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Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Business School
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Management
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Διοίκησης Επιχειρήσεων στη Διοίκηση
Φιλοξενίας (4 χρόνια, 240 ECTS)

In English:

Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality
Management (4 years, 240 ECTS)

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



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].

In English: Integrated Resort Management and Hotel and Restaurant Management



A. Introduction

The EEC online visit to the University of Nicosia to evaluate the Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality Management took place on the 27th of May 2021. This evaluation is based on the application document submitted by the Department of Management, University of Nicosia and the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC) series of video conference meetings with the management team, a random group of teaching staff and students.

During the online visit the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions to the Directors, teaching and administrative staff and students. The meetings took place in a warm and fruitful atmosphere; all questions asked were effectively and kindly answered.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Carlos Costa	Full Professor	University of Aveiro
Nevenka Cavlek	Full Professor	University of Zagreb
Wai Mun Lim	Associate Professor	University of Plymouth, UK
Lito Zymaride	Student	University of Cyprus

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings

At the University level, there are quality procedures that ensure external national assessments on a 5-year time frame conducted by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditations in Higher Education (CYQAA). Additionally, QA is provided through the European Guidelines and Standards for Quality Assurance, the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, the Private Universities (Establishment, Operation and Control) Law 109(1) of 2005 and the KYSATS – Cyprus National Academic Recognition Information Centre - NARIC Law.

The University has also implemented an Internal Quality Assurance structure that requires self-assessment of all the faculties and administrative staff every academic year carried out by the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC). The composition, processes and responsibilities of UIQAC were recently updated to reflect the newest version of the European Standards and Guidelines of 2015 (ESG 2015). The UIQAC through its subcommittees, assures quality at an institutional, departmental and programme level.

In the event changes are needed in the programme there are clearly defined procedures for continuous curriculum reform and a practice of consultation with faculty. Changes might be initiated by faculty, students and alumni or by industry.

The policy for QA ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud.

Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The Hospitality Management programme under review is a four-year programme designed to educate and to train students for supervisory/managerial positions in the field of hospitality industry. It offers two concentrations: a) Integrated Resort Management; b) Hotel and Restaurant Management. The programme rationale fits well with the School's strategy. It aims to develop students' personal skills and competences and trains them to be effective responsible managers who can operate in an international environment. Its objectives are in line with the institutional context and are appropriate to target market and the profile of students. It is a conventional learning programme fully conducted in English language. Taking into account the new circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the

School has successfully transferred its programme delivery to online mode because all faculty and staff were already used to distance learning environment before the pandemic.

There is a good balance of the academic and managerial dimensions, both in terms of the assignment undertaken by students and the mix of faculty from the academic and corporate world. There are 3 types of courses: major core requirements; courses related to concentration requirements; and major and integration electives. The program curriculum aims to provide students a solid foundation in fundamental hospitality business issues and their application in real working environment. An extensive offer of elective courses enables students to tailor their own studies.

The concentration on Integrated Resorts Management incorporates a cluster of courses in the field of lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, gaming, convention and wellness. The concentration on Hotel and Restaurant Management focuses on courses such as Food Service Layout and Design, Food Production and Restaurant Operations gaining an in depth understanding of the hotel and restaurant sector. To satisfy the needs of the practical courses, the School created cooking labs, restaurant, bar that simulate an operation within a hotel and thus enables an excellent learning environment for students, which is very commendable.

The student internship is obligatory and is scheduled in semester D, and in semester F students can take it as an elective course. In both cases internship is awarded by 6 ECTS. The internship responds closely to corporate needs and is a guarantee of *in situ* learning for the students. The students are required to develop a self-reflective paper which includes internship expectations prior to the experience; description of the host organization; self-assessment of the internship experience; and personal reflections for self-development, and the student's supervisor writes his/hers report which represents a part of the necessary assessment method of student's achievement.

The general programme ILOs are specified and clear (seven ILOs). Additionally, there are specific ILOs defined for the two concentrations. However, more work needs to be done on course ILOs and especially in the effort to explain them to their students and all faculty, and also to ensure that the ILOs are properly assessed. Namely, the extension of the programme level objectives into the ILOs at the course level is in most cases not well expressed. For example, ILOs of the courses are as long as the course content and some courses have set longer list of ILOs than the course content; in certain cases, like the course F&B Cost Control, or Spa and Wellness Operations Management, the course objectives and/or ILOs are too general (not specifically set for the course); and in the case of *Introduction to Management* the ILOs do not at all correspond to the course title, course objectives and the course content. This clearly indicates that this area requires significant improvement so that the course ILOs are connected to the ILOs defined on the program level as well as to the specific concentration level in order to make a necessary explicit link between them. Since the School passed the eligibility for AACSB accreditation and has started to work with the assigned mentor, the EEC is convinced that the School will follow all necessary steps to set properly all ILOs.

