



Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 03.10.2022

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Global College

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Μηχανική Οχημάτων «2 Έτη/120 ECTS, Δίπλωμα»

In English:

Automobile Engineering (2 years, 120 ECTS, Diploma)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **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 300.1.1/2 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.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *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, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings

The diploma program under evaluation in Global College has an officially approved status. It fulfils all the formal requirements of respective regulators of the Republic of Cyprus. The program has a clear structure, which is publicly available at GC website. Study objectives and outcome goals are based on ECTS system for evaluating student knowledge. The diploma program is adequately designed and has sufficient staff expertise according to the scope of study.

Many statements about compliance with the above criteria were made during assessment. However, little factual information was provided. The College seems to have many engagements with other institutions abroad, but these do not seem to have any direct relevance to the Automotive Engineering program under evaluation. No existing system for the evaluation and improvement of education quality was presented to the committee.

Strengths

The program seems to be of high demand in the labour market of Cyprus. This program dramatically improves employability perspectives for its graduates.

Graduate students found the courses useful for their jobs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Objectives and expected outcomes in most courses as well as the program overall need to be clearer formulated. This applies in particular to the English version of the documents, that was presented to the committee. The Greek version of the courses' description is much better in that sense, since objectives and outcomes are clearly described and formulated.

HEI's response

We are pleased to see that the EEC finds that the program has an officially approved status and that it fulfils all the formal requirements of respective regulators of the Republic of Cyprus.

Global College has a number of engagements with local and international institutions with direct relevance to the Automotive Engineering. For example, the Automobile Engineering department has a collaboration with the Institute for **Automotive Business Training Center**, which provides systematic and online support for the e-books, e-seminars, automotive tools, automotive software & diagnostics. Also, this institute offers job positions to our students in Greece during summer (for three months) to gain experience in a much bigger automobile market. This is very important for our students to gain experience from bigger automotive markets.

Quality assurance is achieved through 360° evaluations. The student evaluations are taken very seriously into consideration. Programme Coordinators and HR Department work closely on designing these evaluation forms. Global College Administration execute the evaluations, prepare reports and hands them to the Programme Coordinator. The Programme Coordinator meets with the Board of Directors in order to inform them about the Programme delivery at the end of each semester. Feedback is also given by the Programme Coordinator to the module tutors. Our HR department ensures that evaluations are carried out on a regular basis in order to identify areas that require further improvement. We also work with high calibre external academic consultants that evaluate our academic staff's material and teaching methods through teaching observation on a monthly basis. The External Academic Consultant gives feedback to the module tutors and reports to the Programme Coordinators and the Board of Directors normally within each semester.

Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Findings

The program is found to have sufficient education standards addressing the main needs of students. Program coordinators make excellent effort to distribute teaching time flexibly, depending on student needs, even when it comes at the expense of increasing load on teachers. Theoretical courses are designed to give just enough background to students for building practical skills that are the focus of this program.

The dropout of students from the program is virtually non-existent, which suggests modest load on students during their studies along with soft demands in the assessment of their knowledge. Students on this program also get sufficient administrative support along with flexible schedule of collecting tuition fees.

Strengths

The focus in this program is made on practical skills, which is totally appropriate for the level of such a diploma program and is much appreciated by the students themselves. The possibilities of visiting major car manufacturers in Germany is a strong motivational factor for students contributing to the study program quality and success. The existence of a 'practical training' course in the last semester preceding graduation is one of the program strengths. English manuals for vehicles are used for students to learn English and understand vehicle specifications and maintenance.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The practical skills and modernisation of student background can be significantly improved by adding in structured way to the practical works with electric or at least hybrid vehicle.

HEI's response

It's nice to see that the EEC identifies that the program has sufficient education standards such as main needs of students, also nice to see that the Program coordinator makes excellent effort to distribute teaching time flexibly, depending on student needs, even when it comes at the expense of increasing load on teachers.

However, the practical skills and modernisation of student background is improved each semester by adding material related to electric & hybrid vehicles. The Automobile Laboratory has the required equipment for this purpose, which is constantly upgraded thanks to our partners in the Automotive Industry. All the critical parts of a hybrid and an electric vehicle are available in our laboratory, enabling our students and future automobile engineers to be able to repair or replace though their practical courses. Using these parts and the equipment during the two-year course period, students have the opportunity to learn and become confident on how to repair a hybrid or an electric vehicle. Moreover, our students get internships during the two-year period of the course and have the opportunity to work in Automotive Garages in Cyprus to gain experience and a job placement after concluding their studies Through this practical course, they also have the opportunity to work on both hybrid and electric cars.

2. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings

Teaching personnel in the program under evaluation appear to have adequate qualifications sufficient for quality education. However, teaching staff has no incentives nor systematic approach in professional development. All the professional development is carried out by teachers based on their own initiatives. There seems to be little to no connection between teaching and research in this program. This may not be a significant problem for the Diploma level, but it would certainly help to further improve the program's level and, especially, the development of the teaching staff.

Strengths

Teaching personnel in this program appear to have good practices and broad knowledge sufficient to cover rather broad range of topics at the same time providing personal attention to student needs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Academic personnel on this program seem to have very limited research activities and no incentives to carry out such. This pattern is very similar to the approach to professional development. Significant efforts should be made to encourage and systematically assess professional development and research activities of teachers.

HEI's response

Teaching staff is given incentives and therefore have a systematic approach in professional development. Seminars and conferences are offered free by the College Vocational Training Department, for the professional development of the teaching staff. However, the limited formal research work in the form of peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations from the teaching staff is identified as a weakness. The EEA recognises the efforts and work done by the Department of Research and Development, which was established by Global College in August 2018, that has as its main goal, education, research, and social promotion. The mission of this department is to support the academic staff in terms of their development and production of research work.

This department helps our academic staff to improve their research work, publish articles and participate in international conferences. The objectives of the Department are:

- *Promoting a plan for the development of academic staff*
- *Encouraging the academic staff to develop research towards their teaching subject*
- *Presenting research proposals at local and/or international conferences*
- *Supporting the involvement of the academic staff in national and/or international professional organizations active in their field of expertise*

The department has been allocated the amount of 25K to fund for the promotion of Research at the College. The department operates in an autonomous environment, with the financial and technical support of our Institution. For this purpose, the amount of € 25000 has been approved for the period September 2021 - August 2023. To date, the department has organized a significant number of seminars and conferences [both face-to-face and online] with the participation of our academic staff and students, while several conferences were held in the form of an open discussion, with the participation of the public. The comments, as well as the results - conclusions that were drawn, were extremely positive. Based on the recommendations made by the EEC, we would like to ensure that we will continue in investing in research and development and motivate our teaching staff to resume incorporating research into teaching.



Even though this is a diploma level program, and the significance of the issue not so important, still the Research Department believes that research culture needs to be embedded throughout all courses. Recently (in September 2022), your Institution signed a MoU with the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs (University of Nicosia Research Center), enabling us to jointly be involved in research and development programs (research, conferences, Training and developments events, etc.). Our goal from this strategic synergy is to gradually enhance the institutions' research culture.

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

Findings

The program seems to have clearly stated pre-requisite and selection criteria regarding student admission that are based on the regulatory framework of the Republic of Cyprus; they are published on GC website. It also has flexible admission schedule and a transparent structure well distributed among four teaching semesters with most courses being compulsory. The education process is primarily in Greek with limited formal courses given in English.

Strengths

Good laboratory facilities including a model car for the practical exploration each module operation. The students can carry out hands-on laboratory work on multiple practical aspects.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

At least some of the instruments including a car model need to be upgraded / modernised, to cope with developments in the automotive branch. Virtual laboratory tools would also be nice to develop.

The number of female students is very low and therefore more efforts are necessary to attract such to the program, although it is known that it is a professional sector dominated by male engineers.

HEI's response

It's nice to see that the EEC finds that this program has clearly stated pre-requisite and selection criteria regarding student admission based on the regulatory framework of the Republic of Cyprus and also has flexible admission schedule and a transparent structure well distributed among four teaching semesters with most courses being compulsory.

The laboratory's car model has been recently upgraded to a EURO 6 category (hybrid & electric vehicle) to cope with developments in the automotive industry. The recommendation of developing virtual laboratory tools is already taken into consideration, and we are working closely with our industry partners in order to implement this expensive idea. As for the number of female students, we agree that are low, however we will continue offering special incentives in order to attract more. This is more a cultural issue rather than a problem related to our institution.

4. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Findings

Students on the diploma program have sufficient support from teaching and administration personnel as well as flexible options for the time of studies. Laboratory facilities, (electronic) libraries and study rooms are adequate for the level of educations and current number of students. Most students on the program have very practical demands to their education, and these are addressed adequately.

Students are provided with hard copies of lecture materials; electronic versions of lecture materials are available to students who require them.

The IT department is able to support the student with the required software for learning the course.

