Doc. 300.1.2

# Higher Education Institution's Response

**Date:** 02/05/2024

- **Higher Education Institution:** Mediterranean Maritime Training Centre/Mediterranean Maritime Academy
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **Programme of study**
  **Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  **In Greek:**

  Αξιωματικός Φυλακής Γεφύρας - Ανθυποπλοίαρχος (3 έτη / 180 ECTS, Ανώτερο Δίπλωμα, Συμβατικό)

  **In English:**

  Officers in Charge of a Navigational Watch (3 Years / 180 ECTS, Higher Diploma, Conventional)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek/English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

  **In Greek:** Concentrations
  **In English:** Concentrations

**The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws" of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].**

## A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

    - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
*(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| The curriculum includes practice and theory modules based on the IMO model courses for STCW competence which overall corresponds to 180 ECTS. However, ECTS credits are a standard means for comparing the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload for higher education. Even though, a vocational and bachelor's degree both can have 180 ECTS credits, which indicates a similar volume of total learning work required to complete each program, the nature of the education, the skills acquired, and the opportunities can differ significantly. | According to the CYQAA representative in the EEC, only 50% of the ECTS can be credited when applying for enrollment in a bachelor's degree programme for graduates of vocational higher education institutes. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The committee recognizes that higher educational institutions, including universities and university colleges, may reduce the value of each recognized ECTS credit from vocational courses. This reduction typically occurs when the vocational courses do not fully align with the university courses in terms of content depth, academic rigour, or learning outcomes. | According to the CYQAA representative in the EEC, only 50% of the ECTS can be credited when applying for enrollment in a bachelor's degree programme for graduates of vocational higher education institutes. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Most of the practical training facilities are in a different city. | All simulator facilities including the engine room simulator, as well as chartwork, compass etc. laboratories are located in the academy's premises in Larnaca. The machinery workshops are in Limassol port, due to the complexity, specialization, size and safety arrangements of the required installations. Limassol port is the only place in Cyprus where such facilities can be available. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The description of the study program on the webpage is limited | The academy has updated its website to include the curriculum, studies guide, enrollment procedures etc. | Choose level of compliance: |
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## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
*(ESG 1.3)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| No elective courses are offered to the students. From a higher education perspective, this approach is recommended. | Additional soft skill courses have been incorporated within the curriculum as follows:<br>• Risk assessment<br>• Incident investigation<br>• Recognizing signs of mental health issues<br>• Cultural awareness<br>• Prevention of sexual harassment<br>• Resilience<br>• Cyber Security<br>The courses have been included in the 3rd and 4th semesters. The students have to select two courses each semester. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The bridge simulator has limitations, including the maximum number of students that can be trained in each session and a student-to-instructor ratio that is too high. The facility features a basic bridge simulator, lacking full mission control and offering a limited view of approximately 150 degrees. | The existing simulators have been inspected by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as the auditors of the European Maritime Safety Agency and the training programmes have been accredited by the Competent Authority of the Republic of Cyprus for meeting the requirements of the STCW Convention, using the specific simulator arrangements. Also, the student to instructor ratio for the bridge simulator is 1 instructor per 4 trainees, which meets the requirements of the International Standards, and is strictly kept all the time. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The committee has not seen any radio and/or navigational equipment laboratories in the training centre. Such labs are important to enhance learning. | Bridge, ECDIS, GMDSS, Liquid Cargo and Engine Room Simulators are available and have been presented to members of the committee. The bridge simulator includes electronic charts, Radar/ARPA, AIS, Loran, GPS, gyro compass repeater and all the required by the STCW Convention electronic navigational equipment. Also, a fully equipped laboratory with charts, parallel rulers, dividers, nautical publications, magnetic and gyro compasses, sextant, loading instrument, lamp for sending and receiving visual signals, flags of the international code of signals etc. is available in the academy, which has been inspected by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus and | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | the auditors of the European Maritime Safety Agency. | |
| Seamanship workshops, which are an important part of training during the first year of the program, are not located at the training centre. | All necessary workshops are available. All simulators, as well as chartwork, morse code, international code of signals and compass workshops are available within the academy's presmises. Only the basic safety workshop (fire ground and swimming pool) is not located within the academy's premises, as accepted and verified by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Most modules are delivered in the Greek language even though the global maritime working language is English. The program to the IMO SMTP requirements | The academy has already developed all required documentation for offering both programmes in English language. The programmes have already been accredited by the SDM, aiming to attract foreign students for the new academic year 2024-2025. Additionally, holding a B2 level certificate in English language, is mandatory in order for the students to graduate. Furthermore, the academy’s students do not participate in student mobility programmes. The academy is obliged by the Cyprus government to offer both programmes in the Greek language as well. The requirements of the IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases are an essential part of the training programme for Officers in Charge of a Navigational Watch. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The practical training equipment and facilities were neither visited nor audited. Therefore, the reported findings are limited to the main training institute | The practical training equipment and facilities have been already audited and approved by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Maritime Safety Agency. The practical facilities were included in the information submitted to CYQAA. The facilities are readily available at your disposal. | Choose level of compliance: |

