

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 13 May 2025

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training - MIEEK
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** MIEEK
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
120 ECTS, 2 year Diploma
In Greek:
ΞΕΝΑΓΟΣ
In English:
Tourist Guide
- **Language(s) of instruction:** 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.

The onsite visit and meeting took place in Nicosia on 12 May 2025 at MIEEK Nicosia with the following attendees were present:

K. Kyriakou, Coordinator MIEEK

Dr.M.Anastasiou, MIEEK Program Coordinator Pastry and Baking, Culinary Arts & Catering Services

G.Katsis, Manager MIEEK Nicosia

M.Michaelides, Assistant Manager MIEEK Larnaka

P. Zacharoplastis, Quality Assurance Officer MIEEK

A.Vasiliou, Coordinator IT technologies MIEEK / Assistant Manager MIEEK Nicosia

V. Loizides, Representative Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Industry Representatives

L. Mylona, President of the Cyprus Tour Guides Association

A. Georgiou, ACCTA representative

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) toured the site, visited the library and teaching facilities, met with students, teaching and administrative staff and is satisfied with the state of the facilities.

General Comment

The introduction of the Tour Guides programme after a 5 year period of inactivity is positive and aims to cover the need for trained and qualified tour guides. The transition between different providers is challenging but promising and academic sound. The introduction of academic qualification in the tour guides programme, is of paramount importance as it will form an academic qualification with vocational training too. The support by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism is of paramount importance to ensure smooth transition between the previous and future provision.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Name	Position	University
Dr Pavlos Arvanitis	Associate Professor	Edinburgh Napier University
Dr Charalampos Giousmpasoglou	Principal Academic	Bournemouth University
Dr Emmanouil Papavasileiou	Lecturer	Hellenic Mediterranean University
Mr. Andreas Hatzianastasis	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
 - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
 - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
 - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
 - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

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*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?
- How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?
- How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?
- In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?
- How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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 EEC had an overview of the Tourist Guides programme based on the application documentation and the on-site visit, extensive discussions with the members of staff, students and administration.

The programme aims to offer comprehensive academic and vocational education for individuals aspiring to build a career in tourist guiding. It equips students with the knowledge and practical skills needed to design and deliver engaging guided experiences, blending cultural interpretation and historical storytelling with modern technological tools and effective communication techniques.

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

- develop vocational knowledge and skills in tourist guiding;
- design and organise various types of tourist guiding for individuals and groups, helping people understand the historical course and development of the lifestyle in Cyprus;
- create a quality and correct material for tourist guiding, contributing to the capturing of experiences during visitors' experiential tours of monuments and sights;
- interpret and narrate the most important information related to history, civilization, culture, religion and Cypriot society

The programme has the following key learning competencies according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Subject Knowledge and Understanding:

- Acquisition of professional knowledge regarding the techniques, methods of communication, interpretation and storytelling for effective tourist guiding;
- Knowledge of the historical and geopolitical development of Cyprus and the influences of different cultures, in order to be able to offer documented and quality tourist guiding;

- Awareness of the role of the tourist guide in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism development in Cyprus.

Professional skills:

- Ability to apply the tourist guide professional code of ethics, the etiquette standards of visitor service, the relevant legislation and the legal obligations of the tourist guide;
- Ability to manage unforeseen situations during a tour, maintaining the quality of the tour;
- Ability to develop innovative interpretive approaches to tourist guiding, contributing to the upgrading of the tourist experience and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Technical Skills:

- Skills in designing and implementing tourist guiding, applying appropriate narratives, communication and interpretation techniques for the optimal visitor experience;
- Skills in reviewing/adapting the content and way of presenting information to different audiences, taking into account the visitors' specific characteristics and needs;
- Skills in managing different individuals and groups at the appropriate time of tourist guiding, providing valid information about the history, culture and cultural events of Cyprus.

Transferable skills

- Acquire, develop and practice the professional skills and competencies required for a career in the tourist guiding industry
- Gain practical experience in the tour guiding sector
- Develop a professional and quality oriented service culture and excellence.

The EEC is confident that the programme of study successfully meets the outlined learning outcomes. This is largely attributed to the highly motivated, experienced, and well-qualified teaching staff, whose passion for education, combined with access to exceptional teaching and training facilities, ensures the achievement of these outcomes.

