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FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 09.07.2019

Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution: Global College**

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

  In Greek: Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

  In English: BA in Business Management
  240 ECTS │ 4 years

- **Language of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status**
  New programme: X
  Currently operating:

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) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

    - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

We were impressed with the quality of the proposed programme. It was clear that it had been developed in a thoughtful and inclusive fashion with involvement of the faculty members and external stakeholders. There is evidence of a systematic approach to quality assurance in line with sectoral norms. A clear and coherent structure of the programme of study with appropriate programme objectives and explicit learning outcomes. The programme supports a smooth and clear academic progression of the students. Information on all key aspects of the programme, e.g., admission criteria, teaching and learning assessment procedures, etc., appear to be accurate and readily accessible.

Strengths

- *Professionalism, skills, and commitment of the various staff*
- *Clear evidence of a team ethos within the college*
- *Previous extensive experience in effective management of successful programmes*
- *Substantial teaching experience of the faculty*
- *A broad range of elective courses*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *Update course content and material by drawing on the most recent textbook editions.*
- *Utilise the excellent links that the college appears to have with the industry by formally and systematically involving professionals and industry leaders into the review of the programme content.*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

Provide information on:

1. *Employability records*
2. *Pass rate per course/semester*
3. *The correspondence of exams' and assignments' content to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*

Higher education institution response

It is clear that the EEC is impressed by the programme's design and development. The strengths identified by the EEC, regarding our extensive experience, our qualified staff, the quality of the programme and the team ethos within the College, highly evidence that the programme is fully compliant with the criteria and standards of the CyQAA.

The only recommendation made by the EEC, (for improvement), for this assessed area, is the use of the most recent textbook editions. The selection of the required textbooks was originally made based on the value and the importance of the authors on the specific topic. It seems that new editions exist, therefore we must update some textbooks with recent editions. We have forwarded a list of books to the Head of the Library, who has already ordered the new (recent) editions.

The EEC also emphasises on the excellent links that the College has with the industry, recommending to utilise these links in order to systematically review the programme's content. We would like to point out that this is one of our main aspects and our essential philosophy as an institution, for all our programmes, and therefore, affirm that the Programme Coordinator together with the faculty members and the assistance of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, will constantly upgrade the programme, by taking into consideration the reviews of professionals and industry leaders.

Regarding the requested information under the quality indicators, we would like to note the following:

1. Employability records

Although this is a new programme of study and no employability records exist for this specific programme, we strongly believe, and we are confident that the trend will be similar to the other business / management programmes we offer.

For example, the Diploma and BA in Security Management programme has over 95% employability, the Diploma and BA in Business Administration over 90%, all in the recognised industry. The reason we managed to reach these high rates is because of the large volume of collaborations and the excellent links that the College has with the industry, in regard to internship opportunities and employment prospects.

2. Pass rate per course/semester

More than 85% of our students pass the course/semester. The majority of our students pass the semester in their final exam and only a minor percentage take the second attempt. Our records show that around 5% - 10% of our students drop-out during the semester.

3. The correspondence of exams' and assignments' content to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS

It is up to the faculty to decide whether they will give an assignment or proceed with a written exam during the semester. In any case, the content of each course and the workload is examined and approved by the Programme Coordinator at the beginning of each semester, in order to make sure that there is a balance between the content volume and the number of the ECTS's. On average, for every course (6 ECTS) we expect students to dedicate approximately 150 - 180 hours, in lectures, homework, projects, coursework, exams, etc.

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2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (*ESG 1.3*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

We were impressed by the experience of the teaching faculty and the application of a range of teaching methods, including videos and case studies with real world problems facing organisations. The conversations we had with the faculty showed evidence of a strong commitment to student-centered learning. The models of assessment planned seemed appropriate to the development of the learner and to the learning outcomes of the programme.

Strengths

- *Collaboration and strong ties the University of Roehampton provides opportunities for professional development and pedagogical innovation. It is clear that the faculty values this partnership and the opportunities it brings.*
- *The programme director collected all the syllabi every semester in order to align the courses and ensure a proper workload for the students.*
- *Introducing students to research methods and ethical academic practice from semester 1 of the programme.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *We would recommend that the policy on updating course content and material includes the most recent textbook editions (instead of the current policy allowing textbooks to be up to 8-10 years old).*
- *We would recommend that the assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance become even more clearly communicated to the students ahead of semester start.*
- *The College could build on evidence research strengths of staff so that they have opportunities to ensure that teaching and learning are continuously enriched by research.*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

Again, this area is proven by the EEC to be very strong and fully compliant with the criteria and standards of the CyQAA. It is obvious that our franchise agreement with the University of Roehampton has been fully utilised, and good pedagogical practices have been embedded by our teaching staff.

Based on the recommendations made by the EEC, regarding the assessment system and criteria, we would like to clarify what has already stated during the evaluation procedure. Each one of our academic staff, prior to each semester, prepares a detailed course outline, stating the course aim and learning outcomes, the weekly topics that will be taught, the assessment methods, the required and additional textbooks, and details that will assist students in every

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possible way to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. All course outlines are approved by the Programme Coordinator in advance, in order to avoid conflicts on mid-term examination dates and safeguard the workload for the students.

