

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 11 July 2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Limassol International University
Formerly Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM)

- **Town: Nicosia or Limassol**

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

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MSc Green and Digital Management (14 months full-time or 24 months part-time, 90 ECTS, 2nd Cycle)

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating (as MSc Business Management; significantly revised and renamed)
- **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
<p>The rationale for combining green and digital needs more thinking, especially when it comes recruitment. Considering that this programme will need to be able to attract students who are interested in both sides, marketing may be more challenging than usual.</p>	<p>The rationale for combining green and digital is to reskill and upskill working managers as well and fresh university graduates for the new world of business which is increasingly becoming green and digital. The unique value proposition of the programme is: "Looking for an innovative master program that will give you a solid knowledge of sustainability management in the new digital era and allow you to make a meaningful contribution to the global green transition? Join our Master in Green and Digital Management – a synthesis of high-quality academic content and 'learning by doing' practical approach – to start or accelerate your career in the dynamic world of green and digital management. Join the brand-new generation of managers who are value-oriented, customer-centric, data-driven, and socially responsible."</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Documenting quality assurance meetings and decisions needs to be more comprehensively and systematically undertaken and more formally structured. The EEC recommends that external stakeholders (especially considering the two thematic areas of the program) are involved in a structured and systematic way.</p>	<p>External stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process in a structured and systematic way. In fact, this very programme was designed with substantial and substantive input from external stakeholders through a formal consultation process. The involvement of business leaders has been a part of the design of CIIM academic programmes from the very beginning of CIIM (which was established by a group of visionary business leaders and a team of prominent academics); their involvement continues today. Regular meetings take place between the Dean, the Programme Directors, and the external stakeholders. While external stakeholders (alumni, employers, community leaders, and external academics) are not formal members of the QA committee they are regularly consulted and invited to participate in meetings as advisors. Their views are also solicited through surveys and focus groups. Following the EEC recommendation, we have further systematized and institutionalized the process. At a minimum, an alumnus/a, a business/community leader, and an external academic will be present in all QA meetings, as non-voting participants.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>The quality assurance framework proposed is comprehensive. Still certain areas need to be considered more carefully and thoroughly. The EEC recommends that the quality assurance process is carefully monitored to meet CYQAA standards. This</p>	<p>The EEC is right that the quality assurance process must be carefully monitored, so that results meet CYQAA standards and a culture of quality are maintained. For this reason, we have established QA Committees at three levels: department, school and university. Furthermore, the monitoring of the quality assurance process is assigned to the internal auditor. It is a long standing rule and practice for CIIM to map course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) against programme intended learning outcomes (PILOs), see ANNEX 1.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>particularly applies to mapping the course program outcome and assessment to the program learning objectives and competencies.</p>		
<p>Students are expected to attend the core courses (72 ECTS) and then choose between 18 ECTS of taught courses (3 electives from one of the three available tracks) or 18 ECTS as a result of a final project thesis. This creates a two-level approach and might lead to discrepancies with respect to evaluation outcomes, student performance, knowledge and competencies obtained. Potentially it may worth considering having all students undertake a thesis, which can also help scale up research outputs (especially in collaboration with local stakeholders related to the two themes of this program).</p>	<p>This programme was designed with substantial and substantive input from external stakeholders through a formal consultation process. What external stakeholders, especially employers, wanted was a programme that, while academically sound, will serve their need to green and digitalize their business. They were concerned that if the programme had a mandatory thesis, the managers they wanted to upskill and/or reskill will reject it as overly academic and, if they accepted to join it, they will be bogged down in writing a thesis rather than applying what they learned to the transformation of their business. On our side we wanted our graduates to contribute to the research output of the LIU and go on to continue their studies at a doctoral level. The compromise we reach was to make the thesis optional whereby the research-oriented students will do a thesis and the working managers will take additional electives needed in their management role.</p> <p>Indeed, our market research indicated that the larger block of prospective students for the MSc in Green & Digital Management are already employed managers who seek tools and techniques to effect an efficient green transition and digital transformation of their organizations; for them the GDM is a terminal degree. Those interested in research-oriented career or in continuing for a PhD-- about a quarter of the target market-- have the option of doing a thesis instead of additional electives. We, thus, prefer to keep the final project as an optional path. Nevertheless, all students of the programme are provided intensive training in research methods (both quantitative & qualitative) and they undertake research projects as part of many of their courses, some of which are designated as capstone courses for this exact reason.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Course descriptions and workload specifications should be clear and balanced. The workload balance needs to be adjusted as now students are expected to spend a lot of hours studying on their own whereas there will be limited interaction with instructors in class. This ratio is not in line with international standards. The EEC recommends that the ratio of contact-hours</p>	<p>The conversion of the CIIM credits into ECTS and the ratio of contact hours to non-contact hours (1:4) was determined and fixed for all CIIM programmes about 15 years ago in consultation with the local focal point of the Bologna Process. One ECTS was set at 4.67 class contact hours not including exams, in class assignments, research and teamwork, all of which involve interaction with the instructor in person and online and are counted in the learning effort but not in the class contact time. In CIIM's Masters programmes, the instructors interact with the students before class and after the class with tutorials, business games, company visits, and field trips connected to their course work which increases the instructor-student interaction by 25%. Students are not expected to spend a lot of hours studying on their own; to the contrary, CIIM is famed for its heavy student-instructor contact time.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>versus non-contact hours becomes more balanced.</p>	<p>CIIM’s ratio of contact-hours versus non-contact hours was repeatedly tested in multiple local and international accreditations (EFMD, AMBA) and found to be balanced and according to international standards including the Bologna process. According to ECTS Users’ Guide: <i>“Workload is an estimation of the time the individual typically needs to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements and individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments. The correspondence of the full-time workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalized by national legal provisions. Workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, which means that one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. It should be recognised that this represents the typical workload and that for individual students the actual time to achieve the learning outcomes will vary”.</i> (http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ECTS_Guide/00/0/ects-users-guide-2015_614000.pdf p.10).</p>	
<p>With respect to public information the EEC recommends that minutes should be kept in detail and should adhere to the usual standards. The sample of minutes that the EEC saw from existing programs were extremely brief overviews, compiled after specific requests have been made by the committee. Keeping detailed minutes and making them public should be a standard practice in the new program as they form evidence of quality assurance.</p>	<p>We confirm that since the beginning of 2022 all administration and faculty committee meetings, including those of the Quality Assurance Committee are scheduled for the year on fixed dates and recorded in the Outlook Calendar of the institution (ANNEX 2), available to all concerned.</p> <p>The administrative practice of minute taking has now been revised to a) adhere to the usual minute-taking standards with sufficient detail: agenda of issues, participants, views expressed, decisions taken, actions arising, and next steps; b) the record of meetings and minutes are kept in a special depository as evidence of quality assurance Minutes are now posted on the institution’s intranet and available to internal stakeholders on a “need to know” basis for GDPR reasons.</p>	

