Doc. 300.1.1

Date: April 17, 2025

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: AUB Mediterraneo**

- **Town: Paphos**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Business Intelligence and Management**

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

  Programme Name

  In English:

  Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (BBA):

  Digital Marketing

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**
  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Digital Marketing

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee met with all relevant parties throughout the day on Wednesday April 16, starting with the Vice Rector, and the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee. Next, we had presentations by the Dean of the Faculty of Business, the Head of the Department and the Coordination Committee. Excellent presentations were made throughout summarizing and explaining key elements of the application and expanding on some core areas. Documentation was of a high-quality level. We had insightful discussions with teaching staff, students, administrative staff and external stakeholders. We also toured the current brand-new facilities.

The AUBM campus in Cyprus is a new campus of the AUB-Lebanon, which is a highly ranked and quality assured institution. AUBM already has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (BBA): Management and now wants to expand its portfolio by adding BBA: Digital Marketing.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Tammo Bijmolt	Professor	University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Els Breugelmans	Professor	KU Leuven, Belgium
Spyros Galanis	Professor	Durham University, UK
Effie Papaefstathiou	Student	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.***

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA **ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ**
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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:*
  - o *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - o *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
  - o *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
  - o *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - o *benefits from external expertise*
  - o *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)*
  - o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
  - o *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*
  - o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
  - o *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*
  - o *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:*
    - o *selection criteria*
    - o *intended learning outcomes*
    - o *qualification awarded*
    - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
    - o *pass rates*
    - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
    - o *graduate employment information*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that
    - o Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
    - o Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
    - o External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
    - o Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
    - o 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:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
    - o *learning resources and student support available*
    - o *career paths of graduates*
    - o *industry trend analysis.*
    - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
    - o *data exchanges with professional networks*

> o   *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?*

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- *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 BBA: Management program of the AUBM is already in operation and the BBA: Digital Marketing is planned to be in operation in September 2025 (or if too soon, September 2026). The program has been designed based on the 10 principles of the DMI (Digital Marketing Institute), input from practitioners, and market research of existing BBA programs. The program is aligned with industry and societal needs. The BBA: Digital Marketing program has two years of overlap with the BBA: Management. In general, the program seeks to prepare students for jobs within digital marketing.

The program is a 4-year, full-time program and requires a minimum of 240 ECTS. Its objectives are in accordance with the overall strategy and educational philosophy (Liberal Arts) of AUBM and the intended learning outcomes stem from and are consistent with the content of the program. The purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes will be available to potential students on the website of the program.

The program of study consists of the following categories: (i) Compulsory Core Business Courses (96 ECTS), (ii) Compulsory Business Concentration Courses (30 ECTS), (iii) Free Business Elective Courses (12 ECTS), (iv) Free Elective courses (12 ECTS) and (v) General Education Courses (90 ECTS). In addition, and as a condition for graduation, all students are required to successfully complete workshops designed to enhance their soft skills and an internship.

The program fulfils the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe that is, preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

AUBM has developed and implemented a robust quality assurance policy that fosters a culture of continuous improvement and academic integrity. Regular program evaluations incorporate feedback from students, faculty, and external stakeholders to ensure relevance, innovation, and quality.

In terms of public information, AUBM maintains a transparent and accessible communication strategy. Comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information regarding academic programs, learning outcomes, admission criteria, and support services is readily available through the university's website.

To conclude, the BBA: Digital Marketing at AUBM is an industry-relevant undergraduate program designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience required in the fast-evolving field of digital marketing. The program successfully integrates foundational business principles with contemporary digital marketing strategies, analytics, and tools, preparing graduates for dynamic careers in marketing, e-commerce, content creation, and digital strategy.

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

The strengths of the program are as follows:

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1. The AUB Lebanon (parent institution) has more than 150 years of experience in delivering university-level educational programs. AUBM inherits these robust systems and procedures from the parent institution, but it has also implemented appropriate local adjustments.
2. It conforms to regulatory frameworks from three different regions (Europe, Middle East, US), which is a unique advantage. Next to accreditation from Cyprus (CYQAA), the programs of the AUBM are also accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the US (AACSB, NYSED).
3. It conforms to the Liberal Arts philosophy, consistent with the AUB, which gives students a solid basis for further studies and the future job market.
4. The overlap of the first two years with BBA: Management provides synergy and gives students flexibility to switch and/or combine both bachelor programs.
5. The faculty teaching staff has adequate practical experience which ensures a good balance between theory and practice.
6. The internship, as a Compulsory Business course, allows students to connect theory with the practice, beyond case studies, while boosting future employability opportunities.
7. There is adequate support and are sufficient quality assurance processes.

