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Date: 14/05/25

External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Mediterranean Institute of Management
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** N/A
- **Department/ Sector:** N/A
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
Μεταπτυχιακό στην Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων Εξ'
In English:
Master in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English/Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: 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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following an invitation from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) was appointed to review a new Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) offered by the Mediterranean Institute of Management (MIM) in Nicosia, Cyprus. The Mediterranean Institute of Management (MIM), a public institution operating under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, has a longstanding presence in Cyprus as the country's first business school.

The EEC consisted of four academics and a student - the Chair of the Committee, Professor Fergal O'Brien (University of Limerick), the academic members - Associate Professor Alessandra Ferrari (University of Loughborough), Associate Professor Evangelia (Evi) Kopanaki (University of Piraeus), the online learning expert Professor Albert Sangrà Morer (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), and the student member Ms Efstathia Papaefstathiou (Open University of Cyprus).

This is the second time that MIM has applied for the accreditation of a Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning). The intention is to develop two MBA programmes, one in Greek and one in English, in an online format that branches off from the existing and already accredited conventional MBA. The content of the programme (modules to be delivered, ILOs, level of difficulty) is the same as that of the conventional one and the main difference is in the delivery method. This is what the EEC focused its attention on.

The evaluation for the programme took place at the MIM premises in Nicosia on May 13, 2025. In advance of the site visit, the EEC received extensive materials and documentation on the programme under review. Follow-up requests for further information during the site visit, including all the materials presented on the day of the site visit, were acted upon.

The EEC met with the senior management team - the MIM Manager Christopher Markides, the MIM Director, Maria Nicolaou, and members of the Internal Quality Committee (Kyprianos Nicolaidis, Paris Vogazianos and Pavlos Panagi), a number of full-time adjunct faculty, the administrative and other support staff from MIM, several students (current and graduates) who participated in the existing conventional MBA and MPA programmes offered at MIM, and external stakeholders from industry.

The senior management team at MIM introduced the institution, its history and positioning, along with details of the proposed programme under review. The EEC explored the structure of the programme, its academic features and characteristics, the impact the new programme could have on staff workload and administration burden, assessment strategies, resource implications, as well as the e-learning management system, and most fundamentally the pedagogical philosophy underpinning the programme.

Where presentations formed part of sessions, they provided the basis for the EEC to engage in a questions-and-answers approach to seek clarity and garner more nuanced information around the proposed new programme. More specifically, the EEC inquired about various aspects of the proposed new programme as follows:

- What was the pedagogical approach to fully online delivery? Was it underpinned by any particular philosophy?
- Was the necessary learning scaffolding in place to support fully online delivery?

- What innovative approaches to fully online delivery were being considered?
- What would be the unique selling points of the proposed new programme?
- What resource and workload implications would there be if the new programme was approved?
- How would the new programme be marketed in domestic and international markets, and what intake numbers would be achievable? What recruitment processes were in place?
- What quality procedures existed around programme design and review, admission, assessment, progression, etc?
- What staff development activities had taken place to prepare faculty for a fully online programme?
- What IT supports were in place and how student records were managed?
- What student supports were in place for academic support and pastoral care?

During the site visit, the EEC engaged with both current and graduate students, who shared their experiences at MIM, particularly based on their experience of the conventional programmes. The students were extremely positive about their experience in MIM and are excellent ambassadors. External industry stakeholders were equally positive about MIM.

The final session involved a meeting with members of the senior management team for any remaining questions and clarifications. The EEC members found the discussions to be fruitful and informative.

The EEC would like to commend all parties involved for their cooperation and positive engagement during the site evaluation. The committee would also like to express its gratitude to Dr. Lefkios Neophytou, the CYQAA coordinator, for his highly efficient management of the entire process.

The EEC identifies some specific achievable actions throughout this document for MIM that should lead to improvements and a successful programme launch in the near future.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Fergal O'Brien	Professor and Chair	University of Limerick
Alessandra Ferrari	Professor	University of Loughborough
Evangelia (Evi) Kopanaki	Professor	University of Piraeus
Albert Sangrà Morer	Professor	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Efstathia Papaefstathiou	Student Member	Open 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.