1.1 Quality Assurance

There is a policy for quality assurance in place which is applied across the MIEEK institutions. The EEC came to the conclusion following the on site visit and consultation with staff members that there is a strong quality assurance policy in place, in line with international sector standards.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The aim of the programme is to provide both practical training and academic instruction, equipping students with the knowledge and skills required for a successful career in tourist guiding. It also offers clear pathways for continuing education and sustainable employment. While the programme is designed in alignment with international standards, one area for enhancement would be the revision of the Learning Outcomes (LOs). Typically, international standards recommend 3 to 5 LOs per course, and not every assessment should be expected to address all of them. A policy is in place to monitor and review the programme's progress following its launch.

1.3 Public Information

There is public information available online and in printed leaflets and guides as well as social media presence and promotional videos of various lengths and messages.

1.4 Information Management

Information Management is in place in accordance with the MIEEK policies and processes which have been well established.

Strengths

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

The programme is built on strong academic foundations and leads to a Level 5 Diploma in Tourist Guiding. It is designed in accordance with the practices and recommendations of the World

Federation of Tourist Guide Associations. Its academic approach offers an innovative model for tourist guide training by effectively integrating practical, vocational, and academic components, equipping learners with a well-rounded and industry-relevant skill set.

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.

In terms of branding, consistency is essential. During the visit and related discussions, it became clear that the School is publicly perceived as "MIEEK," whereas its official identity is that of a Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training. The interchangeable use of logos has resulted in brand confusion, affecting the School's identity, its staff, students, educational programmes, and key stakeholders.

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)

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

2.1 Teaching, Learning Processes, and Student-Centred Methodology

The (EEC) reviewed the Tourist Guides Programme, a two-year course awarding 120 ECTS. The evaluation focused on the programme's learning outcomes, objectives, structure, delivery methods, and the support systems available to both students and staff. The programme is delivered in Greek and is open to anyone who is proficient in the Greek language, provided they meet the specified entry requirements.

The teaching and learning approach is student-centred, aiming to foster the development of essential competencies for a successful career in tourist guiding and the broader tourism industry. A variety of delivery methods are employed to enrich the learning experience. Notably, teaching staff utilise the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle to share course outlines, lecture notes, and additional learning resources.

The curriculum integrates field trips and guest lectures to strengthen practical skills and provide real-world exposure. These activities enrich the academic experience, support professional development, and offer students valuable networking opportunities. They also promote a deeper understanding of industry practices, career pathways, and the occupational culture of the sector.

Student learning is further enhanced through formative feedback, active in-class discussions, and diverse assessment methods. The School supports strong student-staff relationships by maintaining an open-door policy, encouraging students to approach academic staff for guidance and support.

The programme values diversity and promotes an inclusive and collaborative learning environment. Course delivery is informed by lecturers' research and supported by a wide range of academic and industry sources, ensuring a balanced blend of theoretical and practical knowledge.

A clear policy is in place to address student concerns and complaints efficiently. Students can submit anonymous feedback through an online system, which is reviewed and responded to by module tutors. A structured course evaluation process is conducted regularly to gather student input on teaching quality, course content, resources, and facilities, supporting continuous improvement.

Students are also supported through a structured academic advising system. Each student group is assigned a permanent academic advisor (local coordinator) at the start of their studies. Advisors meet regularly with students to monitor academic progress and address any challenges. They serve as the primary point of contact for support, and all related actions are documented and reviewed by the relevant committee to ensure transparency and continuity.

2.2 Practical Training

Practical training is a key component of the programme and is fully embedded in the curriculum. Students undertake internships during Semesters B and D, enabling them to apply their learning in real-world settings and develop the competencies required of professional tourist guides.

Internships are carefully monitored by the programme coordinators, who conduct regular meetings with students, line managers, and host employers to ensure a constructive, supportive, and educational experience. This practical component strengthens employability and fosters stronger connections with the tourism industry.

2.3 Student Assessment

Student assessment is coordinated by the module leaders and follows clear institutional guidelines. Each module outline includes detailed assessment criteria and marking rubrics to ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness. Assessment methods include individual and group assignments, research projects, presentations, and practical tasks. Additionally, both interim and final exams—covering theoretical and practical content—form a significant component of overall evaluation, typically accounting for 30–40% of the final module grade.

Attendance is closely monitored, and a 10% participation grade is awarded to promote engagement. Module tutors are trained in assessment methodologies and receive ongoing professional development to maintain high standards in evaluating student performance.

Assessments are aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and constructive feedback is provided to support students' academic growth. A plagiarism and academic integrity policy is firmly in place, and students are expected to adhere to these standards.

Each course clearly defines the assessment types and their respective weightings. The final diploma grade is calculated based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) across all modules. To graduate, students must achieve a minimum passing grade of 50% in each module. If this is not met, students have the opportunity to retake the relevant modules to improve their grades.

