**Doc. 300.1.1**

**Date:** Date.

# External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:
American University of Beirut – Mediterraneo**

- **Town: Paphos**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

- **Department/ Sector: Institute of Liberal Arts**

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

  **In Greek:**

  Διεθνείς και ελεύθερες σπουδές

  **In English:**

  **B.A. Global Studies and Liberal Arts, 4 years, 240 ECTS**

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek: n/a**
**In English: n/a**

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The American University Beirut – Mediterraneo has asked a new programme, BA Global Studies and Liberal Arts, to be accredited. The programme is a liberal arts programme that will offer students a broad background covering different disciplinary areas from the Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. It follows an US-style liberal arts education. The programme contains 15 required courses, of which six are to be taken in the first, foundational year, 10 elective courses specifically related to the programme and 15 electives from a "General Education Programme".

The site visit took place on 17 February 2025 from 10:00 to 18:30. It involved a meeting with the Rector and other leading staff; a meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Chair of the Institute of Liberal Arts; a meeting with the Heads of the involved departments and the coordination committee; a meeting with teaching staff; an online meeting with external stakeholders; a meeting with student representatives; a meeting with administrative staff; a visit of the learning and teaching facilities; and a final meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Chair of the Institute of Liberal Arts and the Director of Institutional Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

The External Evaluation Committee consisted of four members from Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Cyprus: a Professor of International Relations, an Associate Professor of Globalisation and Development, a Reader in Philosophy, and a student of Hellenic Culture Studies.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| Name | Position | University |
|---|---|---|
| **Thomas Diez, Chair** | Professor | University of Tübingen |
| **Elsje Fourie** | Associate Professor | Maastricht University |
| **John Callanan** | Reader | King's College London |
| **Stavroulla Evgeniou** | Student of Hellenic Culture | Open University Cyprus |
| Name | Position | University |
| 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)*

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**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**

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**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*

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- 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?*
- *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 proposed BA is offered by a new institution, AUB Mediterraneo, that opened in 2023 as a sister institution of the well-established American University of Beirut. AUB Mediterraneo currently is offering 5 BA and 2 MSc programmes. Despite its recent establishment, AUB Mediterraneo draws on the administrative experience and teaching and learning resources of the mother campus. The proposed BA in Global Studies and Liberal Arts is supposed to broaden the portfolio, strengthen the liberal arts tradition of AUB, and offer a new interdisciplinary programme with a wide educational spectrum.

**Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance is clearly an integral part of the strategic management of the proposed BA and indeed AUB Mediterraneo generally speaking. The quality assurance procedures include a self-evaluation as well as internal and external evaluation processes, outlined in the Guidelines for Program Review Self Study Reports and the Guidelines for External Reviewers. University Policies and Procedures are generally available on the University website. There is a dedicated Director of Institutional Accreditation & Quality Assurance overseeing the procedures. Internal programme reviews in the form of Programme Learning Outcome assessments take place every four years; external Periodic Programme Reviews every eight years. Teaching staff and courses are evaluated anonymously twice a semester via an online survey sent directly to the students. Staff responses to students are provided only on request, but teaching staff is required to reflect on the evaluation results in their course portfolios, which staff has to submit for each course and every semester. The internal review committee includes senior management and representatives from all Faculties as well as a student representative. The external review committee includes two experts from outside the University. The inclusion of external stakeholders is not specified. Principles of academic integrity are laid out in the Student Code of Conduct. Turnitin is provided to staff to check for plagiarism as well as unethical use of artificial intelligence. The University has a basic policy on AI and has formed a committee to develop more comprehensive guidelines. Policy documents addressing issues of discrimination and sexual harassment include Principles of Ethical Conduct for staff, the student Code of Conduct, Procedures to Address Allegations of Discrimination and Discriminatory and Sexual Harassment, the Non-Discrimination and Anti Discriminatory Harassment Policy and the Sexual Harassment Policy. The website includes a dedicated page on Title IX compliance. There are established Student Grievance Policy and Procedures.

**Design, Approval, On-going Monitoring and Review**

The programme's learning outcomes were provided during the presentations at the site visit. They include that students:

Demonstrate broad cultural knowledge that is focused on big questions, significant historical texts, and current critiques of humanistic knowledge;

Be adept at intellectual practices and capacities valued in the liberal arts including finding and evaluating information; reading and analysis; thinking creatively and critically; developing evidence-based arguments; and working with integrity;

Communicate information and ideas to academic audiences and to the public orally, in writing and through images, using different media;

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Reflect a sense of personal and social responsibility at local and global levels;
Develop a level of critical thinking, reading, and analysis that will allow them to be successful in advanced academic study and support lifelong learning.