Although the 4th general objective of the programme refers to ethics and sustainability, and a specific objective to civic responsibility, the ILOs of programme concentration on Integrated Resort Management refers only to ability of students to apply ethical reasoning and professional judgement in **gaming operations**, and in the case of Hotel and Restaurant Management to apply the same ethical reasoning in hotel and restaurant operations. ILOs of both concentrations leave aside the sustainability issues. Additionally, ILOs of most relevant courses do not mention ERS at all. The EEC therefore strongly recommends to the School to integrate principles of ERS explicitly into programme and course ILOs. However, during the online evaluation the EEC was informed about ongoing encouragement of students' involvement in societal and sustainable initiatives, which is very commendable.

Overall, the EEC found the quality of teaching and learning delivery to be sound with appropriate range of methods in use. It offers a good combination of individual exercises and group work. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored

through student evaluations. Pedagogy seems to be satisfactory. Thanks to the School's good connections with the corporate world, corporate needs are well covered in the programme design. The quality of the international experience is very good. There is also a significant number of ERASMUS exchange students in the programme (before COVID-19). However, the EEC noticed that the programme does not offer research methods as an obligatory course which is essential for preparing all students with necessary knowledge and skills to gather and interpret relevant data.

Public information

Public information regarding the study programme is up-to date and readily accessible. Selection criteria are clear as well as student transfer to the School from another school and his/hers corresponding credit transfers. Students are well informed about the programme curriculum, the educational procedures implemented and the services of the School. Additionally, an Orientation Day is organised every year at the beginning of the academic year for all new-coming students to introduce them to the programme of study, the activities included and the teaching staff.

Information management

The University of Nicosia is a private university run by a coherent and ambitious management. The management has a clear vision of how to satisfy the needs of the job market. The School manages its own faculty, programmes, student admissions and future research. Student progression, success and drop-out rates are monitored by School's administration. Students satisfaction is acquired through a survey (questionnaires) distributed to all students to gather information on their satisfaction with each course, each lecturer and the service offered by the School. The results of the data analysis are shared with the Head of the Programme and the relevant services and officers and necessary actions are taken accordingly.

Strengths

- A strong engagement of the enthusiastic and dedicated faculty
- National reputation and international presence
- Obligatory internship
- Corporate partners
- Ability to blend academic and managerial dimensions into teaching
- Possibility for students to tailor their own studies

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Development of all aspects of ILOs
- Introduction of principles of ERS explicitly integrated in the programme and course ILOs
- Introducing Research methods as an obligatory course



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

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

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

Findings

This evaluation is based on the application document submitted by the Department of Management, University of Nicosia and the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC) series of video conference meetings with the management team, a random group of teaching staff and students.

The University of Nicosia facilitates a student-centred learning environment via the provision of support to learners through various services and departments. These include:

- Centre for Research and Counselling Services
- Academic Counselling
- The Student Success Centre (including Math and Writing labs facilitated by peer tutors)
- A Careers Office.

Therefore, the panel acknowledges that the University of Nicosia appears to be sufficiently resourced in the facilitation of support services for the proposed recruitment of 40 students per semester to the evaluated programme (with two concentrations).

The Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality Management programme adopts a streamlined process to its teaching and learning principles. During discussions with the management team, teaching staff and students, it was evident that lecturers actively attempt to incorporate practice and theory in their delivery.

Students are required to undertake an internship module of 6 ECTS during their period of study, with a further opportunity to undertake another internship module (6 ECTS) in their 3rd year as an option. Due to the on-going pandemic, students revealed that they were given the option to complete a project instead.

During the EEC panel's scheduled meeting with the students, the students revealed that they were generally happy with their experience of the programme. The majority of them were in their 4th year of the programme and were able to provide examples of their positive experiences of support from the university. For example, they were impressed with some of their lecturers' swift pivot in using the pandemic as a learning point in their curriculum. This is augmented by the department's 'Let's Talk Hospitality' webinar series, where industry practitioners were invited to engage with students. Additionally, the students also provided examples of practice led modules where assessments were based on practice, for example layout and design of restaurants and conducting a service audit.

Students are familiar with the types of assessments in place as they spoke about both formative and summative assessments, and the usefulness of Turnitin. They are also aware of the appeal process in place as one was able to walk the panel through her inquiry of a poor mark received leading to a satisfactory response. Critically, students were aware of, and tapped into the opportunities provided by the university's partnership with numerous overseas universities, such as the Erasmus+ programme.