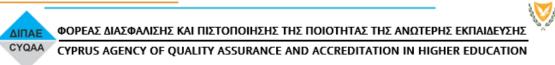## *Areas of improvement and recommendations*
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The areas of improvement and recommendations of the program are as follows:

1. While the internship is a strength, in practice putting the burden almost fully on students to find internship places is problematic. First, there are many international students who have fewer connections and not a well-developed network in Cyprus. Second, there is not yet a well-developed match-making platform where companies and students can find each other where the university could play an important role (e.g., via fairs, databases, websites, etc.).
2. The current program does not include a natural final project where learnings from the BBA: Digital Marketing are integrated and linked to practice. This could be achieved by introducing a (small) thesis at the end, e.g. of 10 ECTS, or having the internship more at the end of the program. Of course, this final project should be of sufficient academic level and on digital marketing proving the obtained skills and knowledge of the entire BBA: Digital Marketing.
3. The content of the BBA: Digital Marketing is too strongly focussed on digital marketing communication but less on customer relationship management and omni-channel management which are important elements of digital marketing (as confirmed by the external stakeholders). Reconfiguring the 5 current business concentration courses would provide room to integrate these other essential elements and would prepare students for a broader set of digital marketing jobs (e.g., financial services or retailing companies).
4. The inclusion in the program of two compulsory courses in the Arabic language may discourage non-Arabic speaking prospective students to apply for the program. These courses could be offered as free electives, together with other language options.

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

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Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment *(ESG 1.3)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.3 Practical training**
> **2.4 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

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- *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 isexplicitly 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).*

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- *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 various accreditations (MSCHE, AACSB, NYSED) ensure a well-structured and effective educational process and frequent assessments and updates.

AUBM has adopted a student-centred teaching and learning philosophy that prioritizes active engagement, critical thinking, and the personal development of each student. The teaching methodology is inclusive, diverse, and aligned with contemporary pedagogical best practices.

Practical training is an integral part of the curriculum, offering students opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. Collaborations with local and international partners enrich the learning experience and prepare students for successful professional careers.

Student assessment practices at AUBM are varied and transparent. They are designed to measure learning outcomes accurately and support continuous learning. Assessments are communicated to students in advance. The assessment

system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and are communicated to the students at the beginning of the course through the course syllabus. The assessment system is diverse and consists of assignments throughout the course, mid-term examination and final examination. Feedback is provided in a timely and constructive manner, contributing to academic development.

The students interviewed by the EEC (following among others the BBA: Management, Master of Business Analytics) indicated that they are very satisfied with the quality of their program and that they are in contact with faculty on a regular basis.

There is evidence of structured and well-organized lecture material (including case studies). All teaching material is uploaded to the educational platform used by the university and students have easy access to it.

The library provides access to electronic books, journals, and other material, and room to study and work on projects.

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

The findings above make the strengths clear:

1. Student-centred teaching.
2. Practical training as an integral part of the program.
3. Wide variety of assessment methods.

In addition, we note the following strengths:

4. Strong personal connections to students, thanks to the small-scale program and the one-on-one advisory roles of faculty members.
5. Effective internal quality assurance committees and processes. The quality assurance of the program of study is ensured through active participation of the members of the academic personnel, the members of the administrative personnel, and the students.
6. Small size programs, which stimulates a friendly and collegiate environment between students and teaching/ administrative staff.
7. A very diverse, engaged and motivated student body.

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 areas of improvement and recommendations of the program are as follows:

1. AUBM should connect students to the national (Cyprus) industry. This could provide students the opportunity to find internships and employment after graduation. It would enhance the industry link of the program.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2	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

4. **Teaching staff recruitment and development**
5. **Teaching staff number and status**
5.1 **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.*

4. **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.*

4.1 **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.

The teaching staff involved in the program has the appropriate qualifications and competences. The teaching staff is highly qualified, combining strong academic backgrounds with professional experience in marketing and digital communications.

The university has a rigorous and transparent recruitment process that ensures the selection of highly qualified academic staff. Continuous professional development is actively promoted through training workshops, research support, and performance evaluations, contributing to staff excellence and institutional advancement.

The favourable student-to-faculty ratio supports a personalized approach to education and quality learning. Faculty members are approachable, and committed to student success, providing mentorship and guidance beyond the classroom.

Faculty members are actively engaged in both teaching and research, creating synergies that enhance the academic environment and keep the curriculum current. The ongoing involvement in research and consultancy enhances the relevance and quality of education.

The Dean of the Faculty of Business of AUBM informed us that they are hiring new academic staff and gradually replace lecturing of staff from AUB Lebanon by permanent staff at AUBM. Recently, this has been successful with the hiring of one new Assistant Professor in Digital Marketing and another vacancy is open.

The faculty implements two tracks of teaching load. The teaching focused staff (Lecturer and Senior Lecturer) teach four courses per semester, whereas the research focused staff (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor) teach two courses per semester.

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

The strengths of the program are as follows:

1. A highly motivated team of faculty members, with good qualifications. They appear enthusiastic about building a new department and contributing to the growth of AUBM.
2. A good balance between young and experienced faculty members.
3. A small ratio of students per faculty member, which allows the personalized approach and is consistent with the pedagogical ideals of the program.
4. Faculty members that make an effort of integrating relevant practical experiences and keeping courses up to date.

