

4 Δεκεμβρίου 2023

Πρόεδρο,
Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης,
Λευκωσία.

Αγαπητή Καθηγήτρια Μ. Κουτσελίνη,

Θέμα: Αναβολή λήψης απόφασης για την αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος “Hotel Administration” (2 academic years, 120 ECTS, Diploma) του Ιδρύματος Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης “College of Tourism and Hotel Management”

Αναφερόμαστε στο πιο πάνω θέμα και δια της παρούσης σας υποβάλλομε τις τεκμηριωμένες ενέργειες στις οποίες έχει προβεί η διεύθυνση του ιδρύματος για βελτίωση του προγράμματος περιλαμβανομένων των αναγκαίων διευκρινήσεων, όπως αναφέρεται στην επιστολή σας ημερομηνίας 20 Οκτωβρίου 2023.

Παραμένουμε στη διάθεση σας για οποιοσδήποτε διευκρινήσεις μπορεί να χρειαστείτε.

Με εκτίμηση,

Σάββας Αδαμίδης,

Διευθυντής.

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
Make the quality assurance policy publicly available on the College website.	The quality assurance policy has been made publicly available. Link: https://www.cothm.ac.cy/quality-assurance
Clarify and streamline its policy regarding plagiarism.	The college’s policy regarding plagiarism is clarified and is or will be included (with the new version) in all relevant documentation (Prospectus, Student Handbook, Quality Assurance Handbook) as well as our website on the below link: https://www.cothm.ac.cy/student-rights-responsibilities-ethics It was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 1.
Revise and streamline	Following individual meetings between the academic director, the course coordinator and

programme and course learning outcomes to be consistent.	lecturers, both the programme and course learning outcomes have been revised and streamlined as per the report's comments and was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 2 .
Devise generic grade descriptors for each level of study to improve marking consistency and guide students in expectations.	Generic grade descriptors have been devised. These apply for all levels of study and was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 3 .
Include a programme-level measure of student satisfaction	A programme-level measure of student satisfaction has been added to the questionnaire which is now edited as per Annex 4 , which was included on our reply to the EEC.
Devise appropriate KPIs for the programme.	Appropriate KPIs have been designed for the programme and these are monitored by the administration staff (was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 5).
Involve alumni in further revisions to the programme to ensure it is fit for purpose.	An email was sent to alumni members requesting their input for revisions to their respective programme of study by assessing the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of the individual modules and programme as a whole to their work experience through specific targeted questions combined with more general open questions (Annex 10). A few responses were received and these were reviewed and discussed by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee to take necessary action where required and as indicated in the minutes (Annex 11). A similar email will be sent periodically as new alumni members emerge.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>Introduce changes to the curriculum to reduce the emphasis on writing style courses and increase the focus on courses directly related to the subject of the Diploma programme.</p>	<p>As evident by our actions and replies throughout the report, the EEC's recommendations are appreciated and taken into consideration. However, we respectfully feel that, - given the majority of our students ethnic background and the importance of languages and especially the English language – we should not introduce the specific changes referred to in this section.</p>
<p>Further develop the student-centred learning approach.</p>	<p>Two staff members (Antonis Thrassou and DBA cand. Chrysostomos Adamides) have just completed their Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (ANAD) certification, bringing the total number of ANAD-certified staff to five. Another staff member (Constantinos Adamides) took the certification exam on the 27th of November, whereas yet another member of staff (Dr. Sotiris Hadjigeorgiou) – who has completed the relevant course – will take his exam though a date has not been yet fixed. The ANAD certification is based on the ADDIE model which is a student-centered-learning method and the goal is for all staff to increasingly employ such methods. To this end, we have registered for a total of 18 seminar titles to be held by our ANAD-certified staff members in a further effort to increase staff's use of student-centered approaches in teaching. Relevant instructions were given to all teaching staff and subsequent feedback will be requested at the end of the semester. In addition to this, as noted, the college is actively promoting participation in seminars and conferences relating to this; 3 staff members (subject to limits imposed) participated in a relevant 2-day conference organised by the CyQAA, Harvard University and the University of St. Gallen a few months ago.</p>
<p>Further use its industry contacts to provide guest lectures or fieldtrips, enriching the student experience</p>	<p>An email has been sent to all teaching staff urging them to plan for guest lecturers and fieldtrips with the help of our admin staff where necessary (ANNEX 12). We will follow-up and log such events, as well as making sure to collect feedback from both staff and students. College management has initiated communications with 4 hotels and a well-known catering company to make preliminary arrangements for site visits. It has also arranged with specialists in sustainable tourism and alternative tourism to act as guest lecturers. Further contacts will be approached following and depending on the feedback of our teaching staff. For the time being in the current semester, Suzan Elfving has organised a visit to the Archaeological Museum in Nicosia on the 18th of October with the students of her Introduction to Tourism module. She has also organised a day trip on the 22nd of November for the students of her Travel & Tourism Management module. The day trip included a visit to the Archbishop Palace and Shakolas Tower in Nicosia. Mrs. Roxana Michaelides organised a visit by Wine Specialist and blogger Mateo Jarrin Cuvi on the 1st on November to lecture the students of her Food and Beverage Management module. The presentation focused on wine varieties, basics of wine and food pairing, guidelines for storing wine, explanation of wine labels, including grape variety, region, and vintage and the importance of drinking responsibly. Mr. Andreas Christoforou has organised a guest lecture by Dr. Anestis Vassiliou for Health,</p>