Upon successful completion of the two-year programme, students are awarded a Diploma in Tourist Guiding, along with a Transcript of Records, detailing all completed courses and corresponding ECTS credits.

Strengths

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

The programme is designed taking into consideration international tourist guide practices and academic excellence. The programme will be supported by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism and industry stakeholders.

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 allocation of ECTS credits should be revisited to ensure a structured and balanced distribution across all modules, aligned with the actual contact hours and learning workload. A total of 60 ECTS should be allocated per academic year, with careful consideration given to maintaining a balanced workload across both semesters. The EEC acknowledges that, due to the inclusion of internships in the second semester of each year, there may be a natural concentration of credits in the spring semesters.

Given the specialised nature of the programme, it is recommended that new teaching staff be mentored and supported by experienced faculty members. This will help streamline the onboarding process and familiarise new tutors with MIEEK's educational philosophy and student-centred teaching approach.

When revising the Learning Outcomes (LOs), it is important to ensure that each outcome is linked to a corresponding assessment method. Conducting a thorough mapping exercise is advised to

identify any potential overlaps, gaps, or redundancies in content and assessment, thereby enhancing coherence and alignment across the curriculum.

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)

Sub-areas

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

The School (MIEEK) employs diverse and highly qualified teaching staff, consisting of both full-time and part-time educators, whose qualifications align with the academic and professional requirements of the diploma. The faculty's expertise is more than sufficient to support the programme's objectives and learning outcomes. To enhance their teaching effectiveness and

professional growth, staff members are actively encouraged to participate in study and exchange programmes, such as Erasmus+, fostering continuous development and exposure to international best practices. At least 70% of the existing teaching staff hold a recognised academic degree one level higher than the programme they teach, ensuring academic rigor and subject-matter expertise. With the implementation of the new programme, this figure is expected to reach 100%, further strengthening the academic foundation of the curriculum. The teaching load is distributed at a ratio of 2:3 between full-time and part-time faculty members, maintaining a balanced and flexible instructional framework. The final number of part-time staff recruited per academic year is determined by the student enrolment figures for the programme, ensuring that staffing levels align with the needs of the student cohort and maintain optimal learning conditions.

The recruitment and selection process is fair, transparent, and clearly defined by the Ministry of Education. All relevant documentation and procedures for hiring both full-time and part-time staff are publicly available on the Ministry's website, ensuring openness and accessibility.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The Tourist Guide programme will be supported by a well-balanced and diverse teaching team, ensuring adequate staffing across the wide range of courses offered. Faculty members hold varied and relevant academic qualifications, making them well-equipped for both teaching and mentoring students. There is a strong mix of full-time and part-time staff, effectively combining academic expertise with industry experience, which enhances the practical and theoretical aspects of the programme. This balance fosters a dynamic and well-rounded learning environment, benefiting students through exposure to both scholarly knowledge and real-world professional practice.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

The training and professional development of teaching personnel is facilitated through structured training programmes offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, which are officially published on its website. These programmes ensure that tutors stay up to date with pedagogical advancements and best teaching practices. Additionally, the Academic Coordinators are responsible for identifying specific training needs and organising targeted seminars tailored to each programme's requirements. Furthermore, through Erasmus+ programmes, selected teaching personnel receive specialised training in areas relevant to their programme of study. Upon completion, they are required to share the acquired knowledge with their colleagues, fostering a collaborative and continuously improving teaching environment. In addition, scholarly activities take place when or where opportunities arise in conjunction with industry providers.

Anonymous student evaluations are conducted each semester, allowing students to provide constructive feedback on their learning experience. This feedback is carefully reviewed by both the central Academic Quality (AQ) department and the local branches, ensuring that student insights are considered in the continuous improvement of the programme.

Strengths

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

- The diverse expertise of the teaching staff, including highly recognised industry practitioners, enriches the learning experience and ensures a well-rounded, balanced teaching programme.
- A consistent staff exchange programme has been maintained over the past five years, fostering collaboration with various institutions across Europe (this applies to all programmes offered).
- The Tourist Guide programme has already developed strong industry connections through the School's existing national collaborations, significantly enhancing its relevance and the employability prospects of its graduates. Key stakeholders, including the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, the Tour Guides Association, and the Travel Agents Association, have officially endorsed the new programme and will continue to support it through an ongoing partnership with the School.
- Staff across the School actively share best practices and collaborate on Quality Improvement strategies, promoting continuous enhancement of teaching and learning.
- There is excellent communication and coordination between the School (MIEEK) Coordinator, the Academic Quality department, and local branches, ensuring alignment and consistency across all locations.

