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Date: 23/10/2021

External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** European University Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Business Administration

- **Department/ Sector:** Management and Marketing

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

  In English:

  Master in Business Administration (MBA) (18 months, 90 ECTS, Distance Learning)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The online visit took place on Monday 19 October 2020.

The visit started at 10am with introductions and a meeting with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs of the European University Cyprus (EUC), Professor Symeou, who gave a short presentation of the Institution.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) then met with the Dean of the Business School, Professor Chourides, and the representative of the Internal Evaluation Committee, Professor Sourouklis. Professor Ioannou, Head of the Management and Marketing Department, and Professor Efstathiades, program co-ordinator, gave short presentations of the School's structure. A 40-minute presentation of the MBA-Distance learning program by Professor Efstathiades was then presented, followed by a Q&A session on the programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, and the persons involved in the programme's design and development.

In the afternoon, the EEC met members of the teaching staff on each course for all the years of study. The discussion covered academic qualification, staff development, research, workloads, assessment, and resources. Later in the afternoon, the EEC met with MBA students who shared their experiences during the course. This was followed by a meeting with members of the administrative ream.

The visit concluded with a meeting and general discussion with the head of department and the programme co-ordinator regarding the premises of the institution and clarification questions from earlier sessions during the online visit. At the end of the online visit, the EEC attended a live streaming course on blackboard.

Overall, the EEC felt that the online visit was very productive, with all staff of the university being very collaborative and helpful in answering all questions. Additional resources that the EEC requested during the visit were made available online without delay. The quality of the internet provision was very good, which allowed for a smooth running of the online sessions without any issues arising.

The representative of the CYQAA, Mr Lefkios Neophytou did also an excellent job in facilitating the online visit, ensuring that all sessions ran smoothly.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Yannis Georgellis (Chair)	Professor of Management	University of Kent
Dimitris Assimakopoulos	Professor of Information Systems, Technology & Innovation Management	EMLYON Business School, France
Alexandros Sahinidis	Professor of Management	University of West Attica, Greece
Zawacki-Richter, Olaf	Professor of Educational Technology	University of Oldenburg, Germany
Christos Hasapis	Student	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  (a) *sub-areas*
  (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

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

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The MBA-Distance learning program is well designed to cover a broad range of topics in Business and Management to equip future managers with the skills and knowledge needed for successful leadership positions in private and public sector organizations. There are well-defined learning outcomes, which

underpin the teaching delivery and assessment methods. By the end of the program, students are expected to have developed both the technical skills as well as managerial skills to lead organizations globally. Although courses are evaluated using a final exam, a range of coursework assessment methods are designed thoughtfully to safeguard that the programme-level outcomes are achieved.

The study program includes six compulsory courses (60 ECTS): Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation; Business Economics and Finance in a Global Environment; Customer Value Creation; Strategic Management and Planning; Information Systems and Business Analytics; and Logistics and operations Management. Then Students have the option either to proceed with the MBA thesis (30 ECTS) or complete three optional modules (30 ECTS). The optional courses cover the broad thematic areas of Ethics, project management, communication and negotiation skills; e-business and digital marketing, investment and risk management.

The design of the MBA program has been developed by drawing on the EUC policies and quality standards as well as the guidelines of the CYQAA. The EUC adheres to well-established internal quality assurance processes for the design and approval of programs, which entail the involvement of the program committee, advisory board, expert review panel, departmental quality assurance, departmental council, school academic committee, school council, university quality assurance committee, and senate. These processes ensure that internal and external stakeholders contribute to the development, approval, and periodic review of new and existing programs.

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

The MBA-Distance learning program offered by the EUC is a long-running successful program with a strong reputation in Cyprus and abroad. The program currently attracts around 400 students, which is testimony to the quality and appeal of the program. Academic staff involved on the teaching and delivery of the program are experts in their respective areas. Practitioners from industry are also invited often to contribute guest lectures, which enhances the students' learning experience. Quality assurance procedures are well-embedded in the EUC code of practice, which offers reassurances for the quality and sustainability of the program in the longer term.

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.

Although the MBA program is well-designed, it places more weight towards the development of technical skills and knowledge in the core course with some of the softer skills (e.g. communication, negotiations skills) covered mostly in the optional courses. A suggestion is that the program team could, in the future, consider covering such managerial skills in a leadership core course, separate from innovation and entrepreneurship.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

  2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
  2.2 Practical training
  2.3 Student assessment
  2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The MBA program is offered in a distance learning mode since 2013. The nature of the program is compatible with the distance learning delivery, and the pedagogical model comprising the dimensions of collaboration, guidance, and learning resources is appropriate.

