

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 08/07/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Open University of Cyprus
 - **Collaborative Institution(s):**
Hellenic Open University
- **Town:** Nicosia, OUC / Patras, HOU
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Οικονομικά Επιχειρήσεων (Διδρυματικό Προπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα), 4 years, 240 ECTS

In English:

Joint Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Business Economics, 4 years, 240 ECTS

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **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 300.1.1/1 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
<p>The new programme offers a selection of elective courses. Even though the courses are interesting and well designed, covering some important topics and fields, the EEC believes that additional courses can be incorporated, particularly in the last two semesters. A modification to the structure of the courses can benefit the programme and enhance the programme dynamics. Certain revisions in the curriculum content could be envisaged. Such revisions, if they are incorporated, may include (but not limited to) the following:</p> <p>(i) a course module on 'Business Strategy and Financial Performance' orientation. (ii) since there are 4 courses in the last two semesters relating to energy economics, a course(s) in another topic can be considered, within the field of management (business) and economics; (iii) the courses Corporate Finance and Introduction to Financial Theory can swap places in the respective semesters; (iv) in addition to (ii), offering asynchronous webinars covering the aforesaid specific topics in Energy Economics or any other topic that would be replaced or topics of highly ongoing interest (e.g., ESG and sustainability compliance, energy management, green accounting, etc.) are welcome.</p>	<p>We appreciate the EEC's constructive suggestions regarding the curriculum. The Programme Committee will consider expanding the elective offerings in the final semesters to include areas such as Business Strategy and Financial Performance and additional management topics.</p> <p>(i)-(ii) We have reviewed the energy-related modules. The Programme Committee has considered expanding the elective offerings in the final semesters to include modules in areas such as Business Strategy and Financial Performance and additional management topics.</p> <p>We recognize the need to avoid thematic concentration in a narrow area. As a result, we have already developed additional electives within the business and management domain (e.g., Operational Performance and Control, Advanced Financial Accounting & Reporting, Taxation and Public Finance, Audit and Assurance).</p> <p>These are intended to replace some of the energy-focused electives in the final year (e.g. International Energy Markets, Oil and Gas Industry, Energy and Natural Resource Economics, Environmental Economics).</p> <p>Furthermore, certain courses content descriptions were enhanced (with sub-bullets) for clarity and transparency. The more detailed description better demonstrate the depth and scope of each course in alignment with its 10 ECTS credit value.</p> <p>(iii) We thank the Committee for the thoughtful recommendation regarding the sequencing of the Corporate Finance and Introduction to Financial Theory courses. We fully agree that offering Financial Theory (formerly titled <i>Introduction to Financial Theory</i>) prior to Corporate Finance strengthens the logical progression of content and better supports students' conceptual development in finance. Accordingly, the Programme Committee has already implemented the recommended reallocation of these two courses to alternate semesters. In parallel, we have proceeded with renaming the course to Financial Theory, reflecting its content more accurately and in alignment with academic and professional standards. We are grateful for the Committee's constructive input in refining the curriculum's structure and clarity.</p> <p>(iv) We are already planning to introduce asynchronous webinars on emerging topics like ESG compliance, Green Accounting, and Energy Management to enrich students' learning experiences.</p>
<p>The coordinators should consider introducing in the future an optional BSc dissertation.</p>	<p>We fully agree with the EEC on the value of offering an optional undergraduate dissertation. The Programme will work towards introducing an optional dissertation in the later stages of the degree (fourth year).</p>

<p>Some courses in the 3rd and 4th years can be slightly rearranged to ensure a mix of both core and electives courses in the last 2 years of the programme.</p>	<p>We highly value the EEC's thoughtful suggestion to mix core and elective courses in the final semesters.</p> <p>Nevertheless, after thorough consideration, we have decided to retain a clear separation between core and elective modules in the final years for the following reasons: (i) It guarantees that all graduates acquire a solid, common foundation of knowledge and skills critical for their professional success. (ii) It streamlines students' academic paths, reducing the risk of fragmented learning experiences. (iii) It ensures that students are fully prepared before specializing through electives, thus supporting better performance in specialized areas.</p> <p>Additionally, this structure aligns with best practices observed in peer distance-learning business economics programs internationally.</p>
<p>The DL Unit should be further developed, in terms of both human capital and funding.</p>	<p>We recognize the critical role of continuous investment in distance learning. The University is actively strengthening the DL Unit through hiring additional staff specialized in instructional design and digital education. Faculty development workshops focused on the latest online teaching methodologies are being expanded. Students' support services within the e-learning environment will also be enhanced to ensure a high-quality learning experience.</p>