While the structure of the programme and the design of the courses included in the compulsory and elective phases allow students to meet the overall learning outcomes of the programme, the programme does not include sufficient components that would adequately address the Global Studies aspect of the title. Course aims and objectives are set by the individual instructor in consultation with the Head of the Programme. While the foundational year is highly structured in terms of the courses that need to be taken, individual instructors have considerable autonomy in deciding on the exact content of their courses. Students and external stakeholders were informed rather than consulted about the development of the programme. While the programme allows smooth student progression, the exact relationship between workload and ECTS is not always clear. Course assessment is largely a matter for the individual instructor to decide, as it is common in US-based liberal arts programmes but resulting in a big variation of assessment procedures. The readings identified in the available syllabi and course documents vary widely in terms of quality and quantity. The university is still developing the details of its placement policy. The programme requires students to spend some time in the mother campus in Beirut. In present circumstances, this is not enforced due to security considerations.

**Public Information**

The university maintains a well-designed and regularly updated website. The relevant procedural documents are available online. The external review process allows for a regular review to validate programme descriptions and outcomes.

**Information Management**

We were provided with extensive data on student recruitment and the student population. As the programme is new, there is no data on the suggested BA. Further data on student progression in other programmes was not supplied.

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

The course portfolio provided by staff is an exemplary format of quality assurance.

The university has established a broad range of quality assurance procedures.

The university is able to draw on the expertise of the mother institution of AUB.

The programme is conceived to meet a real demand for an updated and less Eurocentric liberal arts programme.

We welcome the focus on hard and soft skills across the courses of the programme. In particular, the multi-media workshop and digital humanities electives will ensure the development of digital skill and knowledge.

The variety of proposed electives will provide student with an interesting and diverse set of competencies.

*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 University ought to include external stakeholders in the External Review Process beyond "external experts".

The website could include a dedicated Complaints link and Information Disclosure link for students, following the AUB example.

Staff should systematically use Turnitin and not only be encouraged to do so.

The development of a comprehensive GenAI policy should be treated as a matter of urgency.

We suggest the aspect of "Global Studies" to be dropped from the title. The Committee strongly prefers the title of "Global Liberal Arts" or similar, which in our view reflects the content of courses more adequately.

In order to meet the aspirations indicated by the reference to the global in the title, courses ought to include readings and themes from a truly global background more systematically.

Details about courses provided in the course descriptions ought to meet common standards and be of sufficient detail.

Course GSLA 200 ought to specify more concretely what kinds of methods it will teach.

The University may want to consider inclusion of the Global Citizenship course in the core curriculum, while moving the Cyprus course to the electives.

The University ought to collect and analyse data on student progression systematically.

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

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

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

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**Sub-areas**

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

**2.2 Practical training**

**2.3 Student assessment**

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## 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 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).*
- *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.*

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

While we found little variation in course delivery, the small class sizes across the programme allow students to be heavily involved in the teaching and learning process. Infrastructure allows for hybrid teaching where necessary. Learning includes formats outside the classroom. We particularly welcome the inclusion of a student project and e-portfolio. The curriculum foresees a BA Thesis to be written in the final year, which, together with the project course, counts for 12 ECTS. Attendance is strictly monitored and students may miss a maximum of 20% of the classes. Details about classes in the course handbook are provided but differ significantly from each other.

**Practical training**

Classes often contain an element of practical engagement, including site visits and working with the local population. The Beirut internship offers potential practical training. A comprehensive internship programme is being developed; students currently may draw on the extensive network of staff members.

**Student assessment**

Student assessment is highly diversified and includes many different forms. It varies significantly from course to course. Some assessment provisions are very detailed, others less so. Assessment normally includes an element of course participation. There is no distinction between formative and summative assessment. Marking is down to the individual instructor. Marking criteria are not published in the coursebook. There are no systematic provisions for second or external marking. Complaints about marks are to be brought up with the instructor in the first instance and with the Dean if they cannot be resolved. Procedures are laid out in the Grievance Policy.