All students get in advance and in printing the course outline, so to be informed with the above details. Students are informed in detail about the method and the exact date of their mid-term evaluation. In case of a coursework, they are provided with additional details regarding the subject, the total words, the submission date, the structure, the assessment criteria, etc.

3. Teaching Staff (*ESG 1.5*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

We strongly believe that teaching staff has excellent and relevant qualifications and experience to deliver teaching and inform the learning process through their own research activities. The College provides good support to teaching staff to improve their research skills and networks through financing conferences and other activities. Teaching staff is evaluated in a transparent and systematic way taking into account the quality of their teaching and research activity.

Strengths

- *Modern HRM practices are used for the development and evaluation of faculty*
- *Commitment to the research development of teaching staff*
- *Teaching staff that is committed and passionate with regards to supporting students' learning and working collaboratively with each other*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *Further emphasis on supporting the faculty in producing journal article publications*
- *Further opportunities for training of faculty in modern ways of delivering teaching through attending seminars and teaching focused events and conferences*
- *Involve, whenever possible, high-performing students in the faculty's research, e.g., through merit-based scholarships*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

Provide information on the following:

In every programme of study the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

Higher education institution response

Our teaching staff has always been one of most valuable assets. The EEC recognises not only their skills, commitment and experience, but also the predefined practices and procedures the College has, in order to evaluate and upgrade their quality.

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In respect to the recommendations of the EEC, we would like to note that although the above points are always taken into consideration by our Research and Development Department, we agree with the EEC that research, in terms of publications, attending conferences and seminars, involving students, etc., is something that must be constantly examined since these opportunities occur in a dynamic environment.

We would like to inform you that we have forwarded the above points to our Research and Development Department, with a clear instruction to integrate them in their new academic year planning.

Regarding the requested information under the quality indicators, we would like to note that the specific programme of study, for the first two years, will run with ten (10) academic / teaching staff, by which nine (1) full-time and one (1) part-time. Therefore, no special teaching staff will be engaged in this programme. For the third year onwards, or in case of new recruitments or new groups, etc., we ensure that if any special teaching staff is involved, it will not exceed the 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

4. Students (*ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

We were impressed with the quality of support to students and we felt that the communication to students of access policies, admissions criteria, etc. is adequate.

Strengths

- *There is an introduction week to orientate students to the programme and for them to integrate with each other*
- *Support in place for students' accommodation and extra-curricular activities*
- *Good faculty awareness of the different needs of the diverse student population*
- *Dedicated administrative staff ("one-point-of-contact") to help with every student issue*
- *Teaching staff that is committed and passionate with regards to supporting students' learning and working collaboratively with each other*
- *Formalised internships provided to promote students' working experience and employability prospects*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *Further clarity on how information on students' performance indicators, progression, staff evaluations, drop-out rates, etc. is collected, monitored and analysed*
- *Further clarity regarding opportunities for students' participation in exchange programmes*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

Our students are our main concern and for this we always support their smooth and clear academic progression and provide a strong commitment for a student-centered learning concept.

The EEC recognises the quality of the support we provide to our students though the introduction week and the various students activities, the communication channels we established with the involvement of our teaching staff, the internship courses we offer, the administration assistance, etc.

Considering the recommendation made by the EEC, we would like to further clarify on how information on students' performance indicators, progression, staff evaluations, drop-out rates, etc. is collected, monitored and analysed.

Students performance: Our academic staff examines - evaluates students according to the syllabus and the curriculum of their module. Grades are based on the student attendance and participation (10%), the mid-term exam mark (30%) and the final exam mark (60%). All marks are posted on a mark-sheet and handed over, together with the relevant material, to the programme administrator. Also, marks are uploaded on Moodle. All documents are kept in each student's file for future reference. Students who have constantly low marks, and demonstrate slow progression, are invited for a short interview - discussion with the Programme Coordinator. If any further actions or assistance is required then, the Student Affairs Office is informed. At the end of each semester, all marks are analysed and the overall performance is examined and evaluated by the Management in cooperation with the Programme Coordinator.

Staff evaluation: The College is applying the 360-degree feedback evaluation. Feedback is received from students, peers, the Management and self-assessment reports. The College is also gathering information from our Academic Advisor, who performs observations in class and evaluates our academic staff in action. His comments are orally discussed with the lecturers in an effort to improve their teaching skills and methods in class. During the semester, students are required to assess anonymously their lecturers, by answering questions regarding the material used, the teaching style and performance, the engagement quality, etc., with a scale from 1 to 5. All data are gathered, analysed and academics are informed in order to improve their tactics and skills. Our academic advisor organizes meetings with our staff, to discuss various teaching methods and explain the pedagogical framework and philosophy of our College.

All data are safeguarded according to the GDPR laws and procedures and our administration staff is well trained by professionals in this field, on how to treat personal and sensitive data and information.

Regarding the opportunities for student participation in exchange programmes, we would like to note that our College is part of the Erasmus + programme, and our students have the opportunity to visit companies and organisations abroad and gain knowledge on specific aspects, directly linked with their course.