	Hygiene and Safety in the Workplace during his Food and Beverage Service module on the 7 th of November, while he has also organised a visit to the Centrum Hotel for the same group. Eliza Makridou has also organised a visit to Hilton Park with the students of the MA Mediterranean Diet and Tourism programme of study, on 18 November . The purpose of the visit was to follow a lecture by Chef Doros Hadjipieris regarding nutrition of hotel guests following special diets. Relevant pictures of the events were posted on our website.
Review all learning outcomes to ensure they are at the appropriate level and are written appropriately.	Following individual meetings between the academic director, the course coordinator and lecturers, all course outlines have been reviewed and written in a way that better summarise each module's learning outcomes rather than as a list of course content that will be covered. (These had been attached as Annex 2 to our reply to the EEC).

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
To undertake an effort to help existing members of staff to upgrade their educational level.	The college actively encourages staff members to upgrade their educational level; Two teaching staff members are at an advanced stage of completion of their PhD and DBAs, while another one is currently looking for a university to do her PhD. The College provides as incentives to academics to promote research a reduction of 3 teaching hours per week for participation in research, as well as financing of the research publication upon request. It also provides researchers with appropriate equipment and facilities for research and considers their research activity as a factor in academic ranking. The College also encourages staff for participation to the Erasmus+ program which offers many relevant advantages such as development of teaching skills and methodologies, learning of new pedagogical approaches and classroom management techniques, access to new teaching materials and Resources through collaboration with international colleagues, as well as research and collaboration opportunities. Our most recent participations are shown in Annex 13. Finally, we encourage teaching staff to participate in conferences, seminars and workshops and such participations have increased considerably as can be seen in Annex 14.
To support and coordinate research activities based on solid KPIs and to encourage publication in industry/trade and peer-reviewed academic journals of a certain calibre.	The college very actively encourages research activity by its teaching staff. The college accepts a reduction of 3 teaching hours per week by teaching staff involved in research with no effect on pay. The list presented to the EEC on research activity by teaching staff was by no means conclusive; A more conclusive list was included in our reply to the EEC as Annex 6 , including both full-time and part-time lecturers and in some cases research that has taken time long ago but which showcases the continuous

	<p>involvement of the lecturers in research-related activities.</p> <p>The KPIs we use are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research Output: Number of research publications produced by the college's researchers (journal articles, conference papers, books, and book chapters) in industry/trade and peer-reviewed academic journals. 2. Research Impact: Impact of the college's research by tracking citations of research publications. 3. Research Collaborations: Number of research collaborations established by the college with other institutions, both nationally and internationally (joint research projects, co-authored publications, and collaborative funding initiatives).
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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
Implement a more detailed process for reviewing transcripts and other documents.	The process for reviewing transcripts and other documents has been made more detailed, the relevant staff have been informed of these changes and a note has been made for these to be included in the college's next prospectus and student handbook. Please refer to Annex 7 in our reply to the EEC, for the Admissions Procedure which includes the process for reviewing transcripts and other documents.
The College could consider offering additional support services for students who may struggle with the English language, such as language tutoring or language-specific study groups during the semester.	As noted in Part 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3), we feel that given the majority of our students ethnic background and the importance of languages and especially the English language – we should not introduce the specific changes referred to in that section. We have introduced a requirement that students should have at least IELTS 5; if they have IELTS 4, they need to take the foundation course (for which we have applied to the CYQAA in a consortium of 15 institutions and for which the accreditation is pending - online accreditation visit planned for the 8th of December). This renders language tutoring or language-specific study groups redundant.
Continue tracking progression rates of students in the programme regularly, and to also make plans to increase or maintain progression levels, and to evaluate why targets were (not) met.	We do plan to continue tracking progression rates of students in the programme regularly with an aim to increase progression levels. Although largely out of our hands, it is to this end that we are trying to increase the currently low ratio of other students to 3 rd country students in the college overall as progression levels are higher for other students.