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

We welcome the BA thesis and the inclusion of a "public-facing version of the material".

The programme aspires to offer a large variety of elective courses.

Assessments are varied and therefore meet different student needs.

Assessments are not based solely on a final deliverable.

The electives grouped under "Understanding our Engagement" are exemplary in how they incorporate and further community-based learning.

*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 light of the workload involved in the writing of a BA Thesis, the University may reconsider the number of ECTS attached to it.

The process of thesis supervision ought to be further specified and structured.

Assessment criteria should be standardised more systematically and published in the coursebook.

The university ought to consider differentiating between formative and summative assessments.

The university may want to develop second marking procedures. This applies particularly to the Thesis.

The student appeal process ought to be formalised further.

The university may want to consider the inclusion of some external oversight over assessment.

Standards of assessment ought to be maintained rigorously. The university ought to put into effect monitoring mechanisms for the spread of marks within and across courses.

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

| Sub-area | | Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology | Compliant |
| **2.2** | Practical training | Compliant |

| 2.3 | Student assessment | Partially 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**

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### 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

*Standards*

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *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.*

**Teaching Staff Recruitment and Development**

The University has demonstrated a good record of hiring local staff with an internationally recognised background and substantial teaching experience and research output. We are not aware of a formalised programme to offer further professional and teaching-skills related training. Local staff based in Paphos and employed to deliver teaching on the programme is currently on fixed-term contracts. The inclusion of a variety of teaching technologies is encouraged. There is a clearly regulated promotion process. Tenure-track staff are required to teach 4 courses per year, whereas lecturers are required to teach 8 courses per year. Teaching staff coming from abroad is offered accommodation.

**Teaching staff numbers and status**

While the programme is currently still being built and staff hires are ongoing, the University has provided a plan of staffing that we consider sufficient to cover compulsory teaching and at least parts of the electives. The task force who developed the programme are responsible to make appropriate hires. Current staff is a mixture of staff seconded from Beirut, local staff in Paphos and visiting staff from Beirut.

**Synergies of teaching and research**

Teaching staff generally have a good publication and research output record in their respective fields commensurate with their career stages. The university does allocate sufficient time for research and actively encourages their tenure-track staff to engage in internationally recognised research as well as internationally funded research projects. Staff is actively engaged in applying for research grants.  Tenure-track staff is granted a one semester sabbatical after each three years of teaching.

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

An impressive quality of junior staff hired in recent appointments.

Staff is highly enthusiastic, engaged and professional.

The university provisions for tenure-track staff are of a high standard.

Senior staff from Beirut offers good mentoring opportunities.

*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 university ought to gradually minimise the dependence on staff either seconded or visiting from the mother campus in Beirut without increasing the teaching load of local staff. Prospective student ought to be made aware of any restrictions in the choice of electives because of limited staff capacities. Non-permanent staff should be systematically supported in career development.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
> **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2 Student progression**
> **4.3 Student recognition**
> **4.4 Student certification**

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**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.*

**Student admission, processes and criteria**

The university has set clearly defined criteria for student admission that take into account the diverse background of applicants. Criteria are published on the university website. Data on applications, offers and acceptances are collected and monitored closely. Tuition fees are high in comparison with universities in continental Europe, however the university offers a range of scholarships so that on average, students only pay 57% of the fees. This includes six Presidential scholarships that are in effect complete fee waivers. The recruitment office employs recruitment personnel dedicated to different geographical regions. The current intake of existing programmes is heavily tilted toward Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East.

**Student progression**

Regulations about student progression have not yet been published. Students who fail a course need to re-take this course, however the procedures of how to do this remain unclear or are decided on a case-by-case basis. This may be appropriate in present circumstances as long student numbers are small but may become an issue to be addressed as the programme and the university grow.

**Student recognition and certification**

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The university has been accepted into the Erasmus plus programme and has developed first links with both universities inside (Sweden, Estonia, Germany and Italy) and outside Europe (including Vietnam) to establish exchange programmes beyond the existing links to AUB Beirut and other AUB hubs. Students will be encouraged to makes use of these mobility opportunities. The panel discussed with staff the potential problem of the recognition of a broad liberal arts programme without specialisation for entry into European consecutive MA programmes outside of the Humanities. We assume compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. As yet, the University has not had BA students completing their degree programmes so there is no established evidence of degree certification.

