

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 8 June 2022

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American College

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Διεύθυνση Γραφείου (2 έτη, 120 ECTS, Δίπλωμα)

In English:

Office Management (2 years, 120 ECTS, Diploma)

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **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.*

We have studied the report of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisted of Prof. Yannis Georgellis, Prof. Judit Kormos, Prof. Alexandros Sachinidis, and Mr. Charalambos Glymakopoulos regarding the educational evaluation-accreditation of the Diploma in Office Management carefully and thoroughly. We find that their report is objective and positive. Below we provide our response to all the recommendations for revisions/improvements noted in the EEC report. In addition, we refer to issues we felt they needed us to provide clarifications or further information. The revisions/improvements we made, have already been implemented and they are fully documented below and in the annexes provided.

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

EEC – Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

The College can offer additional support for teaching staff to continuously upgrading their courses. The support can be in the form of seminar/conference attendance and time allowances to prepare new course materials.

American College's Response:

At American College we believe that in order to improve the quality of education we offer, faculty members must continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills. We therefore offer in-house seminars for our faculty members of all disciplines. Faculty members are also encouraged to participate in relevant external seminars. The participation in external seminars is subsidized by the College assuming the eligibility criteria are met (e.g. topic relevance). The in-house and external seminars usually cover either pedagogical aspects (teaching, student assessment, course design, curriculum development etc.) which are applicable for faculty member of all disciplines or aspects related to a particular discipline. In the latter case such seminars are applicable for faculty members teaching the particular discipline. Recent examples of such seminars are the in-house seminar we had in which our faculty members attended, on the 23rd of June 2021, by Dr. Doros Christofi, titled 'Introducing the Teaching Models; The Pre-Organizer Teaching Method'. Another example of a training event in which members of our faculty participated in is the conference titled "Tourism: The Next Day" which took place on Tuesday, March 29th, 2022, organized by The Association of Cyprus Tourist Enterprises (ACTE). Furthermore, members of our faculty will also participate in the upcoming seminar titled 'Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment', organized by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), on the 6-7 September, 2022.

Based on the EEC suggestions we have prepared a "Course Revision Form" and a "New Course Proposal Form" to assist faculty members in suggesting course changes, development of new courses and requesting time allowance for researching and preparing the course changes or the development of new courses. Both forms must be submitted to the Department Head or to the Director of Academic Affairs (if proposals are submitted by the department heads). The forms are found in Annex 1 – Course Revision Form, and Annex 2 – New Course Proposal Form. The development of the two forms has already been communicated to all existing faculty members, and they have been added to the biannual orientation seminar for new faculty members.

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

EEC – Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

The English language teaching component of the program needs to be revised so that learning outcomes are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching 2020 (<https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>). The outcomes should cover the major skill and knowledge areas relevant for the vocational field (e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening comprehension, vocabulary etc.). Unrealistic expectations such as “Using English grammar perfectly” and “communicating excellently” at English 101 (at IELTS level 5) should not be set. There should be a clear progression from different levels of proficiency in accordance with CEFR across the English language modules. The English Writing course (ENG 102) should be revised so that it focusses on the development of writing skills (topics such as writing an article for a school magazine should not be included as they are not relevant for the professional field and age group). ENG201 (Advanced English) should not set ‘demonstrate the ability to analyse a reader’ as a learning outcome because this is not relevant.

English language teaching methods should be explained more specifically (e.g. groupwork, presentations, discussions etc.) and more learner autonomy should be offered in terms of topic choice.

The coursebooks for the English language and communication modules should be updated and it should be ensured that the topics and themes covered are relevant for the age group and the vocational field. If possible, more room should be given to English for Specific Purposes in the modules or a dedicated module that teaches students English in the workplace should be designed.

American College’s Response:

The English language teaching component of the program has been reviewed and revised so that learning outcomes are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching. More specifically, any unrealistic outcomes and expectations from ENG101 English Communication have been removed, ENG102 English Writing focuses solely on the development of writing skills, any irrelevant learning outcomes have also been removed from ENG201 Advanced English, and the revised courses allow students to clearly progress from different levels of proficiency according to CEFR standards. Concerning to the latter, the learning outcomes of ENG101 English Communication course and ENG102 English Writing course correspond to CEFR Level B2, and ENG201 Advanced English course and ENG205 Advanced English Communication course correspond to CEFR Level C1/C2.

According to the EEC recommendations, the learning outcomes, the learning methods, the content and the textbooks of ENG101 English Communication, ENG102 English Writing, ENG201 Advanced English and ENG205 Advanced English Communication have been revised. The revised syllabuses are found in Annexes 3 to 6.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC - Findings:

Notably, some of the teachers carry a 25 hour per week load while others teach much less hours (3 or 6).

American College's Response:

The 25 hour per week load apply in the case of faculty members teaching the English Language Intensive preparatory courses. These courses do not carry any credits and are taken by students prior to commencing their studies, and therefore are not considered as higher education by the Ministry of Education. Any 3 to 6 hour per week teaching load applies for Part-Time faculty members and 12 to 15 hour per week teaching load applies for Full-Time faculty members.

EEC – Areas of Improvement and Recommendations:

The distribution of the teaching load is somewhat unequal, with some teachers having many hours per week and others much fewer.

Also, although in most cases the teachers have at least a Degree above the level of the program there is one case of a Diploma holder teaching Diploma students, according to the documents presented.

American College's Response:

The distribution of the teaching load depends on the status of faculty members (Part-time faculty members teach 3-6 hrs per week and full-time faculty members teach 12-15 hours per week), with the exception of those teaching English language preparatory non-credit based courses, as explained above.

At American College most faculty members hold degrees which are above the level of the programs of study they teach in. In the cases of vocational programs of study in certain disciplines where no bachelor degree exists in the particular discipline, faculty members hold qualifications of the same level with the program of study they teach in, provided they have considerable industry experience. In the case of the Diploma in Office Management where no Bachelor Degree in Office Management is available, it is the norm for institutions to have faculty members teaching in the program holders of Diploma in Office Management and having adequate industry experience. The same applies in the case of our Diploma in Office Management.



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



5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC:

The EEC recommends that the College provides additional support for teaching staff to help them upgrade their courses and to adopt innovation in their teaching methods. For example, the English language teaching component of the program needs to be revised so that learning outcomes are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching 2020.

American College's Response:

As suggested by the EEC, additional support is provided to faculty through seminars and time allowance to upgrade their courses and to adopt innovation in their teaching methods.

Further, the English language teaching component of the program has been revised so that the learning outcomes are linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching 2020. The learning outcomes, the textbooks and the content of ENG101 English Communication, ENG102 English Writing, ENG201 Advanced English, ENG205 Advanced English Communication have been revised, hence to allow clear progression from different levels of proficiency.

As a conclusion, we want to state that we took into account all EEC's comments for revisions/improvements and we have implemented all necessary revisions/improvements. Once again we would like to thank the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their very positive report.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr. Charalambos Louca	Program Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

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