

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 15/11/2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

In Greek:

ΜΠΣ Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (ΜΒΑ) (18 μήνες, 90 ECTS, ΜΒΑ, Εξ Αποστάσεως) – Το Ανοικτό ΜΒΑ

In English:

Master of Business Administration (MBA) (18 months, 90 ECTS, MBA, E-Learning – The Open MBA

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English and 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.*

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
<p>We would recommend that the coordinators of the programme seek to ensure that the course content is better aligned with the programme objectives.</p>	<p>This is a very important suggestion. Every year, module coordinators will be provided with the programme objectives and will be asked to align module with programme objectives accordingly. This will be done as part of the Intended Learning Outcomes Mapping exercise to compare intended and actual learning outcomes for each module and programme as a whole. In addition, questions relating to programme objectives will be sought out from students completing the degree as part of the new University initiative to collect student/graduate/alumni evaluations on an annual basis for programmes of study. Finally, before every semester a teaching readiness meeting will be organised to discuss what each tutor will cover in their module and ensure coordination and alignment with programme objectives.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Furthermore, the programme ethos should encompass a focus on the holistic development of students. The programme descriptions should better explicate the contribution to the personal development of the students as practitioners in ways appropriate to an MBA.</p>	<p>Point well taken. "The Open MBA's" purpose is to offer a distinctive, cutting-edge, and flexible learning experience. "The Open MBA" is designed to challenge, prepare, and support individuals wishing to further their studies in the business administration area. This is done by exposing students to the latest management thinking and practice, providing specialised knowledge and practical training, and improving skills and competencies in business management to cope effectively with the new realities of today's global work environment. Our research-led blended approach enables individuals to boost their career potential without sacrificing professional momentum. As the programme starts, it will become possible to materialize ideas for better integration of practice in the programme and make this holistic development of the student clearer and more visible to the students. This will include (virtual) site visits where possible given the distance learning methodology, guest lectures by academics and practitioners, alumni involvement, practice-based research, and closer attention to professional development. Moreover, students and recent graduates who are not currently employed can apply for internships abroad through the Erasmus+ Mobility Programme, and/or for industry placements in public and private organisations in Cyprus through the OUC Industry Liaison Office. Such placements can contribute to the personal and professional development of our students and graduates.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>In this context we welcome and encourage the plans of the</p>	<p>Establishing a Faculty Advisory Board is in the University's immediate plans for specific faculties and a decision has</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>coordinators of the programme to establish an advisory board, as well as developing the work with alumni (taking into account their career paths). Doing so will increase the ambassadorial roles of alumni and create opportunities for students pursuing their MBA projects.</p>	<p>been made at the Faculty of Economics and Management to proceed with such a suggestion. In addition, resources will be re-organized to reinvigorate our efforts in the alumni domain and increase their involvement in programme activities (e.g., inviting alumni in programme induction to share their experiences, request applied business project ideas, organise sessions to share progress and experiences, and encourage alumni mentoring (e.g., through the OUC Alumni Office).</p>	
<p>We would like to see an improvement of the articulation of the students’ development of academic skills across the curriculum in the programme documentation.</p>	<p>This is an excellent suggestion that helped us to look into the possibility of better communicating the development of academic skills across the curriculum in the documentation. Concerning research skills, the “Research Methods and Instruments” module is compulsory for all students. For further academic skills, first, a programme handbook will be developed at the beginning of the academic year, which will include the programme’s structure, the different module choices, and the skills and competencies associated with each module. Second, each module leader will have to prepare a short video providing an outline for their module, key skills and competencies associated with the module, and if applicable, how this builds on core modules already covered in the programme.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Interactive activities and productive learning opportunities should be better visible in the study guides and reports. The variety of innovative learning opportunities presented during the site visit could be made more visible in the documentation.