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>Enhanced assessment and feedback strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review of team assessments: Implementing peer review for team assessments offers a valuable opportunity for students to develop critical evaluation skills and gain deeper insights into the assessment criteria. Structured peer review: Implement a system where student teams anonymously review each other's work based on clear rubrics provided by the instructors. Focus on specific aspects: Instead of reviewing entire assessments, focus peer review on specific components (e.g., methodology, argumentation, presentation quality). Feedback on feedback: Instructors can review the quality of the peer feedback provided, offering guidance to students on how to 	<p>We thank the Evaluation Committee for its constructive suggestions concerning assessment and feedback practices, particularly in relation to peer review mechanisms and the development of students' evaluative and critical thinking skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We fully acknowledge the pedagogical value of structured peer review activities, especially as part of collaborative or team-based assessments. These approaches help students to reflect critically on assessment criteria, understand quality standards, and engage more deeply with both content and process. <p>In response to the Committee's suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review of Team Assessments: While peer evaluation is not currently a mandatory feature of all group assessments, it is already used in certain courses (e.g., through reflective components in team assignments). The Programme Committee is actively exploring ways to expand this practice, starting with pilot implementation in selected modules that involve substantial group work. Structured Peer Review & Use of Rubrics: We agree that the use of transparent, structured rubrics can enhance the fairness and consistency of peer feedback. We plan to develop optional peer review guidelines and templates for instructors wishing to implement this feature, ensuring it aligns with course learning outcomes. Focus on Specific Components of Assignments: This is an especially practical recommendation. We anticipate introducing targeted peer review (e.g., on methodology or presentation aspects) as part of formative assessment opportunities, which will complement instructor-led feedback. Instructor Oversight of Feedback Quality: To ensure the effectiveness of peer review, we support the principle of reviewing the feedback itself—either by instructors or teaching assistants—as a means of coaching students in providing constructive critique. Digital Tools for Peer Feedback: The university's e-Class platform already supports basic peer evaluation features. In addition, the programme coordinators intend to submit a proposal to the relevant University bodies to explore institutional support for tools such as FeedbackFruits or Peergrade, which are specifically designed to facilitate structured,

<p>give constructive criticism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools for peer review: Utilize e-class or dedicated tools (like Peergrade, FeedbackFruits, or even simple anonymous surveys) that facilitate the distribution, review, and feedback process. 	<p>anonymous, and pedagogically sound peer review in digital learning environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These initiatives are designed to align with broader objectives of assessment for learning, and to encourage reflective, participatory, and feedback-rich learning environments. We see this as an area of progressive development, with the potential for phased implementation and evaluation during the programme's initial years.
<p>Formative assessments with automated feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive quizzes and self-assessments: Use e-class features or external tools to create quizzes with immediate feedback, guiding students on areas they need to revisit. Branching scenarios: Implement interactive scenarios where students make choices and receive feedback based on their decisions, promoting deeper engagement and understanding. Automated feedback on submissions: Where possible (e.g., for structured writing tasks), use tools that provide automated feedback on syntax, style, or basic 	<p>We appreciate the Committee's emphasis on strengthening formative assessment practices and the use of automated feedback as an effective means of supporting student learning and engagement.</p> <p>The programme already includes formative assessments such as online quizzes, short exercises, and self-assessment opportunities, particularly in courses involving quantitative content. These activities are designed to offer students timely and low-stakes feedback on their understanding and allow instructors to identify areas where further clarification may be needed.</p> <p>In response to the specific suggestions:</p> <p>Interactive Quizzes and Self-Assessments: The university's e-Class platform already supports the creation of quizzes with automatic scoring and instant feedback. These tools are actively used in multiple modules to help students monitor their progress. Going forward, we are encouraging instructors to systematically integrate such quizzes into weekly learning activities where pedagogically appropriate.</p> <p>Branching Scenarios: While branching scenarios are not yet widely implemented, we acknowledge their value in promoting applied learning and decision-making. We are currently exploring options for introducing basic scenario-based activities in selected courses—particularly those dealing with ethics, business decision-making, and management strategy. The use of interactive content tools will be discussed with the Distance Learning Unit, and proposals will be submitted to the University's relevant bodies for support in adopting such technologies.</p> <p>Automated Feedback on Submissions: For assignments with structured formats (e.g., quantitative problems, short answers), instructors are encouraged to use rubric-based or auto-commenting templates. Additionally, we are investigating the potential of automated feedback tools—for instance, AI-assisted platforms that support feedback on writing quality, citation style, or logic structure. A proposal to pilot such tools</p>