The EEC was unable to verify that all students on the programme are engaged with research. While there are modules that include varying levels of research, for example HOSP490: Thesis (24 ECTS), BADM431 Research Methods in Business (6 ECTS) and THOM475 Senior Year Seminar (6 ECTS), none are mandatory. According to the guidelines of [the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area \(FQEHEA\)](#), the Bachelor's level qualifications are awarded to students who 'have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data to inform judgments that include

reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues'. The team must therefore ensure that this proficiency is distinctly delivered in its programme curriculum.

Finally, it is evident that the programme team attempts to update their teaching method leveraging on relevant education technologies. This was demonstrated in the team's development of the HOSP495 Hospitality Business Simulation module based on an update of teaching method for front office operations, from Property Management Systems (PMS) to SLATE, a hospitality business simulation teaching tool.

Strengths

- In response to the move of teaching online, the department organised a series of online webinar series under the umbrella of 'Let's Talk Hospitality' to encourage continued student engagement.
- It is evident that the programme team has implemented educational activities that successfully encourage students' participation in their learning journey. For example: Students are aware of the university's overseas partnerships and were able to tap into the opportunities with the support of the university.
- Students are aware of and could articulate their experience of formative and summative assessments in the course of their programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Based on the programme structure, it is currently not clear if graduates of the programme are indeed able to 'gather and interpret relevant data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues' as recommended by the FQEHEA. The panel strongly recommends that the programme team considers incorporating a mandatory module that clearly delivers the proficiency advised.
- The EEC panel strongly recommends that the programme team re-considers the course titled 'Thesis', HOSP-490 of 24 ECTS. 24 ECTS taken in the 4th year (over 2 semesters) is not proportionate to the rest of the courses where each is weighted at 6 ECTS delivered over 1 semester. The current course syllabus does not appear to have sufficient content to merit 24 ECTS. The EEC panel therefore recommends that the 'Thesis', HOSP-490 be weighted at no more than 12 ECTS.

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

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

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings

The number and qualifications of the teaching staff is appropriate to run a Programme in Hospitality Management (4 years / 240 ECTS). The school has 38 full-time faculty members and 12 visiting professors. The teaching staff is recruited following official procedures and therefore under principles of transparency and equal opportunities. They have proved to be committed and passionate about their job.

There are visiting staff coming to the department. They contribute to improve the quality of the programme, and the number is not unbalanced with the resident faculty members.

The staff keeps regular contacts with other colleagues from abroad, which contributes to a sound and fruitful internationalization of the university.

The University of Nicosia has reached excellent positions in the world's academic ranks, and that is due, among other aspects, to the outputs emerging from the qualified academic staff. Most academics hold a degree from overseas well ranked and reputed universities. Besides the university includes a Pedagogical Support Unit, an e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit and a Technology Enhanced Learning Center that supports and promote the quality of the teaching faculty members.

They are actively involved in research, though the scientific output is uneven across the group. The number of publications in top journals (Q1 and Q2) has expanded over recent years. The research produced in the department is fairly linked with several courses.

The staff will be faced with the restructuring of the School of Business. The university is planning to undergo a major reform, by merging several departments which ultimately will lead to the extinction of the Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Sports, and the creation of the Department of Management. The EEC expressed concerns with the planned changes. While understanding the need to optimize resources, the panel is of the opinion that the loss of the name of tourism is neither good for the tourism area nor for its branding, and therefore the EEC advised the university leaders to rethink the situation. It should be reminded that tourism programmes should be run in schools were tourism is properly recognized and appreciated.

Strengths

- Qualified teaching staff
- Level of internationalisation
- Research quality and links to the teaching courses
- Pedagogical Unites that support the teaching staff

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Some faculty members show low levels of scientific production in particular compared to other colleagues



- The EEC recommended to keep the name of tourism in the name of the Department

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

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

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

Findings

The regulations regarding student admission are pre-defined and published. The whole process, guidelines and policy statements for admission to the program are available online and candidates can find the requirements needed (<https://www.unic.ac.cy/admission-requirements/>). The program accepts students that fulfil the criteria of a High School Leaving Certificate and transcript and good knowledge of English language. The administration of the program is also available to support the applicants with the whole process. There is a welcoming/orientation week where students are introduced to every aspect and services that are offered by academic affairs office such as Academic Counselling, Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY), etc.

Regarding student's progression, there are mechanisms and tools that monitor students' performance. The program through platforms such as Portal and Moodle, communicates with the students, gives grades/feedback and track down the progress of them. According to students' feedback, lecturers provide comprehensive and constructive feedback to students on course tasks, activities and coursework in a structured way so that students can better understand the assessment and relevant requirements. Furthermore, by analysing students' performance or absences of each student the program tries to identify students that are not progressing as they should (poor performance or lack of participation). In such cases, the program contacts the students directly to identify the reason and to find a collective supporting approach for the solution of the problem.