5. Resources (*ESG 1.6*)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

In general, we find all resources available and fit for purpose. There are certain aspects, however, that can be improved. Our recommendations on how to achieve this are listed below.

Strengths

- *Adequate teaching space and equipment*
- *Modern audiovisual technology is available and accessible*
- *Space for students' socialization is available*
- *A good visible presence of administrative and support staff, e.g., library and IT support*
- *Access to additional electronic resources via University of Roehampton*
- *Student welfare support, such as counselling is available and adequate*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *More up-to-date hard copies of core textbooks of the courses are needed. The availability of these textbooks should take into account planned growth as well as advancements within the market for study materials.*
- *Consideration to be given on how to provide out-of-hours IT support to students and faculty.*
- *Further investment on resources, physical and human, should be suitably planned to account for projected increase in the student population.*

Deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators (criteria)

No deficiencies noted by EEC under the quality indicators

Higher education institution response

We are pleased to see that the EEC finds the available resources fit for purpose. Taking into consideration their recommendations, we would like to inform you that, as mentioned in the assessed area 1 above, we have already ordered a number of textbooks, taking into consideration the future needs of the programme.

We have recently announced a vacancy for an IT Coordinator, who will reorganise the College's IT department. This project involves beyond the upgrade of the IT support to students and faculty members, the implementation of further IT services.

During the site visit, we presented our ongoing strategic plan and especially the expansion of our premises in order to upgrade our facilities and gain value for our programmes. We are constantly evaluating our needs, in terms of human resources, and the Programme Coordinators together with the HR Manager are making the necessary arrangements, well in advance, in order to recruit personnel and faculty members either because of replacements, resignations or increase in the student population.

There is a predefined procedure, which enables us to recruit faculty members in a fast, effective and efficient way, establishing at the same time professionalism and team spirit.

6. Additional for distance learning programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

8. Additional for joint programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Not applicable

B.   Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC

In conclusion, we find the information on the programme included in the application and that provided by management, teaching and administrative staff and students during the site visit clear and adequate. On the basis of the full information provided, we believe that the programme is fully compliant with the standards of the agency across all areas.

Our key overall findings are that careful consideration has been put into the design of the programme with involvement of faculty members and other stakeholders. The experience of the teaching faculty and the application of a range of teaching methods, as well as the blending of theory and practice in the courses offered was up to the standards. We also believe that the qualifications and expertise of the faculty is excellent and relevant to the program and that sufficient opportunities are provided for further faculty training and development. We were also impressed with the quality of support to students and we feel that the communication to students of access policies, admissions criteria, etc. is adequate. Moreover, we find that, in general, all resources available are fit for purpose.

The core strengths of the programme are: first, the professionalism, commitment, skills, and team ethos within the college; second, the collaboration and strong ties with the University of Roehampton across all areas of the program design and delivery, including teaching and learning, resources, and overall support and opportunities provided to students; third, the commitment of the college to faculty development and the dedication of the faculty members to achieving the programme objectives and goals, as well as supporting students to become employable, global citizens; fourth, the excellent support to students' welfare across all areas; and, finally, the adequacy of resources invested to the programme.

Our key recommendations for improvement across areas include: first, formal and systematic inclusion of external stakeholders and industry partners in the process of informing and reviewing all areas of the programme; second, regular update of content and material, also through inclusion of the most recent textbook editions; third, further emphasis on supporting the

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faculty in producing journal article publications and including students in the research process; fourth, further clarity on how information across all areas of the programme is collected and analysed to inform the review of the programme design; and fifth, further investments in physical and human resources, including investment in library resources that takes into account planned growth as well as advancements in available material on the market for study materials.

Higher education institution response

First, we would like to welcome the fact that the External Evaluation Committee recognises the fact that the program is well designed with a clear and coherent structure and developed in a thoughtful and inclusive fashion with the involvement of the faculty members and various external stakeholders. We also agree that the well qualified and experienced teaching staff and the strong links with the industry, give a great value to our program.

It can be evidenced from all the above-mentioned points, that we have responded positively to the recommendations raised by the EE, and that clearly strengthens our program. Highlighting the comment made by the EEC, that *"…on the basis of the full information provided, we believe that the programme is fully compliant with the standards of the agency across all areas"*, we are certain that the program will be a success.

We assure, that since this program is part of our multilevel long-term strategic plan, we will invest in numerous aspects in order to fulfill our goals.

At this point, we would like to send our regards to the EEC for their exceptional, thorough and valuable report and for the productive discussions we had during their site visit.

Looking forward for the final approval, and we are at your disposal for any further details.

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C.   Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr George Kriticos	General Manager	
Mr Makis Sepos	Academic Advisor	
Mr Andreas Kriticos	Director of Administration and Finance	
Dr Andreas Constantinou	Head of Research and Development Department	
Mr Neophytos Karkotis	Lecturer	
Mrs Eleni Toliopoulou	Students' Representative	
Mr Marios Michael	Students' Representative	

Date: 09.07.2019