MIM is seeking approval for a new Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning). The proposed programme is expected to last up to a 1.5-year. The programme requires the successful completion of 90 ECTS credits, consisting of seven core courses, each worth 7.5 ECTS, and two elective courses (selected from four available options), each worth 7.5 ECTS, along with a compulsory dissertation worth 22.5 ECTS. This structure is identical to that of the existing conventional programme. The conventional MBA programme is accredited by CYQAA, confirming its alignment with national higher education quality standards. This provides confidence that any transition to online delivery should maintain academic integrity.

The EEC reviewed information relating to admission criteria, course learning outcomes, course delivery methods, and assessment tools and procedures, all of which appear to be consistent with the conventional programme. The online version of the MBA is motivated by MIM's ambition to open its MBA programme to online learners domestically and internationally. MIM are also dedicated to providing the social good of such a programme.

The University has a quality assurance policy that is publicly available through its website. The internal quality committee follows processes to ensure the quality of the programme of studies. The committee takes into consideration the evaluations of courses and teaching staff and produces an extensive self-evaluation report every three years.

Important information related to admission criteria, structure and learning outcomes of the programme are publicly available. Moreover, the content of courses, as well as teaching and learning assessment procedures are specified in study guides and made available to the students.

The students actively participate in the quality assurance process by evaluating all courses at the end of each semester, as well as evaluating the programme as a whole. They can also express their opinions about the programme by actively participating in various MIM committees.

The EEC also evaluated the features of the online learning environment as presented by MIM. MIM staff regularly referenced their online experiences throughout COVID as evidence of their online education expertise. However, a truly online MBA programme needs to be developed with a deeper online learning philosophy than what was presented.

When the EEC engaged with MIM faculty responsible for coordinating and teaching modules on the proposed programme, it was clear how dedicated they were to their students and MIM. A consistent theme throughout the visit was the personal level of care that MIM provides to its students. The EEC found that the student journey from application to graduation on the conventional programmes was a positive one founded on high levels of administrative and academic support. Some further comments:

- Admission criteria are consistent, in that a degree from any discipline is acceptable to enter the programme, and work experience is also considered.

- Assessment methods, and criteria for student progression are laid out in the “Second Revised Internal Rules of Operation of the Public Institution of Tertiary Education “MIM”” and appear to be appropriate and in compliance with the requirements set by Cypriot authorities and HE legislation.
- Internal policies and procedures are in place to ensure programme quality. However, there were some concerns as to how consistently these are applied.
- Student feedback is gathered regularly and acted upon as confirmed by the students and graduates the EEC met during the visit.
- Progression rates on the conventional MBA programme are consistent with similar programmes. MIM staff noted that students exiting the programme normally did so for personal reasons rather than academic reasons. It was suggested that the Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) would lead to less student exits due to its flexibility compared to the conventional programme.
- There appeared to be a process in place for determining final awards, but it was not clearly articulated during the visit.
- The role of the MIM Council, as an advisory board, was noted.

Overall, the Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) under review is closely aligned with the conventional version, with learning objectives aligned with MIM's strategy and approach to MBA education. The purpose, requirements, and learning objectives correspond with the mission of both the programme and the needs of the Cypriot job market. The curriculum has a disciplinary focus, reflected in its structure and content. The dissertation holds significant importance within the programme as it strengthens industry relationships through the research topics explored (often work-related projects). As with the conventional programme, the Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) is envisaged to attract professional learners in full-time employment.

Strengths

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

- The proposed programme leverages the existing conventional MBA programme at MIM.
- By offering instruction in both English and Greek, the program is well-positioned to serve both local and international students through online delivery.
- The Senior Management, faculty and administrative staff demonstrate commendable dedication to their students and to their programme planning and delivery.
- The programme consists of courses that cover key topics in business administration (e.g., accounting, finance, marketing, strategy, technology, etc.). These courses provide students with the requisite background knowledge and skills to meet future work requirements in their respective fields or advance their careers in the public and private sector. This was evidenced during the meeting with students and graduates. The programme's content aligns with requirements within the public and private sector.
- The dissertation component of the proposed new programme is highly valued within MIM. MIM understands how the research carried out by students is an important link to industry and a showcase for the talents of their students/graduates.