## 3. Teaching staff
*(ESG 1.5)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| Due to the considerable number of part-time instructors, the team working environment may not develop as appropriate. | The Academy's instructors are mainly Masters and Engineers that are employed on a part-time basis but have a long employment history with the Academy. That being said, various strategies and actions (e.g. open lines of communication among staff members, collaborative projects, and the participation of teaching staff members in training seminars and/or staff development sessions, etc.) contribute to the creation of a vibrant and cohesive academic community within the institution. | Choose level of compliance: |
| There are few full-time instructors. | Regarding the full time members of the teaching staff, as explained during the visit of the EEC, additional full-time instructors will be hired after the notification from CYQAA that the Academy can be accredited as a higher education institute (relevant Letters of Commitment are available). This is when the Internal Regulation and the Regulation of Studies, which provide for full-time members of the teaching staff, will become effective. Regarding existing full-time instructors, please find attached social security evidence from December 2023. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The high teaching load impacts the availability of mentoring, student guidance, and tutoring. | The daily teaching programme allows instructors ample time for mentoring, guiding and tutoring students, as the academy employs a large number of instructors considering needs for delivering. Each instructor is occupied for 2 to 6 hours in a teaching day. | Choose level of compliance: |
| There is no research being carried out due to the nature of the training, i.e., vocational. | The academy has already established agreement with a research center (CMMI) – see attached. The teaching staff and the students are encouraged to participate in the programmes of CMMI. The academy will investigate the prospect of regular involvement in research in the future. | Choose level of compliance: |
| It is also recommended to review the student contact hours for lecturing. | The student teaching hours are arranged for 4 to 6 hours which are in alignment with the standards for vocational education institutes. | Choose level of compliance: |

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

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| The institution has established criteria and processes which relate to student admission, progression and recognition. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Choose level of compliance: |
| The criteria established from admission, progression and recognition could be reviewed and enhanced in view of the institute's aim to attract more talent and offer a Higher Diploma recognised by the Ministry of Education. | A placement interview has been incorporated within the Regulation of Studies which is held prior to the enrollment of the candidate student to determine that all requirements for enrollment are met. English Certificate of B2 level is mandatory for all students in order to graduate. For maths, physics and computers, as applicable for the specific courses, are provided to the students, in addition to the training required for obtaining a Certificate of Competence in order for the students to be on the same adequate level when attending the mandatory courses, exactly because no specific grades on the graduation certificate are required. In order to attract more talent, the academy provides merit-based awards. More specifically, four scholarships are granted for the candidate students with the highest high-school grades in Greece and two for students with a high school average grade of over 16 from Cyprus, in order to attract high-level students. Also, the academy applied for accreditation to the CYQAA in order to attract high-level students, providing them the opportunity to continue their studies in university programmes. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Efforts to attract more female candidates should be encourage to improve the gender balance. | Gender balance, due to the nature of the profession, has always been an issue globally addressed by organizations such as the IMO. The academy has a small number of non-male students, aligned with the average of non-male seafarers globally. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Consider turning the teaching to English only, to attract more international students. | The academy has already developed all required documentation for offering both programmes in English language. The programmes have already been accredited by the SDM, aiming to attract foreign students for the new | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | academic year 2024-2025. Additionally, holding a B2 level certificate in English language, is mandatory in order for the students to graduate. Furthermore, the academy's students do not participate in student mobility programmes. The academy is obliged by the Cyprus government to offer both programmes in the Greek language as well. In order to attract more international students, the academy has established an office in Egypt to arrange enrollment of Arab students in the English-speaking programme. | |
| Although, the processes exist, they need to be more accessible and visible to students. | The website has been updated to include scholarship criteria, the studies guide, the programme curricula, the regulation of studies and the services provided to the students. | Choose level of compliance: |