The progress of students is continually measured during the semester, using different methods and techniques such as face-to-face evaluations, assessments, quizzes, tests, projects, case studies and forum discussions, all structured based on the learning outcomes and goals of the course. Students therefore receive feedback on their results during the semester and can contact their lecturers with any questions. Both methods of formative and summative evaluation are used. Students overall feel comfortable to discuss with their lecturers and academic supervisors any issues or concerns (good communication, approachable professors and constant support offered). The program uses evaluation forms for student's feedback collection after the completion of each module.

Students with special needs have a special treatment. Students are assessed and treated according to their skills and abilities and will be given equal opportunities to function successfully within the program. In particular, the program has a centre that tracks the progress of such students while offering continued support. (ex. helping students with psychological issues).

The regulations regarding student recognition are pre-defined, published and seem to be fair. Furthermore, the program offers the opportunity and supports students to have an internship in order to gain experience. In addition to that, the university promotes mobility actively by being part of the mobility program ERASMUS plus. An evaluation report is filled during their internship that contains how the students spend their time, students and organisation's feedback etc. The university has a variety of partners on a corporate, industry and international level for internships and volunteering projects. The program tries to link theory with practice through professional visits, guest speakers, speeches from professionals, case studies and role-playing activities.

The regulations in the Academic Policies of the University explain which requirements the students must meet to obtain an Academic Award. A bachelor's degree requires a completion of at least 240 ECTS. Thus, regulations regarding student certification are pre-defined and published.

The students highlighted that the University is accommodating when it needs to be, that they are satisfied with the modules and with the infrastructure of the university. They also noted that the Department/University is active in helping them find jobs and overall, they did not raise any serious red flags.

Strengths

- Clear rules on admission procedures, manuals on website
- Academic advisors supervise the student progression and may intervene in case of lower performance. Students feel comfortable to provide feedback and address any issues or concerns to their professors. According to students' feedback their professors are very approachable and responsive.
- Link with the industry, opportunities for internships abroad and within Cyprus.
- Some of the students expressed their confidence and eagerness to continue their studies because of their experience and interaction with the program.
- The University offers scholarships on a competitive basis. This helps the University to attract top students, maintain its reputation and fulfil its role as an academic institution.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The University of Nicosia should improve the possibility of students to go abroad on exchange programmes
- The library can be improved with more publications and databases covering the tourism and hospitality areas

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Findings

The School provides students and staff with an infrastructure and facilities appropriated to the functioning of the programme. The facilities are modern and comfortable.

The methods of teaching are in accordance with international standards. Nevertheless, the university should stimulate student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching. Due to the pandemic, these methods may prepare students better for the future.

Taking into account the information provided it may be concluded that the IT infrastructure is suitable to run the programme.

The library also offers good conditions, but it is recommended that more books in hospitality & tourism should be acquired by the university in order to improve the present conditions.

The administrative staff is very professional and motivated.

The number and qualifications of the administrative staff is adjusted to the needs. Staff perform both academic and integrative functions, which are critical for overseas students to adjust to the island.

The university offers students induction sessions that allow them to gain knowledge about the services available and the way they can accommodate outside the school.

Strengths

- Suitable infrastructure and IT
- Students are offered induction courses
- Academic staff very professional and motivated

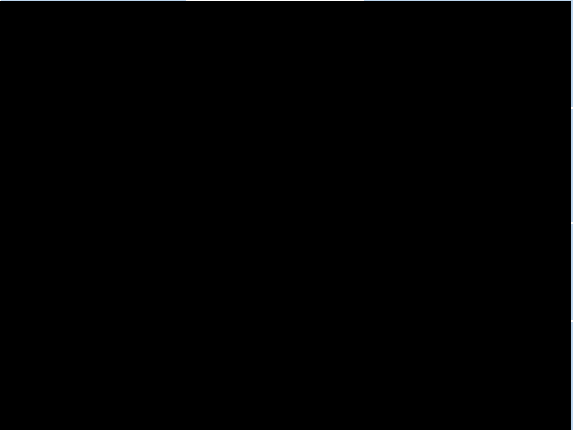
Areas of improvement and recommendations

- More international exchange mobility programmes should be offered by the university
- Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, should be utilised more frequently in the future

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

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

C. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Carlos Costa	
Nevenka Cavlek	
Wai Mun Lim	
Lito Zymaride	

Date: 2021.06.11