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
<p>Due to the dynamic areas combined in the degree it is important the external stakeholders from local industry are regularly and actively involved at a course and program level. This will help build strong relationships with the local community/industry and will improve student employability.</p>	<p>CIIM was established by a group of business leaders and a team of prominent academics from the world’s top business schools. The involvement of business leaders has been central to the design of CIIM academic programmes from the very beginning, and continues to be so today. We will continue to invest 10% of the time and effort of all our faculty and senior management in community outreach and the fostering of community relations which will continue to inform our strategy and operations as a University for many years to come, as they did in the case of CIIM for three decades. CIIM-LIU’s senior management has exceptional connections with the sustainability/ green management community: The Rector is Peace Nobel Prize contributor for his work on Climate Change while the Executive Director has been the country’s Environmental Commissioner for seven years in the recent past. These relations are further strengthened and expanded with LIU’s Bio-economia and ESG Centers. With regard to the digital part of the programme the connection with external stakeholders is solidified through the <i>Cyprus Blockchain Technologies</i>, of which CIIM was a co-founder (with UCL’s Financial Computing Centre) and which now counts among its members all the major banks, accounting firms (3 of the Big Four), large law firms, and computer technology services providers like Oracle.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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<p>According to the new policy the academic staff workload is divided among teaching (30%), research (30%), administration (30%) and community (10%). Yet taking into consideration that resident academic faculty members have a teaching load of 40 ECTS and this is delivered twice (in two different sites) this can result in a significant workload imbalance in teaching. The additional administrative demands associated with the new MSc development and the Institutional support will further suppress the available time for research and quality time for students in the course. As student numbers are expected to eventually increase, there are going to be demands for effective student handling as well. All these create a pressing situation for immediate staff recruitment as well as the implementation of practices that will ensure that workloads remain manageable. Moreover, as it was noted by the EEC, there are different contracts in the various staff members creating a confusion as to what is expected of staff and what are the criteria for performance evaluation.</p>	<p>The EEC’s concern that the teaching load of resident academic faculty members of 40 ECTS along with final project supervision responsibilities, might be excessive is understandable but is due to misunderstanding. The “up to 40 ECTS” teaching load applies to only a few faculty members who have been with CIIM for several years on a fixed-time contract focusing more on teaching than research. They still have the option of reduced teaching to do more research if they so choose and there is funding to buy off part of their teaching. Newly recruited faculty members (tenured and tenure-track) have reduced teaching load in the range of 20-30 ECTS (2 courses in each semester, or less) and 40-55% of their time allocated to research.</p> <p>EEC’s impression that the fact that ECTs are delivered twice (in two different sites) can increase the faculty’s workload is not accurate since this far from increasing their teaching load is reducing it because preparation time is reduced; the number of ECTS and the class contact hours do not change: 110-140 class contact hour per year for research-oriented faculty and 160-180 class contact hours for teaching-oriented faculty. However, everyone is expected to do some teaching and some research to fulfill their contractual obligations.</p> <p>It is indeed a challenge to undergo the transformation into a University while maintaining continuity of existing activities and subsequently undergo transition to a new campus. The Temporary Governing Board is fully equipped and prepared to oversee the transformation guided by an operational plan and a transition committee will oversee and coordinate the shift to the new campus. A faculty recruitment strategy has been in operation for a year through advertising in multiple academic job sites. We received over 1,000 applications with some 150 applications for faculty positions in the Department of information Technologies which were assessed by the Faculty Selection & Promotion Committee.</p> <p>This year we hired four new faculty members (two senior and two junior) for the Information Technologies Department. Our Hiring Plan (see ANNEX 3) provides for</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



	recruiting four additional faculty members for the Department, two of them in the coming academic year.	
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