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

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| There is no existence of a formal Library and/or desk space for the students. | The library facility meets the requirements of Cyprus legislation (Κ.Δ.Π. 54/90 – Ο ΠΕΡΙ ΣΧΟΛΩΝ ΤΡΙΤΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΕΩΝ ΝΟΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ 1987) regarding Higher Educational Institutions. The number of available unique publications is 332 (171 in digital format and 161 in printed format). The available publications meet and exceed those required by the International Maritime Organization for the provided courses. | Choose level of compliance: |
| There is no identity space for the two study programmes. | Due to the nature of the profession, where both officers on board and engineers work in the same environment and live on board, it is of benefit to the students to share the spaces of the academy other than the classrooms and to get prepared for life on board. | Choose level of compliance: |
| There is no student/staff mobility available. | The programmes are accredited by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus under the requirements of the Cypriot Legislation and the STCW Convention. All training must be under the control of the Accreditation Body, thus no student mobility is allowed. Regarding staff mobility, the academy since 2020 has contractual agreement with Cosmos Nautical Training Centre, which is a vocational training centre in Greece and which provides training for upgrading the Certificate of Competence in the capacity Master and Chief Officer for mutual exchange of instructors. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Physical facilities should be upgraded to meet the basic requirements, including meeting rooms for students and staff, self-study areas, and common recreational spaces for students. | The academy fulfills the requirements of CYQAA (Κ.Δ.Π. 54/90 – Ο ΠΕΡΙ ΣΧΟΛΩΝ ΤΡΙΤΟΒΑΘΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΕΩΝ ΝΟΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ 1987) regarding Higher Educational Institutions for up to 96 students. A new meeting room/recreational space for students has been initiated. The library space is considered as self-study area. Computers with internet are available to the trainees in the library area. | Choose level of compliance: |

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## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes

*(ALL ESG)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

*(ALL ESG)*

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## B. Conclusions and final remarks

| Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| Clarification and Public Access: All policies and procedures related to student admission, progression, recognition, and certification should be clarified and made publicly available. | All policies and procedures, including scholarship criteria, the studies guide, the programme curricula, the regulation of studies and the services provided to the students are in place and uploaded to the academy's website The Quality Management System's procedures are available to all stakeholders upon relevant request. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: The institution should seek ways to improve gender balance and attract more international students. | Gender balance, due to the nature of the profession, has always been an issue globally addressed by organizations such as the IMO. The academy has a small number of non-male students, aligned with the average of non-male seafarers globally. Towards attracting more international students, the academy has already developed all required documentation for offering both programmes in the English language. The programmes have already been accredited by the SDM, aiming to attract foreign students for the new academic year 2024-2025. Also, the academy has established an office in Egypt to arrange enrollment of Arab students in the English-speaking programme. Additionally, four scholarships are granted for the candidate students with the highest high-school grades in Greece. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Mobility and Cooperation: Examine opportunities to enhance support for student and staff mobility, including opportunities for international exchange and collaboration with other institutions. | The programmes are accredited by the Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus under the requirements of the Cypriot Legislation and the STCW Convention. All training must be under the control of the Accreditation Body, thus no student mobility is allowed. Regarding staff mobility, the academy since 2020 has contractual agreement with Cosmos Nautical Training Centre, which is a vocational training centre in Greece and which provides training for upgrading the Certificate of Competence in the capacity Master and Chief Officer for mutual exchange of instructors. Opportunities for international exchange and collaboration with other institutions will be examined. | Choose level of compliance: |