Strengths

High teacher/student ratio along with flexible approach to teaching hours as well as electronic libraries. Students appreciate the support of teachers. Thetic exchange visits in the framework of Erasmus+ program is an excellent practice, which be maintained as much as possible.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It would be nice to upgrade laboratory facilities including adding equipment for practical mechanical testing. Additional resources for remote classes to tackle unexpected situations such as pandemics in case of needs have to be elaborated.

HEI's response

Our structures enable us to operate in a dynamic environment and shift to different learning methods to adapt to constant changes and support the individual students' needs.

The EEA recommendations under this assessment area as it comes to upgrade of laboratory facilities, such as automotive equipment for practical & mechanical testing, updated data for our automotive software, updated diagnostic software and equipment already purchased to cover the need for hybrid & electric vehicles, also upgraded health & safety equipment added as a first need in the laboratory. All these will be achieved by using sponsorships from our partners.

Regarding the additional resources for remote classes to tackle unexpected situations such as pandemics, we have the previous experience with the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak. Our institution had to shift the instructional mode from face-to-face to Emergency Remote Teaching, by following specific guidelines issued by the Ministry. The outcome was successful since we rapidly managed not only to shift all our programs to online teaching, but also to maintain the required teaching and learning quality. All practical courses took place in the laboratory but in smaller groups, according to the existing measures and safety protocols issued by the Ministry of Health. This plan was tested and implemented, and our department is ready to implement it again when and if required.



5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Findings

n/a

Strengths

n/a

Areas of improvement and recommendations

n/a

D. Conclusions and final remarks

HEI's response

First, we would like to welcome the fact that the External Evaluation Committee recognises the fact that the program is a distinctive and practically-orientated degree program that serves the public and commercial needs in Cyprus and beyond. It is proven that the program is well designed with a clear and coherent structure, as it was developed thoughtfully and inclusively with the involvement of the faculty members, the students, and various external stakeholders and industry partners. In addition, the well qualified and experienced teaching staff, and the strong links with the industry, give great value to the program.

However, based on the various recommendations provided by the EEA, we would like to summarize the main actions **already taken** by our institution:

Objectives and expected outcomes in most courses as well as the program in general are already formulated briefer and more precise as it has to match the English version of the documents.

The practical skills and modernisation of student background is already heavily improved by adding more hours in the existing practical work with electric & hybrid vehicles and by fully utilizing our Laboratory's equipment. As already mentioned, the laboratory has both electric and hybrid vehicles as working models.

Teaching staff has a variety of incentives and opportunities for their professional development. A number of seminars and training and development programs are organized and offered free by the College Vocational Training Department each semester.

The connection between teaching and research in this program is monitored by the College Research Department, which gives the opportunity to the academic staff and their students to be involved in various research activities. The recent strategic partnership with University of Nicosia (CCEIA), will enhance our research culture and enable our academic staff and students to actively be involved in research.

Instruments and equipment (including a car model) are already upgraded due to the use of the model car already in the laboratory,. In the laboratory a new vehicle of EURO 6 category is used together with a hybrid & electric, following the recent developments in the automotive industry. Virtual laboratory tools are also taken into consideration, and we are currently investigating this option together with our industry partners..

The number of female students is expected to raise in the forthcoming years. Our institution will keep promoting a variety of incentives towards this direction, in an effort to change the society's culture and attract female students into this program.

It can be evidenced from the above points, that we have responded positively to every recommendation quoted by the EEC, something that clearly strengthens our program.

We assure, that since this program is part of our multilevel long-term strategic plan, we will invest in numerous aspects to fulfil our goals. The success of the program is based on our three-pillar concept, which includes the appropriate structure, consistency and content of the program, the adequacy of our academic staff and the direct link with the industry. Taking into consideration that the program has the appropriate structure, consistency, and content, that it is the only program delivered in Cyprus and Greece, the remarkable experience we have gained over the last ten years that the program is offered, the direct link with the industry and the unique experience of our academic staff, we are certain that the program will continue to be a success.

At this point, we would like to send our regards to the EEC for their exceptional, thorough, fruitful, and valuable input and for the productive discussions we had during the online evaluation.

Looking forward to the final approval.

E. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Charalambos Kapetanios	Program coordinator	
Leonidas Neocleous	Quality Assurance	
Evangelia Philippou	Quality Assurance	
Andreas Kritikos	Director of Administration and Finance	
George Yiapanas	Lecturer	
Constantinos Hadjipapas	Lecturer	
Polina Polycarpou	Lecturer	
Alexios Daskalopoulos	Students' Representative	
Demetris Marin	Students' Representative	

Date: 03/11/2022