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 areas of improvement and recommendations of the program are as follows:

1. Continue to attract and retain research-oriented permanent staff at AUBM. To do this, it is important to incentivize starting Assistant Professors in their first years with a reduced teaching load, and limited-service tasks.
2. Cultivate a research culture in the faculty, with regular seminar series of external speakers, research visits and research-oriented workshops.
3. Mentor junior staff as they could face several academic teaching challenges (e.g., new course development, student advisor roles, ...).
4. Build a research identity by focussing hiring and research activities on a selected set of key research areas that relate to the BBA: Digital Marketing.

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

	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> 5.1 **Student admission, processes and criteria**
> 5.2 **Student progression**
> 5.3 **Student recognition**
> 5.4 **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*

o *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 admission criteria are adequate and based on well-defined criteria that are in line with the EEC's expectations for such a program. In general, the program adopts appropriate and high entry standards on several domains. The entry criteria for accepting new students match the criteria of comparable BBA: Management and have long been applied in the parent institution.

The regulations governing the university, school, department and program operations are very detailed and cover a wide range of areas. With regards to the program, there are provisions for student progression, recognition and certification.

The pricing model underlying the tuition fee is rather complex. Though it might not be fully transparent, it does allow for price discrimination between various segments of students.

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

The strengths of the program are as follows:

1. Excellent monitoring of student attendance and progression.
2. Detailed admission criteria and procedures.
3. Extensive framework of scholarships and discounts that offer prospective students financial incentives to join the program.

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

At present, there are no available records of student performance, or distributions of grades across courses of BBA: Digital Marketing. Therefore, we have no concrete recommendations.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

   6.1 **Teaching and Learning resources**
   6.2 **Physical resources**
   6.3 **Human support resources**
   6.4 **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.

AUBM offers a student-centred environment with access to modern learning resources, including a library (with digital access to journals and books), computer labs, relevant software, analytics tools, and a digital content creation studio. These resources are designed to support a high-quality academic experience.

The facilities and buildings are modern, well-equipped and fit-for-purpose. The current facilities allow for growth in student and faculty body in the coming years. Accessibility, safety and sustainability are key priorities in the design and maintenance of these facilities.

Human support resources and administrative staff are available and responsive to student needs. These professionals provide personalized guidance and contribute to a supportive academic community. Provisions have also been made for the wellness of the students (including mentoring and advisory services from the staff), for the development of the staff (including support in teaching and research) and for the financial support of deprived students in terms of reductions in the tuition fees.

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

The strengths of the program are as follows:

1. The broadly shared vision for the future of the campus of AUBM and this specific program.
2. The state-of-the-art new facilities.
3. Strong commitment of all staff, from vice-rector, to dean, teaching and administrative staff.
4. Experienced administration and support staff, all based at the AUBM campus.

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.

We stimulate you to continue along the current path. We have no concrete recommendations.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> 7.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**
> 7.2 **Proposal and dissertation**
> 7.3 **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.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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.

Not applicable.

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

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

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The BBA: Digital Marketing program at AUBM demonstrates a clear vision aligned to both institutional strategy and market needs. The program's design, rooted in the principles of the Digital Marketing Institute and enhanced by inputs from practitioners ensures relevance and responsiveness to the evolving digital landscape. AUBM's emphasis on liberal arts education, international accreditation, and a student-centred teaching philosophy further reinforces the holistic development embedded in the program. These characteristics, along with the internal quality assurance mechanisms and pedagogical approach, provide a good basis for delivering a high-quality educational experience.

Despite the program's strengths, several areas for improvement were identified. Foremost among these is the need to bolster institutional support for internships, because (international) students may face challenges in securing placements. Establishing a structured matchmaking process—facilitated through career fairs, partnerships, or online tools—would create clearer pathways between students and industry, while strengthening the internship possibilities and employability outcomes of the program. The introduction of a final integrative project—potentially in the form of a digital marketing thesis or enhanced internship experience—could serve as a valuable exercise to showcase students' applied knowledge and skills.

Curricular improvements are also recommended to expand the program's focus beyond digital marketing communications. Greater emphasis on areas such as customer relationship management and omni-channel strategy would better reflect the broader demands of the digital marketing field and align the program more closely with employer expectations. Reconfiguring the concentration courses could support this recommendation.

Faculty development and research culture represent additional strategic priorities. AUBM has already taken commendable steps to recruit qualified, enthusiastic academic staff and create a collegial environment. However, supporting junior faculty with reduced teaching loads, dedicated mentoring, and regular seminar series and workshops will be crucial in retaining talent and stimulating research excellence. Focusing research efforts on selected themes closely tied to the BBA: Digital Marketing will build institutional expertise and reputation, and strengthen the curriculum with cutting-edge insights and practical relevance.

In summary, AUBM's BBA: Digital Marketing program is underpinned by a strong educational philosophy, institutional commitment, and alignment with industry trends. The recommendations will support AUBM's goal of becoming a leading institution in digital marketing education and will ensure graduates are well-equipped for the challenges of the global digital economy.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Tammo Bijmolt	
Els Breugelmans	
Spyros Galanis	
Effie Papaefstathiou	

Date: April 17, 2025