- The Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) would provide an opportunity for learners to experience MIM in a more flexible manner. The affordability factors, in terms of time and money, are also attractive features.
- Student progression, success and dropout rates are monitored through the University's Student Management System.
- A graduate employment survey is conducted on a systematic basis.

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 makes the following suggestions/recommendations for improvement:

- A more explicit and consistent approach to quality processes. A quality assurance manual outlining all internal quality processes would be helpful.
- To improve the monitoring of the programme of study, the institution could identify and measure important key performance indicators (KPIs) on an annual basis.
- KPIs or similar metrics need to be specified for the online programme as they will be quite different from the conventional programme.
- Criteria regarding student performance and final awards should be communicated more effectively.
- Consider bringing sustainability, innovation and futures thinking more to the fore in the curriculum.
- Leverage the MIM brand for more effective domestic and international recruitment.
- Consider an International Advisory Board to bring a global perspective to programme design.

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	Partially 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

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.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed 30 students per class.*

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:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *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)*
 - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
 - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *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 Masters in Business Administration (MBA/E-Learning) has yet to be delivered. The following findings are based only on the accreditation documents received by the EEC and the presentations and discussions during the visit to MIM.

As the conventional MBA programme, the proposed programme leans heavily on external adjunct lecturers (professors from other higher education institutions in Cyprus and practitioners from private business consulting firms). The majority of the teaching staff are not permanently employed by MIM. Interaction with and collaboration among students are key elements of the pedagogical e-learning model. Moodle, the Learning Management System (LMS), supports synchronous and asynchronous

communication using Big Blue Button (BBB), both open-source software applications. Focus is placed on asynchronous communication and collaboration, and up to six synchronous sessions are offered throughout the semester (13 weeks).

The size of the classes is restricted to 30 students allowing the instructors to work in close contact with the students providing the guidance and encouragement needed especially in online learning settings. Various digital tools and social media are used to facilitate online interaction, collaboration, and content presentation. 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, self-assessment exercises and activities, and self-evaluation exercises. The students are challenged to apply their knowledge in group work, case studies, presentations, discussions, and project-based learning activities.

Since the online programme is not yet in operation, we had a conversation with students and graduates of the conventional MBA programme. They were very positive about the support they received from the lecturers, who are always easy to contact. However, there is no general guideline or policy for online communication, e.g. with regard to minimum response times for students' questions, albeit there were indicative timeframes presented at the site visit. Each course is completed with a final exam that the students take in person on campus. Non-resident students can take exams at embassies or consulates in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The result of the final exam counts 60% towards the final grade, and another 40% is awarded on weekly learning activities (assignments, online participation, study groups) during the online courses. Rubrics are available for all graded assignments. Plagiarism is checked through the software Turnitin.

Practical training can be supported through internships, although this will be more complicated on the proposed online programme as they may involve an international dimension. However, the internship is no longer compulsory, as many students are already working. Students that wish to do an internship are supported by an administrative officer throughout the entire internship process.

MIM employs Moodle and Big Blue Button (BBB), widely recognized platforms suitable for both asynchronous and synchronous learning. Their integration provides a sound foundation for course delivery, student interaction, and digital assessment.

MIM maintains relationships with experienced external lecturers, including industry professionals and academics from other institutions. This ensures that the MBA remains practically relevant and connected to evolving business environments.

The pedagogical approach encourages collaboration and student interaction, elements that are essential in creating engaging e-learning experiences.

Current student services (academic advising, technical support, and welfare) are tailored for in-person learners. Online students may face challenges in accessing timely and effective support, potentially affecting satisfaction and retention. The establishment of dedicated virtual support systems, including help desks, academic coaching, and mental health support designed for online learners might be considered.

Strengths

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

- MIM has a reputation for student satisfaction and support around student welfare.
- The small group size makes student support easier, and creates a very positive, encouraging atmosphere.
- Enthusiasm, experience and dedication of academic and administrative staff.
- Emphasis on interactive and hands-on work that promotes critical thinking, cooperation and practical relevance. The programme also employs approaches to enhance interaction between students (via group work, focus groups and peer review).
- The inclusion of a master’s dissertation, supported by two well-structured modules “Dissertation 1” and “Dissertation 2”, is a valuable component of the programme.
- Effective feedback system for students and continuous contact with staff.

