

ANNEX 1 – QUALITY ASSURANCE

Academic Quality

This section is designed as a guide to, and source of reference on, the principles, procedures and administrative practice upon which the College's academic quality mechanisms are based. The College operates in the context of continuous development in the areas of quality assurance and quality enhancement. There are a range of bodies both internal and external to which College members, individually and collectively, are accountable for the quality and standard of academic provision. Internally, quality assurance procedures are developed on the basis that each member of College has personal responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards. External quality assurance is dealt by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth.

The College sees the definition, communication and enhancement of academic standards relating to a number of key aspects of College work:

1. The access, admission and induction of students;
2. Systems for program of study design, approval and review;
3. Program of study operation, teaching and learning;
4. Student assessment, progression and levels of academic attainment;
5. Systems for the appointment and appraisal of staff; and
6. Student guidance and learner support.

In relation to each of these areas, the College has defined responsibilities resting with individuals or committees within the College for the:

1. Setting of standards;
2. Communication of standards; and
3. Monitoring, reviewing, evaluation and enhancement of standards.

The quality assurance procedures in place are sanctioned by and operate through the academic committee, department heads and faculty members. Part of the academic committee duties is to undertake checks, from time to time, to monitor the extent to which the College's declared policies and procedures on academic issues are being followed. The academic committee and the quality assurance committee are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness in practice of the quality control mechanisms described in the internal regulations, College intranet and prospectus.

The Quality Assurance Committee meets 4 times in a Year. The exact dates are announced in advance relative to the procedures mentioned below.

What follows is a detailed description of the procedures involved in quality assurance.

Development and approval of a new program of study

Before a new program of study can be introduced it must obtain approval for its development. A suggestion for a new program of study may originate from a variety of sources: e.g. a faculty or administration member of the College, a student of the College or an external source. A suggestion for a new program of study may arise for various reasons, for example, identified niche market; student feedback; strategic opportunity; growth market. Suggestions for a new program of study are accompanied by a 2-4 page supporting document/paper that briefly includes:

- the proposed name, aims and description of the program;
- the target market and evidence of market demand; and
- need for special resources.

The proposal is placed on the agenda of the academic committee's next scheduled meeting. The academic committee has to decide whether to proceed with the development of the proposal. If the committee is positive about the development of the new program it ratifies the composition of an ad hoc committee composed of a number of appropriate people that will develop the proposal and appoints a chairperson for the committee. The appointed members of the ad hoc committee must consist of people with experience/knowhow in the field of the particular program of study, people with experience in teaching, research and curriculum development. Normally, the committee will consist mostly of faculty members of the College but sometimes of external individuals (e.g. industry experts, alumni, members of professional associations). The committee's chairperson will have the responsibility for steering the proposal through the development process. The committee's chairperson will have responsibility for submitting to the academic committee members, before the due date set by the academic committee, the developed proposal. The developed proposal should include the following for the program of study:

1. Name
2. Final higher education qualification awarded
3. Type (academic / vocational, conventional / distance learning)
4. Duration of studies
5. Language of instruction
6. Admission requirements
7. Special provision for students' assessment
8. Purpose and objectives (of the program)
9. Learning outcomes (of the program)
10. Curriculum
11. Course sequence (courses per semester)
12. Syllabus for each course of the program of study
13. Academic / teaching personnel and their curriculum vitae (must include their qualifications and research record)
14. A list of the courses the academic / teaching personnel will teach
15. Infrastructure necessary to run the program (e.g. special laboratories, software, equipment, library material)
16. Relation with similar programs in Cyprus, UK, Europe and USA
17. Relation with any external examinations
18. Relation with any recognition/membership requirements of a related professional association/body (ETEK, etc.).
19. Feasibility study for the offering of the program of study which must include, amongst others the tuition and other fees of the program, the proposed number of students and graduates' employability prospects.

A copy of the developed proposal is given to each member of the academic committee. The academic committee following a thorough evaluation of the proposal meets within 15 days in order to decide one of the following courses of action:

1. To approve the developed proposal (with or without requesting any minor changes that the ad hoc committee will be asked to implement) and decide who the program's coordinator will be;
2. To refer back the developed proposal to the ad hoc committee chairperson for further consideration (pointing out serious issues that must be considered);
3. To defer consideration of the developed proposal until a later date; and
4. To have no further consideration of the developed proposal.

It is important that the proposal is initiated in sufficient time for all stages of the procedure for approval to be completed before the proposal is due to take effect. The Academic Committee will receive proposals no later than the 30th of June (15 months before the start of offering the program of study).

Once the developed proposal is approved, the College prepares the application for evaluation – accreditation of a program of study and any other documents and submits them to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

Monitoring of quality of the education offered

Monitoring and evaluation is the process of systematically gathering and scrutinising relevant information and critical reflection on its significance. The purposes of these activities are:

1. The assessment of the quality of provision;
2. The identification of deficiencies and strategy for remedy;
3. The sharing and reinforcing of good practice; and
4. The encouragement of innovation and subsequent enhancement of good standards.

The routine monitoring of academic provision is carried out throughout the year and is the formal responsibility of individual instructors through the academic committee.

A critical appraisal will normally cover a review of areas like:

1. Aims and objectives: the extent to which these have been satisfied, and of their continuing relevance;
2. Curriculum: including the arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment;
3. Staffing and resources;
4. Learning services and student support services related to the course;
5. Student views;
6. Relevant staff development research;
7. Views of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education on any academic issue; and
8. Where appropriate, vocational and career aspects of relevance to the course through external input from employers and other bodies.

