

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 13/02/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Open University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

ΠΠΣ Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (8 εξάμηνα, 240 ECTS, BSc, Εξ Αποστάσεως)

In English:

BSc in Business Administration (8 Semesters, 240 ECTS, BSc, E-Learning)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **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 300.1.1/1 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.*

The Programme's Academic Committee is very grateful to the External Evaluation Committee for the constructive and insightful comments that will greatly assist in improving the Programme. We would also like to thank the CYQAA officers for their continuous support during the evaluation process.

We are very pleased to note that the Programme has been found by the Committee to be fully compliant across all dimensions. Below, please find the detailed response to all the recommendations made by the evaluators.

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 |
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| <p>The committee welcomes and supports the plans to develop relationships with alumni.</p> | <p>Building and strengthening relationships with alumni is central to the activities of the Programme and the Open University of Cyprus. To this end, the University has recently launched the Alumni Office, staffed with two administrative staff members. The Alumni Office is in the process of updating the alumni database and obtaining all necessary GDPR permissions.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>We see potential for the better explication of existing practice-based experiences for students during their programme. Existing examples and opportunities could be made more explicit in the programme documentation.</p> | <p>We would like to thank the Committee for this comment. Practice-based experience is vital to the Programme and a major part of its courses. We updated the description of the Programme available to the students to address this suggestion. The Programme description (see Annex 1) now contains specific references to the usage of real world case studies, both from local and international organizations, and the use of practice-based simulations in several courses, such as Marketing. Furthermore, detailed course descriptions have also been updated to provide more explicit descriptions of existing practice-based experiences, where applicable. Noted examples include courses in Operations, Services, Economics, Marketing, and Strategy.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>We see some scope for the improvement of the articulation of student progress across the curriculum. i.e. the accumulation of skills from one semester to the next.</p> | <p>Monitoring student progress across the curriculum is at the core of the activities of the Programme's academic committee. The Academic Committee of the Program, in collaboration with the course coordinators and tutors, continuously monitors the accumulation of skills during the Programme's progression. Skill accumulation and related course linkages are conveyed to the students at the beginning of each course. To this end, the following paragraph has recently been added in the Program's documentation:</p> <p>“First year courses are designed to provide the basic analytical skills and business knowledge foundation. Second year courses, that include among others Marketing, Managerial Accounting, Management Information Systems, Organizational Behavior, and Financial Management, provide a solid grasp on various business functions and a good understanding of how business operate. These lay the ground for the third and fourth year courses, that include among others topics such as Human Resource Management, International Marketing, Leadership, Operations Management, Strategy, Financial Analysis, Service Management, Investments Current Marketing Topics etc. followed by our capstone course in Strategy, that further strengthen the skills necessary to excel in today's competitive business environment.”</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |



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| <p>We would encourage the comprehensive use of student feedback in considering improvements in the programme design and content for the future.</p> | <p>Student feedback is instrumental towards programme improvements. The University's Quality Assurance Office runs an anonymized student evaluation survey at the end of each academic semester, and a report is delivered to the Academic Coordinator / Academic Team of each Programme of Study. Hence, feedback from student course evaluations is already considered by the academic committee, as part of the quality assurance process, at the completion of each course. Recommendations emerging from this student feedback along with guidance for improvement are discussed with course coordinators for course improvements.</p> <p>The newly launched Alumni Office is currently in the process of developing a survey instrument that will help collect and incorporate additional student feedback in the above process. Information from alumni will be collected at different points in time (for example exit questionnaires from recent graduates and other alumni). This feedback will help programme adjustments so that the programme is in line with student and market needs.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