The University has a Distance Education Unit with a Team of Pedagogical Planning (TPP). Staff members come from the School of Business Administration with special qualifications and training in distance education. They are responsible for the development and design of distance learning / e-learning programs and courses. The team also provides training in online teaching methodology for faculty members and lecturers.

Interaction with the students and collaboration among students are key elements of the pedagogical model. The Learning Management System (LMS) Blackboard supports synchronous and asynchronous interaction. Focus is placed on asynchronous interaction and collaboration, but weekly synchronous conferences are offered, which are not mandatory. The group size is limited to 30 students per class section, which is appropriate to facilitate personal student support and interaction between faculty members and students.

Various digital tools and social media are used to facilitate online interaction, collaboration, and content presentation such as blogs, wikis, forums or computer-conferences.

The course modules have a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: a summary and synopsis, goals and objectives, intended learning outcomes, a bibliography, supplemental resources, and self-assessment exercises and activities, and self-evaluation exercises.

Students have to attend examinations for each module on-campus, and the university maintains examination centers in Europe, and North America for face-to-face examinations. However, online e-assessment will be introduced in 2021. Continuous assessment comprises 50% of the grades of the students and it consists of individual and group projects. Group projects help compensate for the inherent networking deficiencies of distance learning programs, offering the students the opportunity to work with and network with at least some of their peers.

The Business school maintains quite a strong international academic network. Greek and international students learn and collaborate together in the online classes. High potential students are encouraged and promoted to present on international conferences. The University participates in the Utrecht Network, a European university organization, and has been accredited by the AMBA until recently, an accreditation discontinued as the EUC took the strategic decision not to apply for it.

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

The focus on asynchronous interaction helps to keep the distance learning program flexible for this special target group of distance learners.

Using weekly study guides in the courses is a good practice in the context of distance learning.

Learning activities, exercises and projects are designed to promote collaboration among students in which they apply their knowledge to solve complex problems. A variety of digital tools are used to support collaborative online learning.

It is an important step that the school decided to move towards online assessment. Travelling to the campus in Cyprus or a study centre abroad is probably inconvenient for the majority of the distance student population.

The Distance learning MBA offered by the EUC, provides the organization with a sizeable target market spanning from Greece to the Middle Eastern countries, offering great opportunities to expand beyond its current reach and become an even greater source of revenue than it is today.

Although, there is no official placement program for the MBA graduates, due to the fact that many of the students possess a job prior to joining the program, the EUC officers informed the committee that 92% of the graduates find a job after graduation and 85% of them within six months since leaving the 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.

Apart from learning together in the classes, further opportunities for international experiences for the distance learners could be explored. The model of comprehensive virtual internationalization in higher education might be helpful to improve the international experience (see Bruhn, 2020).

Synchronous lectures should be offered not too often, emphasis should be placed on asynchronous delivery such as (professionally) recorded video-lectures.

Furthermore, it could be considered to use more open educational resources and textbooks.

The EUC could explore the use of a placement office, which would systematically help students find jobs, through the extensive network of the organization and its vast resources. The 6000plus alumni of the university could help an endeavour of this kind.

Reference:
Bruhn, E. (2020). *Virtual Internationalization in Higher Education*. wbv Media.
https://doi.org/10.3278/6004797w

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

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Sub-areas

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

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3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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

The Team of Pedagogical Planning (TPP) in the Distance Learning Unit is responsible for professional development, guidance and support of faculty members in all matters related to distance / e-learning. The staff of the TPP is well qualified to carry out these activities. They come from the School of Business Administration to bring in their academic background and to act as "educational consultants" for their colleagues in the School.

The university makes an effort to train and develop its faculty in various ways. Every year the teaching staff have to opportunity to attend a ten-hour seminar, training them in various matters so as to improve their skills both teaching and technology related ones. Most of the teaching is done by Full-time professors while in some subjects the program uses scientific collaborators or guest/ visiting professors.

Professors and Lecturers are offered a teaching workload reduction, in order to do research or write a book.

The size of the classes limited to 30 students per section allows the instructors to work in close contact with the students providing the guidance and the encouragement needed especially in distance learning settings.

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

Faculty support services work very well, especially under the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Faculty members are quite enthusiastic about the quality of the services provided for online teaching.

Investing time in training the faculty each year, both in technology and teaching has a positive effect on the teachers' productivity, the quality of their lessons and the satisfaction of the students as well as their own. The EUC incorporates such training in their yearly routine.

The professors and lecturers are experts in their fields and teach subjects relevant to their studies and research.

The research centers in the university provide an excellent opportunity for the developing of hubs of cutting-edge research, especially the Microsoft innovation centre recently established with the partnering of the company with the EUC.

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.

Although the current staff of the TPP are providing good services, it is recommended to appoint full-time instructional designers to further improve the development and implementation of distance learning programs and the professional development/training of faculty members.