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| Quality Assurance: Strengthen the program's quality assurance mechanisms to include regular reviews of curriculum, teaching methodologies, and learning outcomes in relation to the EQF levels. Engaging external stakeholders in these reviews can provide valuable insights and ensure that the program meets both national and International standards | Annual reviews of the curriculum are carried out as required by the Quality Management System, which is regularly audited by the academy's certification and accreditation bodies, while the teaching methodologies and learning outcomes are set out in detail within each course framework which follow without deviation the requirements set by the International Maritime Organization in the relevant Model Courses. Representatives from at least 2 different fields of the shipping industry, as well as academics, are invited during the annual management review meeting to provide professional expertise on the outcomes of the quality results. The quality indices and objectives are audited and evaluated by two major stakeholders in the shipping industry, LRQA and Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus, on annual, 5-year and intermediate basis. | Choose level of compliance: |
| Employability and Career Services: Expand career services and strengthen ties with industry and alumni to enhance employability outcomes for graduates. This can include career counselling, and job placement services, ensuring that the program's learning outcomes align with market needs and EQF competencies. | The academy maintains a "career and liaison with the business world office" for counseling on student career matters. The "career and liaison with the business world office assists" the students in compiling their CV, getting access to job vacancies for working on board and finding placement for on board training by providing a fully detailed list of shipping companies. It also arranges participation in career fairs, events and exhibitions, as well as organizes visits of shipping industry professionals in order to connect the students with shipping company executives. Additionally, it collects data on student employment and present them during the annual Management Review Meeting. The academy through the "Career and liaison with the business world office" maintains a network with all shipping companies which turn to the academy for the training of their crews and employees. Thus, a network for career services and job placements has been established. Further to that, career counseling sessions are held by the Training Manager along with the Instructor in Chief of each school and the associated psychologist to prepare the students before their first on board training | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | period for the life on board the ship, as well as the rights and obligations of the cadet. Same is held upon return of the students from the on board training period. The academy has formal feedback mechanism to record the companies of the vessels on which the students completed their onboard training. As for alumni services, one year after graduation, the academy communicates with the students, either verbally or by an e-mail message (which is to be optionally replied on sample basis, where the trainees are asked whether they are still employed and continue on the profession, as well as whether they have any comments and suggestions for improvements in the operation of the academy. The collected data are discussed during the annual management review meeting. In regards to the programme's learning outcomes please find below. | |
| Feedback Mechanisms: Implement robust feedback mechanisms from students, alumni, and employers to continuously improve the program. This feedback can inform adjustments to the curriculum, teaching methods, and support services, ensuring they remain relevant and effective | The improvement of the programmes and the necessary adjustments to the curriculum and the teaching methods, are continuously monitored by the International Maritime Organization, through the Human element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) Sub-Committee and the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), members of which are delegates of all IMO member nations. The academy's accreditation body (Shipping Deputy Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus) collects data from the maritime industry and participates in the committees, which through resolutions set and update the curricula and teaching methods of maritime training courses, as to be on the upmost updated level, in order to meet all the latest developments in technology, legislation and management. The Deputy Ministry, as a member of the IMO adopts the standards included in the IMO Resolutions and regulate, as well as monitor their implementation by the accredited academies. This is why the Certificates of Competence issued by the Shipping Deputy Ministry are recognized by all IMO Member States globally. Further to that, elective courses have been incorporated in our programmes where through KPIs and | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | the input of the stakeholders in the annual Management Review Meeting, the academic committee monitors and verifies that the learning outcomes are relevant, effective and in alignment with the industry's requirements and suggest any necessary amendments. | |

C.

## D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

| *Name* | *Position* | *Signature* |
|---|---|---|
| **Panagis Tzortzatos** | Managing Director | |
| **Georgios Vlachos** | Training Manager | |
| **Polyvios Lemonaris** | Quality Consultant | |
| **Click to enter Name** | Click to enter Position | |
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**Date:** 02/05/2024

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