Review and evaluation of an existing program of study

Every 2 years since the day a program of study started being offered is reviewed and evaluated by Academic Committee and Quality Assurance Committee in a joint meeting based on a report prepared by the program's coordinator. The purpose of the review and evaluation is to facilitate continuing academic development and, where appropriate, change. The program's coordinator report provides information on the following:

1. A review of the program's of study aspects (see aspects considered when developing a new program of study);
2. A review of the students' admission, withdrawal, progression and graduation rates;
3. A review of students' facilities and services satisfaction and faculty and course satisfaction;
4. Information related to the employment of graduates;
5. Aspects of good practice;
6. A critical appraisal of the operation of the program of study; and
7. Suggestions, if necessary, for revising anything related to the operation of the program of study and the rationale for any proposed revisions.

The report is provided to the Quality Assurance Committee and to the Academic Committee members and the discussion related to the particular program's review is placed on the agenda of the Quality Assurance Committee's and Academic Committee's next scheduled joint meeting.

In the meeting, following a thorough examination of the report by committees' members, the Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic Committee decide one of the following:

1. the program is being offered adequately;
2. the program needs to be revised (in such a case the revision of an existing program procedure is initiated);
or
3. the program needs to be discontinued (see the discontinuation of an existing program of study section).

Revision of an existing program of study

Minor revisions related to a program of study (e.g. change in the syllabus of a course, change of main book) are implemented by the appropriate faculty members and approved by the appropriate Department Head. For any major revisions the procedure described below applies.

A suggestion for revising an existing program of study may originate from a variety of sources: e.g. a faculty or administration member of the College, a student of the College or an external source and should be presented to the academic committee for examination. It is important that the proposal is initiated in sufficient time for all stages of the procedure for approval to be completed before the proposal is due to take effect. The Academic

Committee will receive proposals no later than the 28th of February (19 months before the start of offering the program of study).

The proposal is placed on the agenda of the academic committee's next scheduled meeting. The academic committee has to decide whether to proceed with revising the existing program of study. If the committee is positive, it ratifies the composition of an ad hoc committee composed of appropriate members that will prepare a proposal regarding the revision of the program and appoints a chairperson for the committee. The appointed members of the ad hoc committee must consist of people with experience/knowhow in the field of the particular program of study, people with experience in teaching, research and curriculum development. Normally, the committee will consist mostly of faculty members of the College but sometimes of external individuals. The committee's chairperson will have the responsibility for steering the proposal through the preparation of the proposal. The committee's chairperson will have responsibility for submitting to the academic committee members, before the due date set by the academic committee, the developed proposal. The developed proposal should include the following for the program of study:

1. Revision(s) suggested;
2. Reasons for requesting these revision(s);
3. Benefits from proceeding with these revisions(s); and
4. Drawbacks from proceeding with these revision(s).

A copy of the developed proposal is given to each member of the academic committee. The academic committee following a thorough evaluation of the proposal meets within 15 days in order to decide one of the following courses of action:

1. To approve the proposal (with or without requesting any minor changes that the ad hoc committee will be asked to implement);
2. To refer back the proposal to the ad hoc committee chairperson for further consideration (pointing out serious issues that must be considered);
3. To defer consideration of the developed proposal until a later date; and
4. To have no further consideration of the developed proposal.

Once the developed proposal is approved, the College prepares the application for evaluation – accreditation of a program of study and any other documents and submits them to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

Discontinuation of an existing program of study

Occasionally, there may arise a need to discontinue a program of study. This need may arise for the following reasons:

1. The program of study has become obsolete or irrelevant, either academically or professionally;
2. Student demand for the program of study does not justify its continuation; and
3. Major concerns in relation to the quality of the program of study, identified over time have not been adequately addressed.

The decision to discontinue a program of study may only be taken by the academic committee.

Where a staff member wishes to discontinue a program of study, a written suggestion should be submitted to the academic committee setting out the reasons for the recommendations and indicating any necessary arrangements to protect the status and choice of existing and potential students. The academic committee may itself initiate consideration of the discontinuation of a program. It may consider such proposals following consultation with the relevant faculty members.

Membership

The Committee is comprised of the following:

1. Department Head responsible for the overall College academic affairs (Chairperson)
2. Faculty member
3. Faculty member

4. Faculty member
5. Member with experience in quality assurance
6. Member with experience in quality assurance
7. Undergraduate students' representative
8. Postgraduate student's representative
9. Administration staff representative

Note: One of the students' representative must be a Distance Education student

Note: At least one student must be present

Note: Student's representatives are appointed by the Student Union

Note: External Stakeholders can also participate as external consultants

Current Composition of the Quality Assurance Committee

NAME	POSITION
Dr Charalambos Louca	Department Head responsible for the overall College academic affairs (Chairperson)
Dr Yiannos Rossides	Faculty member
Dr Constantinos Iacovou	Faculty member
Dr Ifigenia Efthimiou	Faculty member
Dr Andreas Petasis	Member with experience in quality assurance
Dr Marios Americanos	Member with experience in quality assurance
Mr Efstathios Nikolaides	Undergraduate students' representative
Mr Ioannis Sfakiotakis	Postgraduate students' representative
Mr Fotis Michael	Administration staff representative