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Admissions criteria need to be made explicit in the proposed programme (especially when interviews are undertaken to consider borderline cases).	<p>We agree with the EEC on the importance of admissions criteria being explicit. Below are the explicit admissions criteria of the MSc in Green & Digital Management:</p> <p>Admission Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor’s degree from an accredited university or college. • Proficiency in the English language evidenced by graduation from an English language institution, or satisfactory IELTS score (5.5) or equivalent TOEFL score or other standardized language examination. • Satisfactory quantitative skills as evidenced by the quantitative courses they have taken during their bachelor degree study. • A personal interview is an integral part of the selection process. The interview and documents providing evidence of the above qualifications are used as the basis for evaluating candidates. In cases where applicants have graduated from unfamiliar programs or universities, a GRE/GMAT examination score may be required. <p>There are guidelines as to the expected level of certain knowledge and competencies in quantitative methods (including statistics) and computer skills but no prior knowledge of programming is required.</p>	Choose an item.
Systematic data collection about student related issues (employability and diversity) can help improve the program	While data on student-related issues are being collected this has been more on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis than systematic. Now following the EEC recommendation data collection and their analysis is systematized. The ERP software system being acquired as part of the University’s technological infrastructure provides for such monitoring system of students’ employability, diversity, professional destinations and career advancement. Nevertheless, we have also been exploring supplementary monitoring systems, such as “Career System Manager”, “Odo”, “Epafo – 4 Schools” and “Salesforce”.	Choose an item.
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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
<p>There are currently restricted resources with respect to the labs and lecture rooms available. With the prospect of the new programmes, student numbers are likely to grow. There are plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs which will limit the need for students to use their own computers.</p>	<p>The IT infrastructure of the research laboratory includes hardware, software, access to countrywide resources, and access to the cloud. In terms of hardware, the number of computers increased by 33% to 30 machines in the Nicosia lab and by 60% to 16 in the Limassol lab. These computers have reasonably fast processors (>2.5 GHz), sufficient memory storage (0.5-1 Terabyte), and RAM (>4GB). Our plans to increase the number of student machines in the computer labs from the current number of 50 to 150 will be implemented in two phases: 50 new machines in advance of the launching of the undergraduate programmes and another 50 machines the following year. The expected student intake of all three undergraduate programmes will not exceed 100 and will probably lower with one third being the students of BSc computer growing at the rate of 10% a year according to our timeline.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Library resources are currently updated. Such updates are important and can enhance the quality of education provided, especially with up to date, cutting edge textbooks and reading material in a rapidly evolving area of study.</p>	<p>Library operates a collection of more than 5000 titles of printed materials with topics reflecting the academic programs via a specialized Library Management System with a 24/7 online public catalogue. Full-text 24/7 access is provided to online academic materials of over 43 subject fields from 29 online research databases, and 4 eBook collections, using the EBSCOhost information portal. Additionally, a directory of Open Access resources is provided on at Library's Moodle page. Separated Library Moodle pages are prepared to meet the needs of specific programs that require key documents, resources, and direct links gathered to one space. Library provides updated guides regarding the following topics: a. advanced searching (multiple fields and limiters) b. searching strategies, c. research process stages, d. evaluation of resources, e. referencing (complete guides for APA, Harvard etc.). The library recently renewed its subscription to Turnitin, the plagiarism software's extended version that gives the additional option of feedback and comments to improve training and independent research skills. The library is prepared to provide guidance on data management plan creation regarding future research projects.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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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
Overall, the EEC concludes that the proposed MSc program in Green & Digital Management has the potential to deliver quality education, adhering to the standards of the CYQAA.	We are delighted at the EEC conclusion that the proposed MSc in Green & Digital Management has the potential to deliver quality education, adhering to the standards of the CYQAA.	Choose an item.
The comments provided by the EEC aim to further strengthen the programme and improve its future success prospects.	We thank the EEC members for their constructive and developmental comments and recommendations which prove catalytic in further strengthening the programme and improving its success prospects.	Choose an item.
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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Theodore Panayotou	Rector	
Professor Doron Sonsino	Vice Rector and Dean of Law & Social Science School	
Associate Professor Theodosios Mourouzis	Dean of Technology & Innovation School	
Professor Waldemar Pfoertsch	Director of Research Centre and Dean of Business School	
Associate Professor Olga Kandinskaia	Programme Coordinator	

Date: 11 July 2022