<p>Add to the College regulations clear indications of what can and cannot be put forward as extenuating circumstances, and the evidence required to support an application.</p>	<p>We have added the required to College regulations and have amended all relevant documentation accordingly (Prospectus & Student Handbook which are also available through our website). It was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 8.</p>
<p>State the basis on which a grade petition can be made – e.g., bias, and the evidence that will be needed to support the petition.</p>	<p>In making an appeal, the student must allege bias or caprice in grading, a departure from grading procedures as indicated by the instructor, or refusal to clarify the basis for a grade on the part of the instructor.</p> <p>The evidence that will be needed to support the petition will be the paper in question which will be compared to answer key with grade weights (if available) and/or grading policies as stated on the respective course outline. If deemed necessary by any party the paper can also be compared against similar graded papers by other students.</p> <p>In all cases, a grade petition must be accompanied by the Grade Petition Form.</p> <p>Students wishing to dispute their semester grades have up to one month after the announcement of the grades to contact their School and complete this form. This petition is examined by the Faculty Member, the Course Coordinator and the Academic Director.</p> <p>The above procedure and form have been added to the College’s website on the below link: https://www.cothm.ac.cy/grade-petition</p> <p>The procedure has also been noted to be added on the next issued versions of the Student Handbook and Prospectus.</p>
<p>The College should formalize how learning of soft skills is facilitated at the College and through the educational process.</p>	<p>Two teaching staff members have taught a number of seminars on various soft skills through the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (ANAD). Our goal is to continue to provide professional development opportunities for faculty members to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching and assessing soft skills by offering workshops, training sessions, or resources to equip instructors with effective strategies for promoting soft skill development in the classroom.</p> <p>Although a number of soft skills is already included in the curricula of many modules, lecturers have been informed that special emphasis should be placed on the inclusion of soft skills in the educational process and they have committed to doing so. The formalised procedure as sent to them was included on our reply to the EEC as Annex 9. The end result of this process is also discernible in Annex 2 (on our reply to the EEC), which contains the revised learning outcomes.</p>

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>Based on the discussions held between the EEC and the students, the College is advised to improve its IT facilities from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Among others, hotel, and other simulation platforms relevant to the hospitality sector and other hospitality-related systems used in the industry should be introduced in the College.</p>	<p>Following our review or a relevant demonstration and presentation, the Hotelware PMS Software of Theova Enterprise Solutions Software was installed (ANNEX 15), and, as part of the agreement the relevant staff took part in a training session of the respective modules of the software on the 27th of November (ANNEX 16). In order to be able to host the above-mentioned software on our PCs, in October 2023 we had purchased a new server (ANNEX 17). In the meantime, the office software on our computers has also been upgraded and will continue to be upgraded with new software versions. In addition – and as mentioned in our response to the EEC – the College has made an application under the Recovery And Resilience Plan 2021-2026 (Business Digital Upgrade Plan) with the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry with a view to further upgrading the College’s software and hardware when needed.</p>
<p>The College should consider expanding the library's hours to include evenings and weekends, as many students have busy schedules and may not be able to access the library during regular business hours.</p>	<p>The College administration has decided that, the library hours are now set as 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday. In addition, upon request by any student, the library will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoon all the way to 22:00. Students will be appropriately informed of this option through an announcement, a notice in the library door, and changes of information on the website and student handbook.</p>
<p>The College should consider offering flexible tutoring hours or alternative methods of tutoring (e.g., online tutoring) to make it easier for students to access this service.</p>	<p>As noted above, the College has made an application under the Recovery And Resilience Plan 2021-2026 (Business Digital Upgrade Plan) with the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry with a view to upgrading its software and hardware. Following this, we will proceed with an application to offer the programme online. In the meantime, we are not allowed to offer online tutoring. In cases where a small group of students exist, flexible hours are sometimes offered as agreed with the lecturer.</p>
<p>The College should work on creating a more vibrant college life for students by organizing more social and extracurricular activities on campus (including dining options)</p>	<p>The College organises a welcome party within 3 weeks of commencement of classes to welcome new students. It also organises an annual trip to Troodos in the 3rd week of February and other field trips, while as noted above in <i>Part 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)</i>, further field trips have been and will be organised by lecturers as these serve social as well as educational purposes. The college also organises annual backgammon and chess competitions while chess boards and backgammon boards are available in the administration and are being used by students. The Annual Chess and Backgammon competitions were organised on the 3rd of November, and held at the College Cafeteria. Furthermore, a regulation-size ping-pong table was</p>