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 School employs a robust and comprehensive approach to staff recruitment and development, which can be considered a good practice benchmark. In response to the specific requirements of the Tourist Guide programme, staff development opportunities can be expanded through collaborations with internationally recognised professional bodies, such as the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA).

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

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.

4.1 Student admission, process and criteria

The high school Apolytirion with at least 6-year Secondary Education (public or private) is a prerequisite for admission to the program. For male candidates, the completion of military service is also mandatory. The candidates need to sit an exam organised by a dedicated body (exams office) of the Ministry of Education.

In terms of selection, there is a scoring procedure based on criteria determined by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, as well as the MIEEK Council.

The supporting documentation describes the entry requirements and the admission regulations and policies

in a transparent manner (e.g., the Scoring system is available online at <http://enimerosi.moec.gov.cy/archeia/1/yp7748f>)

4.2 Student progression

Progress monitoring is conducted in two ways. First, through the Local Coordinators who have available time due to the reduced teaching duties. Second using the rest of the teaching staff during office hours, which are notified to the students at the beginning of the semester. In addition, at the end of the academic year, a telephone survey is taking place by the Local and the Academic Coordinators to check the professional development of the students.

4.3 Student recognition

The option of Credit Transfer is provided to students which applies to modules from which the student was exempted due to attendance in other institutions. The process. The maximum number of modules that a student is allowed to transfer from another institution is four (4), with two (2) of them being carried out with Credits following an Examination, “EC”.

Accordingly, the option of “EC” (Credit following an Examination) is also offered to students. This option applies to modules for which the student applied for exemption from the obligation of attendance which was approved following an examination.

Both, processes are completed within the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

4.4 Student certification

The students receive a diploma and explanations about the qualifications gained. The explanations include the learning outcomes and the context as well as the level of the studies (level 5) and the status and the studies.

Strengths

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

The School aligns the development of new programmes (such as the Tourist Guide programme) with the standards set by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This ensures that all new curricula are designed in accordance with established best practices and quality benchmarks. As a result, programme development consistently reflects a structured, outcomes-based approach that promotes transparency, comparability, and academic coherence across European higher education.

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.

No further comments or recommendations are deemed necessary regarding student admission processes and criteria, as the School has implemented a robust and well-established system. This approach has been consistently applied across all programmes and has been formally approved and reviewed by DIPAE, ensuring compliance with national academic quality standards and institutional policies.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

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.

5. Learning Resources and Student Support

The committee was informed that funding for learning resources and student support is sourced from both the Ministry of Education's budget and the European Social Fund, specifically under the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) framework.

5.1 Teaching and Learning Resources

The programme makes use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), specifically Moodle, to support teaching and learning processes. Students are introduced to the platform during their first week and are guided on how to use it effectively. Through the VLE, they can access course outlines, lecture notes, assignments, and other study materials.

The primary modes of instruction include lectures and laboratory sessions, supported by guest lectures that enrich the learning experience. In addition, students will participate in field visits to monuments, museums, and other sites of cultural and historical interest. As part of experiential learning, students will also have opportunities to design and lead guided excursions, allowing them to apply their skills in real-world contexts.

Assessment methods include written exams, group and individual projects, and oral presentations, all aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

5.2 Physical Resources

The facilities available for the delivery of the programme are considered adequate. Classrooms are well-equipped with computers, internet access, and projectors to support effective instruction. A library is also available on-site to support academic research and independent study. To facilitate excursions and off-site visits, shuttle bus transportation will be provided.

5.3 Human Support Resources

The programme is supported by a sufficient number of academic and administrative staff, including both full-time and part-time personnel. Over 70% of the teaching staff hold an academic qualification at least one level higher than the Level 5 diploma offered by the programme.

Leadership and coordination are ensured through a Local Coordinator, who is supported by an Academic Coordinator responsible for overseeing the programme across all provinces, as well as by a District Director and Assistant District Director.

