirement is a cause for concern. The renewal of the faculty, especially practitioners, is already a point of attention for the department. We recommend considering finding replacements from the alumni of the program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Master

For the MSc we recommend that teaching staff develops a more structured approach to integrate their research into teaching, as well as the research activities of students. This is not aimed at developing a separate research effort, but a departmental research strategy that supports the teaching (and the industry) in the short- and long-term.

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

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

Findings for Bachelor

Issues related to student admission, progression and recognition are documented in the Student Handbook and the University Prospectus. The interviews carried out by the panel as part of this accreditation visit did not result in any deviations from the published standards and procedures which in the view of the panel reflect international standards and are in compliance with the regulations in Cyprus.

Findings for Master

The same comments as above apply for the MSc program.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The regulations and practices of the University are outlined in a very detailed way in the Student Handbook and the University Prospectus and therefore give any potentially interested candidate a very good overview about student admission, progression and recognition of earlier academic achievements.

Strengths for Master

The same comments as above apply for the MSc program.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

The panel observed that a relatively large group of students is unable to finish the program in four years and need normally one or two extra semesters. This is an area of concern. However, the panel found that statistics are kept in the Department about the student progression and the interviews of members of the Department did not result in any evidence that the issues is not closely monitored or that students not offered assistance, if required. The extra time needed is often due to students securing employment in the local shipping cluster and thus switch to part-time studies. It may be worthwhile to review what options may exist to help students in their progression. It should also be noted that entry criteria are set at a low level which could be a contributing factor to the delays in completion observed by this Panel.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Master

The review of information and material provided in relation to the MSc program, as well as the interviews conducted during the visit, did not result in suggestions for improvement in this area.

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

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

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.

Findings for Bachelor

The committee has established that in terms of resources, the program is well supported. The committee identified no deficiencies in any of the resource areas.

Findings for Master

The same comments as above apply for the MSc program.

Strengths

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

Strengths for Bachelor

The committee is appreciative of the efforts that were spent by the teaching staff in dealing with the impact of Covid. All staff engaged in a transformation of the educational programs, and for the largest part, this went without a hitch.

Strengths for Master

The committee was very pleased to see that the research ambitions of the program are supported by the appointment of project support staff. This decision also shows a certain adaptability of the department and the School in realising new ambitions and achieving goals for the program and the department.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor

The committee suggests to spend some time on the development of new teaching material that strengthens the industry orientation of the program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Master

While the university facilities and student support services are at an excellent level, it may be worthwhile to consider how research carried out by faculty members in the Department may be better integrated into the programme.



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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Master</i>	
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant	Compliant	
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant	Compliant	
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	
5.4	Student support	Compliant	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 each programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The External Evaluation Committee would like to re-iterate a number of positive points that came out of this review. In particular, the following aspects are points of strength on which the Course management team should build upon further in order to guarantee future growth and success:

- An experienced academic team with strong links with the local shipping and business communities
- Courses that are well organised and are attuned to the needs and requirements of the local market thus providing students with solid practical skills.
- Strong links with the local shipping and finance clusters that enhances the employment prospects of graduates.
- Good administrative support (student affairs, IT, Library personnel).
- One should also comment on the transition from traditional, face-to-face delivery, to a remote learning environment during the recent pandemic. To a large extent, the courses were able to utilise the existing resources of the online course so as to offer a seamless transition to an online learning environment.

At the same time, the learning outcomes in the module specifications need to be streamlined and modified to reflect the learnings objectives of an MSc degree. It is recommended to revise the entire structure of intended learning outcomes for the program as a whole and all the underlying courses, stick to a hierarchical taxonomy, and reduce the number of ILOs overall. For the BSc course in particular, it appears that there are too many ILOs which creates challenges in module delivery and assessment.

In addition, the absence of a research culture and lack of a clearly defined research agenda is something that the courses need to address in order to maintain their competitiveness.

Finally, the fact a number of experienced visiting faculty are going to retire over the next few years will also affect the courses. The management team must draw alternative plans by drawing upon the expertise of industry contacts and alumni.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof Albert Veenstra	
Prof Nikos Nomikos	
Prof Jens-Uwe Schroder-Hinrichs	
Mrs Margarita Panagi	

Date: 15 March 2021