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 needs to be explicit underlying principles for the e-learning modality. MIM’s philosophy is mainly based on what they experienced during the pandemic, and this is not a recommendable starting point for designing a consistent e-learning model.
- The systems in MIM are tailored to conventional delivery. More specific guidelines on e-learning expectations for staff and students are needed. There is also a need to consider how to address the specific needs of online students and more consideration of this is required.
- Currently, the role of the teachers is that of “transmitters of knowledge”, and more emphasis is required on strategies to support online learners, “and become a guide on the side”.
- MIM’s model is described as “autonomous learning”, but it is really not, it is more related to “independent learning” which leaves the students solely responsible for progressing their studies.
- Study guides are not consistent or complete enough. They should integrate all the necessary information for someone who is unable to attend the synchronous meetings. In addition, inconsistencies like the number of hours that should be allocated to study per week should be revised.

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

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

2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially compliant
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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.*
- *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.

Over 80% of the teaching staff are external or adjunct lecturers, most of whom have worked for MIM for many years (some more than 20). This results in the creation of a team with strong collaborative ties. However, this staffing model is a risk for MIM in the future.

The teaching staff interviewed displayed a high level of motivation and commitment to the programme. A feature of the faculty profiles is that they come from academic and industry backgrounds, which is highly suitable for MBA programmes.

Currently, there are small student numbers. The increase in student numbers on the online programme will result in an increased academic and administrative workload has not been properly considered.

To support the training and continuous development of the teaching staff, MIM has introduced some workshops. Examples include the use of AI in teaching and e-learning best practices. Given the online delivery mode proposed it would be better if there was a more structured training process for faculty in online course design, delivery, and assessment strategies. Instructors may struggle to adapt traditional teaching approaches to the digital environment, leading to reduced engagement and effectiveness.

MIM does not yet have in-house instructional designers or multimedia content creators. Course content may therefore lack the interactivity, structure, and accessibility required for a high-quality online learning experience.

Strengths

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

- The teaching staff have extensive academic and professional experience.
- All faculty members are engaged and supportive of the new programme.
- All faculty cultivate and support a student-centred environment.
- Long-term and close collaboration between faculty members (permanent and visiting).
- Teachers have strong roots in industry, which makes them very practice-oriented. Teaching is linked with research interests and expertise.

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 over-reliance on adjunct as opposed to full-time faculty could be a problem in the future (i.e., sustainability of this particular model). This creates a risk in continuity, accountability, and consistent instructional quality, particularly problematic in the more self-directed and support-intensive environment of online education. This should be considered in terms of workforce planning.
- Although MIM have started to provide some short workshops to their teachers, this is not enough. More investment in e-learning training for delivery of online teaching is required. Specifically, investment in systematic professional development focused on digital teaching, including certification in online pedagogy and the use of LMS tools is recommended. The belief that they know how to deliver fully online programmes because they pivoted to online during the pandemic is a “false friend”.
- Recruit dedicated instructional designers or establish partnerships with third-party providers to enhance content design.
- Compulsory induction on an established MIM e-learning model should be a requirement for all teachers. Teaching online is not only having communication strategies in a virtual environment, but learning resource creation and learning scenario design.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*

- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

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 EEC met with current and former students from the conventional MBA and MPA programmes to discuss their experience, and the reasons for choosing MIM's specific programme. Overall, the students expressed predominantly positive opinions about their studies, the programme itself, and the support provided both by academic and administrative staff.

The admission requirements and programme outcomes appear to be clear and well understood by all students. MIM effectively communicates these requirements to prospective students.

Strengths

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

- Graduates and current students spoke enthusiastically about their overall experience and of the support received. The "family" experience in MIM was a common theme.
- The students and graduates of the conventional MBA and MPA programmes highlighted the flexibility of the proposed program. They supported the idea of online delivery. According to students a key motivation for potentially enrolling in the online programme is time efficiency and cost-effectiveness, particularly for those residing in different regions.
- There are adequate processes in place for student admission, monitoring, progression and certification.