The EUC is offering workload reduction to its faculty members to engage with research as an incentive. However, no mention of sabbaticals was made. Although some of the faculty are prolific researchers, others need more encouragement and motivation to engage in more research.

Also, the faculty could be more active in participating in Erasmus programs, even though the MBA does not participate, most professors teach in other programs and they could take advantage of it to broaden their own and their students' horizons.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **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:*
    - o *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - o *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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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.

The admissions criteria for the MBA program are appropriate. To be admitted into the program, candidates must hold a recognized Bachelor's degree and proficiency in English. For proof of English proficiency, applicants need to either provide evidence that their Bachelor's degree was taught in English or to take a TOEFL or IELTS tests. The admissions criteria are publicized and are available by the Admissions office.

Students can transfer credits, up to 30 ECTS, for EUC equivalent courses. The university has a strict non-discrimination policy in admissions. Student progress monitoring and certification processes are clearly defined and adhered to. Overall, the MBA program complies with all requirements of the CYQAA and European and International standards regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

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

Rigorous and transparent processes in place to ensure student admissions, progression, recognitions and certification comply with national and international quality assurance standards.

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.

There are no specific areas of improvement to recommend. Given the distance learning nature of the program, continuous upgrade of technology platforms will be necessary in the future to ensure the best possible practices in student progress monitoring and recognition of achievements.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

  5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
  5.2 Physical resources
  5.3 Human support resources
  5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*

> - *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
> - *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

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

The program courses have a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: a summary and synopsis, goals and objectives, intended learning outcomes, a bibliography, supplemental resources, and self-assessment exercises and activities, and self-evaluation exercises.

Students are satisfied with student support services with testimonials such as : "*Distance learning is better than I thought…*".

Throughout the evaluation visit, the EEC felt that the overall provision of learning resources and student support of the School was very positive. The faculty felt ready for today's turn of events regarding the virus, with online lectures using blackboard.

During the meeting we had the chance to observe (live streaming) one of the lessons. The Lecturer was confident and comfortable with the online lecturing platform and the students were also familiar and used it effectively.

As far as the physical recourses of the school with an online tour of the building provided, the committee had a chance to inspect the library of the University. With the chance to talk to the advisor of the library we were given some information that helped us understand the way the University provides its physical recourses. Five universities in Cyprus have an exchange program on their library recourses. That erases some of the competition that can arise between the Universities and allows students to access a broader collection of books and journals.

The tutors and mentors showed motivation for teaching, research and to provide the students with all the help they might need during their study. The fact that the faculty didn't show any negative signs on their workstation and also the fact that most of the faculty is working for some time on the University shows a healthy environment to work at.

With the chance to talk to the students it was shown that diversity was embraced a main strength of the University. The fact that every mentor had approximately twenty students to mentor created some concerns, although the students showed us that they are really pleased with their tutors. They informed us that the student council was helpful and students that enrolled from other Universities got all the help they needed and felt familiar.

Strengths

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

Special student counselling services are provided to introduce prospective students to the special demands and challenges of a distance learning program.

One of the main advantages this department provides, and more general the University, is the union between the Universities for exchanging library resources.

Tutors and the staff seemed very friendly and students mentioned that during the start of their studies they were provided with all the help they needed.

The staff were experienced with the use of online tutoring a sector that is crucial for this year's turn of events with the COVID-19 virus.

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 "Annotated Bibliography" in the study guides is just a list of references. In most cases there are no annotations that inform students about the rationale for the selection of these mandatory or recommended readings.

The number of mentors could grow on numbers if possible. The number of students compared to the number of tutors has a large ratio, a thing that is a bit concerning.

Generally, staff and students are feeling happy about their work and study environment.

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

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

6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements
6.2 Proposal and dissertation
6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*
  - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - *support for writing research papers*

- o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Findings

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

NA

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

NA

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.

NA

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

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

7. Additional for joint programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement**
> **7.2 The joint programme**

7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
    - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
    - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
    - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
    - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
    - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
    - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

7.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
7.1	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Not applicable
7.2	The joint programme	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The MBA-Distance Learning at the European University of Cyprus is a well-established program with a good reputation nationally and internationally. It is taught by expert faculty and supported by dedicated administrative staff. The University has rigorous processes to safeguard the quality of the program and ensure that it remains relevant and sustainable in the longer term. The program could, in the future, evolve to broaden the coverage of topics so that it responds to new developments in technical knowledge as well as new standards in business and leadership approaches.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Yannis Georgellis (Chair)	
Dimitris Assimakopoulos	
Alexandros Sahinidis	
Zawacki-Richter, Olaf	
Christos Hasapis	

Date: 23 October 2020