</p>	<p>Module Study Guides will be updated with the latest information at the end of each academic year and simplified to better meet the needs of students. The interactive activities and productive learning opportunities for each learning section will also be grouped together at the end of the document (organised in sections) for convenience and better visibility as these might change from year to year. Interactive grading and other self-assessment exercises will be clearly marked on our eLearning platform and appropriately positioned at the end of every learning unit/area. Multi-format educational material to facilitate student interaction will be available for each learning unit/area and the module as a whole on the eLearning Platform.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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<p>We identify the need for the institution to continue securing appropriate levels of administrative support to maintain the quality standards of the new programme. The ambitions of the new MBA may necessitate further investments in this regard.</p>	<p>As per our response in section #5, human resource addition in the administrative area will help us build capacity and reorganize staff accordingly. The Faculty of Economics and Management has recently recruited an Assistant Professor of Management who will be joining us before the start of the new programme in 2023. In addition, the Faculty of Economics and Management is in the process of recruiting three additional academic members in the areas of Accounting or Finance (1 Professor/Associate Professor, 1 Lecturer/Assistant Professor) and Human Resource Management (1 Lecturer/Assistant Professor) who will be in a position to absorb other Faculty responsibilities and enable the Academic Coordinator to focus on implementing and developing further the new programme.</p> <p>Moreover, the Open University of Cyprus has appointed one Academic Advisor per Faculty, who will be responsible for providing academic consulting and support to students relating to progression and professional development. Furthermore, Faculty colleagues will be invited to present their work to “The Open MBA” students as part of the “Meet the Faculty” sessions or in guest sessions for particular modules of their expertise.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Nothing arising	Nothing arising	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
<p>It is important for the institution to have sufficient resources available to administrative staff to handle or develop the required support for students with special needs, the alumni work, and the adaptation of the admission practices. It is important to set priorities and to not stretch hard-working staff too thinly.</p>	<p>As our programmes grow, there will be a need for greater administrative support to maintain quality standards. We will reallocate and reorganize resources 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). As we grow further, we will keep investing in student support, alumni, and industry relations to help keep these programmes successful and popular in the future through the enrichment of the student experience. We recently recruited two (2) new colleagues in the IT Services to support our eLearning platform and systems and are currently on the market for eight (8) additional administrative positions at the University (https://www.ouc.ac.cy/index.php/el/the-university-4/oucvacancies/employment-positions-administrative/uniofficers-2022). We also recently appointed a second administrator to support this programme. These additions will give us additional depth, confidence, and capacity to handle increasing demands associated with this programme. The University also committed resources in updating and improving our support systems and re-training staff to ensure information is obtained more efficiently and in a timely manner. It should be taken into account that OUC is a public University and any new administrative staff positions need to be approved by the State (Ministries of Education and Finance).</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
NA	NA	Choose an item.



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
NA	NA	Choose an item.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>One suggestion is that where appropriate the curriculum could embed some aspects of Greek philosophy, for example to inform the theorisation of management practices.</p>	<p>This is an excellent suggestion that takes into consideration the context of the programme. This is something that will be implemented for modules MBA511 - Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management and MBA616 – Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility. The topics covered in these two modules allow inclusion of Greek Philosophical aspects (e.g., Socrates and the right to think independently, Aristotle on fairness, ethics, and self-determination theory, and link Plutarch’s role model concept in the context of leadership).</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>The committee welcomes the plans to constitute an advisory board and invest into the development of more systematic work with alumni. Doing so will enhance the programme’s connection to a wider group of stakeholders. These initiatives will require continuing investment in administrative support.</p>	<p>Indeed. We consider both areas of great importance for “The Open MBA”. As discussed during the visit, we started to work with alumni (and other industry stakeholders) in a more systematic way and they are expected to be included in the revised programme in different ways (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. The Advisory Board idea was discussed at the Faculty of Economics and Management and there was agreement to proceed forward either in coordination with other Faculties or without. 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>

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Constantinos N. Leonidou	Academic Coordinator – The Open MBA	
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 Georgios Deligiannakis	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	

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