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| <p>There is scope to build in more coverage of the ethical dimensions of management in the programme content. Doing so would also help develop a critical orientation among students. Equally, the coverage of innovation and entrepreneurship in the programme, which currently appears to happen in the module ‘Contemporary Topics in Business Administration’, might be re-positioned as a dedicated module in this area.</p> | <p>We would also like to thank the committee for their constructive comments regarding the coverage of these important areas.</p> <p>Following the suggestion, it was decided to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer a dedicated elective course on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, starting as early as September 2024. 2. Consider the offering of a dedicated Business Ethics elective course, starting September 2024. <p>Furthermore, in collaboration with course coordinators and tutors, the ethical aspects of various business disciplines covered in each course are further highlighted through expanding related reading material, case studies, and assigned coursework, accordingly. The above will greatly help towards building a student collective critical orientation on this important management dimension.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>Related to our previous comments about students’ academic progression, there may be scope to re-visit the sequencing of particular modules.</p> | <p>On an annual basis, the Academic Committee of the Programme examines and makes adjustments, if necessary, on course sequencing. Following this recommendation, the Academic Committee of the Programme undertook a major exercise to reexamine the sequencing of courses, and has reconfirmed that the existing sequence is in line with international state-of-art in undergraduate business education assuring gradual student knowledge and skill accumulation. In doing so, the Academic Committee proceeded with a number of adjustments in the prerequisites of certain courses, in order to further increase student flexibility in course enrollment, but more importantly, to better reflect the academic requirements/foundations of each course. These adjustments are shown in the attachment.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>It would be good if the same description would be used for the assessment overview of each module. The description of the online-activities should include the specific interactive and productive learning activities rather than a standard-text about e-Class.</p> | <p>Following this recommendation, course descriptions have been revisited to ensure that the assessment overview of each module is uniform across courses. The Academic Committee has also revisited course descriptions to ensure that specific learning activities for each course are better articulated.</p> <p>For example, the course description of “PDE 352 - Operations Management” is attached in Appendix B. The Description better articulates the interactive activities used in the course, such as: (i) the use of a production planning simulation game to highlight the interplay between marketing and production</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |



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| | decisions in real-life settings, (ii) pre-recorded sessions and accompanying interactive exercises, (iii) use of real business cases studies, and (iv) use of methodological tools to analyze real life scenarios, regarding inventory and safety stocks. | |
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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| <p>We identify the need for the institution to continue appropriate levels of administrative support to maintain the quality standards of the new programme. The research strengths of the faculty provide a sound basis for further drawing out the distinctiveness of the BA programme at OUC.</p> | <p>The Open University of Cyprus is committed to continue strengthening and supporting the administration of the Programme in order to maintain high levels of quality standards, subject to governmental budgetary constraints.</p> <p>To further strengthen research and academic support, the Faculty of Economics and Management has (i) recently recruited an Assistant Professor of Management, and (ii) is in the process of recruiting three additional members of staff, one in a senior academic position, i.e. Associate Professor or Professor (Accounting or Finance) and two in junior positions, i.e. Lecturer or Assistant Professor (Accounting/Finance and Management/Human Resource Management).</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

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| Here we simply note the need to maintain good practices and the adequacy of resources and systems. | We would like to thank the committee for this remark. Both the Programme and the institution at large, are committed to maintaining and continuously improving related practices, and ensuring high levels of resources and systems. | Choose an item. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Choose an item. |

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 |
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| <p>It is important for the institution to invest in administrative capacity. We were impressed with the professionalism of the administrative team but suggest continued investment in administrative and support services needs to be a priority for the institution, given its wider ambitions in general, and this new programme in particular. It is important that the institution does not take this key group of staff for granted.</p> | <p>Again, we would like to thank the Committee for this remark that acknowledges the professionalism of our administrative team.</p> <p>As our programmes grow, there will be a need for greater administrative support to maintain quality standards. Resources may be reallocated and/or reorganized to ensure quality standards are met (e.g., alumni relations, faculty advisory boards) and the best possible student experience is delivered (e.g., student support, student guidance).</p> <p>Specifically, a second administrator was recently appointed to exclusively support the Programme.</p> <p>Also, two (2) new colleagues were recently recruited in IT to support the University's learning platform and systems. Moreover, eight (8) new administrative positions have recently been announced at the University (https://www.ouc.ac.cy/index.php/el/the-university-4/oucvacancies/employment-positions-administrative/uniofficers-2022). These additions provide the capacity to handle increasing demands associated with the Programme.</p> <p>Finally, the University continuously commits resources towards (i) updating and improving our support systems and (ii) re-training staff.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>The increasing need to provide support for students with special needs and to forge relationships with alumni emphasizes the criticality of investment in administrative capacity.</p> | <p>Addressing the needs of students with special needs is central to the Programme and to the institution. The University is particularly sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities and procures, to the extent possible and in the framework of the relevant Legislation and international practice, the necessary infrastructure, support and conditions, aiming at ensuring effective equality of access to education. The University's Internal Regulations for People with Disabilities (https://www.ouc.ac.cy/images/Kanonismoi/APPROVED_REVISIED_INTERNAL_REGULATIONS_FOR_PWD_14_07_2021_EN.pdf) are relevant.</p> <p>Concerning alumni, as mentioned above, the University is also building and strengthening the relations with its graduates through the activities of the newly launched Alumni Office.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p> | <p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |



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 |
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| <p>A future strength of the programme could involve engagement by students with their local context and applying knowledge to practitioner challenges in their workplaces. Doing so could be a valuable contribution to the development of the students and to the integration of theory and practice. This aim could also be more strongly articulated in the programme.</p> | <p>A unique characteristic of the Programme is that most of its students are currently employed and they are in a position to directly apply the knowledge and skills acquired, further strengthening theory/practice integration. The placement opportunities that the Programme provides through the unique Placement course also contributes in this direction. Students can optionally enrol, once or twice, without additional cost, to the "Industry Placement" Module, which carries five (5) ECTS credits. The module offers a structured placement, designed to provide students with specific industry and professional experience in their particular field of study, and to allow them to build their skills in a real-world setting. The hosting institution can be any public or private organisation operating in the Republic of Cyprus.</p> <p>Moreover, students have the option to apply for Erasmus+ funding to carry out an internship/placement in European countries in the context of the Erasmus+ Mobility Program. The academic committee is currently considering ways to involve and engage alumni in (i) sharing the best practices in their organizations, and industries, with current students, and (ii) addressing real life problems and challenges that students and alumni face.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>The committee welcomes the plans to constitute an advisory board and invest in the development of more systematic relationships with alumni. Doing so will enhance the BA programme's connection to a wider group of stakeholders and practitioners, some of whom can act as ambassadors for the BA and for OUC. We note again, however, that such ambitious initiatives will require continuing investment in administrative support.</p> | <p>We consider both areas to be of great importance to the Programme. As discussed during the visit, efforts to engage alumni (and other industry stakeholders) in a more systematic way are underway or currently being considered (e.g., guest talks, mentors, project collaboration, site visits). We will also offer our alumni specific opportunities to further their education by inviting them to research talks and events.</p> <p>The formation of an Advisory Board was discussed and agreed at the Faculty level. Finally, the university is committed to continue to invest in administrative support and provide appropriate solutions to ensure there is adequate capacity to effectively support programmes and services.</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |
| <p>Finally, the committee wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to the University for the warm reception that members experienced over the</p> | <p>We are grateful to the Committee for the constructive and insightful comments that will greatly assist in improving the Programme. We would also like to thank the CYQAA</p> | <p>Choose an item.</p> |



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| course of the visit. In addition, the support from CYQAA officers is gratefully acknowledged. | officers for their continuous support during the evaluation process. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Choose an item. |

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>Signature</i> |
|---|---|------------------|
| Prof. Constantinos N. Leonidou | Academic Coordinator – BSc in Business Administration | |
| Prof. Vayos Liapis | Vice Rector, Chair of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Prof. Yannis Manolopoulos | Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Member of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Assoc. Professor Elpidoforos Soteriades | Faculty of Economics and Management, Member of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Assoc. Professor Vayia Karaiskou | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Member of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Elena Gregoriou | Head of the OUC Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Services, Member of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Erato Ioanna Sarri | Coordinator of the OUC Rectorate (Strategy – Quality – Outreach) and the University's Quality Assurance Office, Member of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee | |

Date: 13/02/2023