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

The university pursues an ambitious marketing and recruitment strategy and has dedicated appropriate resources for this purpose.

The university has made good provisions for the admission of outstanding Cypriot secondary school graduates, which may help addresses current biases in student intake.

Given the early stages of institutional development, the university has already achieved an impressive network of international links.

## *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.*

Students ought to be advised in the second year about possible elective pathways in correspondence with their prospective Master degree programmes.

Degree certification must be in line with the regulations set by the Lisbon Convention.

Care should be taken to process student data in line with the requirements set by EU General Data Protection Regulation. In this context, the panel is concerned about the use of GoogleDocs in the application process.

Procedures for how to deal with students who have failed a module must be formalised, including provisions for re-take exams, and in particular if the module is compulsory for the student to progress further.

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

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

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

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**Sub-areas**

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

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**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.*

**Teaching, Learning and Physical Resources**

The panel was impressed by the high standard of teaching and learning facilities, especially considering the brief period of operation of the university. Some facilities are still in the process of being furnished and developed, such as additional classrooms as well as labs. There is no library in the traditional sense. The "library" operates mostly as a co-working space, which is frequently used by students. The university thus relies largely on digital resources. If reading material is needed physically, it may be brought in from Beirut, where there is an extensive library. Students have free access to Microsoft Office. Students are required to purchase textbooks themselves. A lot of teaching, especially in the foundational year, relies on such textbooks. The state-of-the-art auditorium provides space for larger lectures and meetings, and is also used by the local community and civil society groups across Cyprus for meetings and conferences. This has already increased the visibility of the university in the broader Cyprus public. The university does not have its own sports facilities but has made a number of arrangements with local sports clubs and fitness studios for students to use free of charge.

**Human Support Resources and Student Support**

The university maintains a dedicated office for incoming students from abroad to assist their arrival and settlement. At present, the university has no mature students. The university employs a Student Counsellor and a Student Affairs Officer and has established a Counselling Centre to help students with any additional needs. Mitigations are decided by the Office of Accessible Education. We have met at least one student who has reported positive experiences with this Office in accommodating his needs. The academic advisory scheme is adequate to provide appropriate pastoral care. We further refer to the point made above regarding advise to students about choosing their electives. Students generally seemed to be aware of the services available to them. Students have formed a Student Council; exchange with university management remains rather informal. Students have also created a range of student clubs with substantial financial support from the university. Public bus lines have been altered and extended to provide a better link between campus and dormitories.

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

Both the university and the municipality seem to have invested significant amounts of money for the development of the campus and have made good provisions for future growth.

The student population, despite being small, seems to be very vibrant and active, and is generously supported by the university in their activities.

The communal use of university space beyond the student population is particularly laudable.

The Writing Centre provides excellent support to develop students' writing skills and has also broadened its activities into broader civil society.

Town Hall meetings provide for good exchanges between students, staff and management.

*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 university may consider providing free online textbook access wherever these are required in courses.

Relations between student representatives and university management ought to be formalised.

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

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

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

> **<u>Sub-areas</u>**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

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## 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

*<u>Standards</u>*

- *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

*<u>Standards</u>*

- *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

*<u>Standards</u>*

- *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*

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- 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.*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

| Sub-area | | Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant |
|---|---|---|
| 6.1 | Selection criteria and requirements | Choose answer |
| 6.2 | Proposal and dissertation | Choose answer |
| 6.3 | Supervision and committees | Choose answer |

## 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 panel highly welcomes the establishment of a globally oriented liberal arts programme in Cyprus. We have been impressed with the dedication of staff, the financial resources and the development of teaching and learning facilities. The programme meets or exceeds most standards in the different fields of assessment. We see areas of improvement in  the programme design, assessment and student progression. In particular, we believe that the suggested name of the programme does not adequately reflect its content and thus ought to be changed. We also encourage the further formalisation and mutual alignment of assessment procedures and criteria as well as more robust procedures for student progression in cases in which student have failed modules. We are confident that the university and programme staff will be able to address these issues and make the programme thrive in the future.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|------|-----------|
| **Thomas Diez** | Thomas Diez |
| **Elsje Fourie** | Elsje Fourie |
| **John Callanan** | John Callanan |
| **Stavroulla Evgeniou** | Stavroulla Evgeniou |
| Click to enter Name | |
| Click to enter Name | |

**Date:** 18/02/2025