Professional development opportunities for teaching staff are available through:

- Training programmes offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
- Participation in Erasmus+ programmes

5.4 Student Support

Student welfare is overseen by the Student Welfare Service, which operates at multiple levels:

- Central Student Welfare Committee, chaired by the Head of Student Welfare and including District Directors
- District Committees, chaired by the Assistant District Director and involving Local Programme Directors
- Day-to-day student matters are managed by the Local Coordinator, serving as the primary point of contact for academic and welfare-related concerns

A range of support activities and enrichment opportunities are available to students, including:

- Awards for outstanding academic performance (funded through sponsorships)
- Educational trips within Cyprus and abroad
- Participation in academic and professional competitions
- Elected student representation
- Opportunities through Erasmus+ mobility programmes
- Support with CV writing and job interview preparation
- Access to professional networks for internships and job placement

Strengths

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

The Local Coordinator for Student Welfare will be assigned a small group of students, allowing for personalised support and the ability to address each student's needs on an individual basis. This close supervision ensures that academic and personal challenges are promptly identified and effectively managed.

Comprehensive student support will be available across different career stages, including those entering the field as a second career and those beginning their professional journey. Tailored guidance will help each student navigate their unique path through the programme and into the workforce.

Participation in Erasmus+ programmes will not only enhance knowledge and skills acquisition for both students and staff but will also facilitate knowledge transfer from trained educators to the wider teaching team, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and international best practice.

Importantly, this programme marks the first initiative of its kind in Cyprus dedicated to tourist guiding. It represents a significant step toward addressing the current shortage of qualified tourist guides and will contribute to strengthening the capacity and professionalism of the tourism sector nationwide.

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.

Mentors:

Given that some of the newly appointed teachers may bring valuable industry experience but lack familiarity with the specific culture and operations of the school, it would be beneficial to introduce a mentoring system. Existing members of the teaching staff can serve as mentors to support new colleagues, helping them navigate institutional procedures, align with the programme's teaching philosophy, and integrate more smoothly into the academic environment.

Media Representative:

In light of current trends in digital media and the popularity of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, appointing a student media representative could be a valuable initiative. This role would involve sharing and promoting the programme's activities, events, and achievements through social media, enhancing visibility, engagement, and outreach among prospective students and the wider public.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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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
- 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?
- Are the criteria reflected in 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.

n/a

Strengths

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

n/a

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.

n/a

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

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

Commendations

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) commends the programme team for the following:

- **Robust Programme Design:** The programme is comprehensive and well-structured, incorporating elements from a previously developed curriculum by another Higher Education Institution, while tailoring it to current needs.
- **Alignment with European and National Standards:** The curriculum is developed in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework, and is informed by both international best practices and national academic and vocational frameworks.
- **Effective Stakeholder Consultation:** Meaningful and productive engagement with key stakeholders — including the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, the Association of Tourist Guides, and the Travel Agents Association — has resulted in a programme that is well-aligned with the needs of the sector.
- **Professionalism and Commitment:** The programme development and support team have shown a high degree of professionalism, enthusiasm, and commitment, which is evident in the quality and coherence of the programme.
- **Industry-Relevant Curriculum:** The curriculum is specifically designed to meet the current and future needs of the national tourism industry, particularly in the training and development of qualified Tourist Guides.

Recommendations

To further strengthen the programme, the EEC recommends the following:

1. **Review and Recalculation of ECTS Allocation:**
The allocation of ECTS credits should be revisited to ensure consistency, fairness, and alignment with the learning outcomes and student workload across all modules. *(This should be included in Section 5 of the report.)*
2. **Clarify Programme Target and Description:**
A clear distinction should be made between the programme target (i.e., intended audience) and the programme description. The current validation templates should be updated to reflect this distinction at both the programme and module levels. *(This also applies to the forms used by DIPAE, which may require revision.)*

3. Use of Measurable Learning Outcomes:

The language used in learning outcomes should be reviewed to ensure consistency and that all outcomes are measurable, using active verbs that clearly define expected competencies.

4. Explicit Articulation of Skills and Competencies:

Each module descriptor should clearly specify the skills, abilities, and competencies that students are expected to acquire upon successful completion. This section should be standardised across all modules. *(This recommendation also applies to DIPAE's documentation templates.)*

5. Student Media Representative:

It is recommended to appoint a student representative responsible for promoting the programme's activities through social media channels. This would enhance visibility and engagement with both prospective students and industry stakeholders.

Final Remarks

This programme creates a unique opportunity to develop the future generation of Tourist Guides in accordance with the international professional standards, considering national industry needs.

It is imperative that the Key Stakeholders (Deputy Ministry of Tourism, Association of Tourist Guides and Travel Agents Association) support the School throughout the delivery of the programme to ensure the transition and continuity between the different delivery providers.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Dr Pavlos Arvanitis	
Dr Charalambos Giousmpasoglou	
Dr Emmanouil Papavasileiou	
Mr. Andreas Hatzianastasis	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 13 May 2025