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.

- Consideration should be given to more flexible student progression processes for the online programme as learner circumstances differ in this modality.

- Not enough consideration has been given to the possible heterogeneity of an international intake, especially since admission criteria are broad. Time-zone issues around synchronous online delivery also need to be considered.
- As the delivery of the online programme requires consistent feedback and more effective communication between faculty and students, a standardisation of processes around this in the online MBA programme should be considered.
- The planned internationalisation of the programme would benefit the school and the programme itself.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *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.

During the visit at the MIM's facilities, the EEC met with the E-Learning Unit and administrative staff. Based on the discussions the EEC found that MIM provides adequate resources for students and instructors, including IT infrastructure, administrative support and access to online library materials.

The technological infrastructure to support the online programme is already developed. Moodle, the Learning Management System (LMS), supports asynchronous and synchronous communication using Big Blue Button (BBB). Meetings can be also conducted via Zoom and Teams.

The IT support is outsourced and the management of the learning process is conducted in collaboration of the internal E-Learning Unit. The E-Learning Unit is responsible for the guidance, professional development and support of instructors in matters related to online learning. The Unit supports the design of curricula and modules, learning objectives, and design of mobile friendly materials.

Online Library Services are available. Open Educational Resources and Open Textbooks are also used. The required and recommended readings mentioned in the study guides can be made available on the learning platform.

The learning resources for the online programme are very similar to those used in MIM conventional programmes. Also the student support facilities and strategies that are in place are based on conventional learners. The requirements of fully online learners will be different and may require alternative approaches.

There is no overarching strategy that outlines goals, standards, and quality assurance mechanisms for online education. The lack of a unified vision increases the risk of fragmented efforts, inconsistent delivery, and scalability issues. The development and implementation of a formal e-learning strategy aligned with MIM’s mission, including KPIs, review mechanisms, and resource planning would be beneficial.

Strengths

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

- The online learning IT infrastructure is in place.
- The commitment of the administrative staff is remarkable. They are instrumental in maintaining a friendly and supportive environment. Their support was often compared to that of a “family member”.
- Students maintain effective communication with the faculty, who provide support relating to assignments and assessments.
- Good online databases (aka libraries) that are easily accessible. Access to electronic journals and books is supported by the library.
- Established Learning Management Systems (Moodle and Big Blue Button).
- Outsourcing of IT support and plans to increase administrative and academic staff numbers.

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.

- Develop and implement a formal e-learning strategy aligned with MIM’s mission, including KPIs, review mechanisms, and resource planning.
- There is a lack of specifically dedicated learning resources (materials) for the proposed online programme. There is a lack of innovation, as the learning resources are limited to e-books, journal articles, generic videos, and recorded sessions.
- Recalibration of the administrative staff should be taken into consideration, especially if they expect to have foreign students, who will face different kinds of problems, many of which will be determined by geography and culture. The existing support services may need to be augmented.

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	Partially compliant



5.2	Physical resources	Not applicable
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	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 the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

MIM has an excellent culture and a strong brand that can be leveraged to ensure a successful entry into the online education space. The faculty and staff at MIM are incredibly dedicated to their students and the institution. Already offering conventional MBA and MPA programmes, the challenge is to transfer the obvious strengths of these to the proposed online programme. The key issue here is to decide on an underpinning online education philosophy based on the current existing literature. Everything else about the online programme will flow from this. The recruitment of educational technologists and educational developers would provide the innovations in online learning required for the programme to be best in class in Cyprus, and make recruitment domestically and internationally more straightforward. Furthermore, structural aspects of the programme will also flow from the philosophy, for example, units rather than weeks may be the measure of progress across courses. Potential challenges relating to staffing, training, student support, and strategic planning, should also be addressed in this context. A further recommendation might be for MIM to consider delivery in English to start with as the demands of getting the programme fully online in English and Greek will be burdensome. Finally, there are ways to bring a more international perspective to MIM, for example, an International Advisory Board, appropriately constituted, could develop online education expertise and recruitment channels.

Overall, if the above recommendations are implemented, the EEC believes that MIM can successfully launch their planned online MBA.



E. Signatures of the EEC

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Date: 14/05/25