	<p>acquired by the college and the first annual ping-pong competition was held at the College cafeteria on the 10th of November.</p> <p>In addition, the college maintains an agreement with Elenion School, under the terms of which, college students are free to use the sports grounds of the school. A 3x3 basketball tournament is planned by the college for December, arranged by the Academic Affairs Officer Elias Elia, who is an International FIBA referee and has organised similar events in the past. Eliza Makridou and the students of the College participating in the MA Mediterranean Diet and Tourism programme of study, have organised an awareness campaign titled "Bringing Mediterranean Diet and Exercise to Our Everyday Life" on the 16th of June at the public market in Larnaca. During the campaign, the students volunteered their services to measure blood pressure and blood sugar levels, as well as BMI calculations under the supervision of their lecturer. The event was supported by the Municipality of Larnaca. Relevant pictures the events organised are posted on our website.</p>
<p>The College should consider ways to increase Cypriot student enrolment.</p>	<p>We are currently in the process of preparing two applications for new programmes of study at the Diploma Level (namely Office Administration and Legal Assistant) which are targeting exclusively (or almost exclusively) Cypriot Students. We also had some enquiries of our running Mediterranean Diet, Nutrition and Tourism Masters' Degree. Finally, we are also deliberating to introduce short courses with the Cypriot students again being the main target market. The existence of the directive by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, under which the graduates of 2-year diplomas are considered as new students if they want to continue their studies for a Bachelor's degree, acts as a hurdle to the development of 2-year diplomas.</p>
<p>The College should make efforts to address the challenge of balancing competing student needs and interests, such as by seeking input from students on priorities and implementing policies or initiatives that address the most pressing issues</p>	<p>A student union representative is included in the College Council, the Academic Committee, the Administrative Committee, the Social Events Committee and the Internal Quality Committee. Both at committee level as well as in the classroom and administration, students are encouraged – as dictated by management – to express views and concerns that are in fact discussed when these arise, and are subsequently reflected in the relevant policies and documentation of the college whenever possible.</p>
<p>The College should facilitate and encourage the establishment of an alumni association to further relations between current students and graduates of the College.</p>	<p>At present, we have a register of alumni members. However, following the recommendation by the EEC, we have commissioned a specialist company who will set up an online platform for which we will send email invitations to former students to join, so as further relations between current students and graduates of the College. The platform, among other things will include a searchable alumni directory, announcements made by College, news and updates by alumni members, career opportunities and advice, continuing education programs at COTHM or through affiliates, volunteer opportunities, social media integration, discussion board and photo gallery.</p>

A. Conclusions and final remarks

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>The College should formalize and explicitly identify how the different learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies link to Learning Objectives, of which there was informal proof: rationalize the number of learning goals and objectives, while at the same time more explicitly linking those Learning Objectives and Learning Goals with respect to sustainability/resilience, diversity, inclusion, etc. - in short, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<p>As noted in <i>Part 1: Study programme and study programme's design and development</i>, following individual meetings between the academic director, the course coordinator and lecturers, both the programme and course learning outcomes have been revised and streamlined to be consistent. Also, as noted in <i>Part 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment</i>, all course outlines have been reviewed and written in a way that better summarise each module's learning outcomes rather than as a list of course content that will be covered. In addition, the learning objectives of both the programme as a whole as well as of individual modules have explicitly been linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Please refer to Annex 2 on our reply to the EEC for Learning Objectives and Goals.</p>
<p>The College should assist academic staff to produce professional/trade and research outputs of added value through the newly established Research Centre. Moreover, the College should carefully redesign its curriculum to increase the number of courses that are explicitly related to the subject of the Diploma programme.</p>	<p>Both issues have been addressed above. Kindly refer to <i>Part 3. Teaching staff</i> for the research issue and <i>Part 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment</i> for the curriculum issue.</p>

Savvas Adamides,

Director.