<p>content understanding.</p>	<p>will be prepared for consideration by the University's academic technology services.</p> <p>In summary, while some of these practices are already in place, the Committee's recommendations provide a valuable roadmap for expanding and systematizing the use of technology-enhanced formative feedback. We are committed to exploring and implementing these practices gradually and with appropriate institutional support.</p>
<p>Instructor feedback beyond grading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio/video feedback: Instead of solely relying on written comments, instructors can provide more personalized and engaging feedback through short audio or video recordings. • Targeted feedback sessions: Offer optional or required short one-on-one or small group feedback sessions via Zoom to discuss specific aspects of their work. 	<p>We appreciate the Committee's insightful comments on the importance of enhancing instructor-student interaction through diversified feedback channels. We fully agree that feedback is not merely a grading tool, but a crucial element of formative learning, especially in the context of distance education.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's suggestions:</p> <p>Audio/Video Feedback: The programme recognises the added pedagogical value of providing feedback in audio or video format, particularly in courses involving written work or project-based assignments. While written feedback remains the most widely used format, we will be encouraging instructors to adopt short, personalised audio or video feedback in appropriate cases, such as thesis proposals, presentations, or reflective assignments. This approach has the potential to enhance student engagement, especially for those who benefit from multimodal communication. We are also proposing to the relevant University bodies that faculty development sessions include guidance and tools for efficiently recording and sharing audio/video feedback through the learning platform.</p> <p>Targeted Feedback Sessions via Zoom: The programme already supports regular synchronous interaction, including live Q&A and tutorial sessions. Instructors are encouraged to offer individual or small-group feedback sessions, particularly after major assignment submissions. These Zoom sessions are not only an opportunity for clarification, but also for coaching students on academic development and deeper learning. We will continue to promote such personalised interactions as part of the programme's student support culture.</p> <p>These practices are in alignment with the broader goal of ensuring that feedback is timely, constructive, and tailored to individual learning needs. We are committed to embedding these enhancements in a gradual and sustainable way, in coordination with both faculty members and University-level support units.</p>
<p>Collaborative learning and knowledge sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-based learning: Where possible, structure the course around team assignments and discussions. • Project-based learning with 	<p>We appreciate the Committee's emphasis on strengthening collaborative learning environments within the programme. We agree that well-structured team-based activities and interactive digital tools contribute significantly to active student engagement, the development of soft skills, and the creation of a supportive academic community, especially in online education.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's suggestions:</p> <p>Team-Based and Project-Based Learning:</p>

<p>collaborative elements: Assign complex projects that require teams to collaborate and apply their knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion forums with structured prompts: Go beyond simple Q&A forums. Pose thought-provoking questions, case studies, or debates that require students to engage with each other's ideas and build upon them. • Shared online documents and collaborative editing: Use tools like Google Docs or wikis for collaborative note-taking, brainstorming, or even co-creating parts of assignments. • Virtual study groups: Encourage and facilitate the formation of student-led study groups via Zoom or dedicated e-class forums. 	<p>Group work is already embedded in several core and elective courses, primarily in the form of team presentations, case analyses, and collaborative assignments. Building on this foundation, the Programme Committee will be encouraging instructors to further structure coursework around team-based problem solving, particularly in final-year electives where students can apply theoretical knowledge in realistic scenarios. This aligns with our commitment to constructive alignment and skills development.</p> <p>Online Discussion Forums with Structured Prompts: Our e-Class platform supports asynchronous discussion forums, which are currently used to varying degrees across courses. We recognise the importance of scaffolded interaction, and will promote the use of structured prompts, case-based debates, and reflective questions to ensure deeper engagement. Guidelines for best practices in discussion moderation will also be circulated to instructors.</p> <p>Collaborative Digital Tools (e.g., Google Docs, Wikis): Instructors are already encouraged to use Google Workspace or equivalent tools to support group collaboration. These allow students to co-create content, exchange ideas, and manage workflow efficiently. We are exploring options to formalise the use of collaborative platforms and will recommend the adoption of institutional tools where possible, in consultation with University IT services.</p> <p>Virtual Study Groups and Peer Support: We strongly support the formation of informal, student-led study groups, and we facilitate these through e-Class forums, social channels, and optional Zoom spaces. Faculty and tutors also guide students at the start of each course on how to effectively organise and participate in such peer networks. As the programme grows, we plan to formalise this by providing dedicated virtual spaces for student collaboration within the learning environment.</p> <p>In sum, we view collaborative learning not only as a pedagogical method but also as a way to build student identity and resilience in an online academic setting. The Committee's recommendations will serve as a valuable framework for strengthening this dimension further.</p>
<p>Enhancing interaction and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual guest speakers: Invite industry professionals or experts to give online talks and Q&A sessions via Zoom, broadening 	<p>We thank the Evaluation Committee for its valuable input on further enhancing student engagement and interactive learning in the context of distance education. The programme's pedagogical philosophy places strong emphasis on student-centred and active learning strategies, and we fully support the integration of innovative practices that promote both academic achievement and learner motivation.</p> <p>In response to the Committee's suggestions:</p> <p>Virtual Guest Speakers:</p>

<p>students' perspectives and connecting theory to practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive simulations and virtual labs: Utilize or develop simulations and virtual labs relevant to the course content to provide hands-on learning experiences in a remote environment. Gamification elements: Incorporate game-like elements (points, badges, leaderboards) into learning activities to increase motivation and engagement. “Flipped classroom” approach: Assign pre-class learning materials (videos, readings) and use Zoom sessions for interactive discussions, problem-solving, and application of concepts. Student-generated content: Encourage students to create and share their own learning materials, such as short videos explaining concepts, mind maps, or summaries. 	<p>This is already a developing practice within the programme, particularly in upper-level electives. We are expanding efforts to invite professionals, alumni, and industry experts to deliver online guest lectures and Q&A sessions via Zoom. These sessions are designed to enrich the curriculum with real-world perspectives and to bridge theory and practice, particularly in courses related to finance, entrepreneurship, and policy.</p> <p>Interactive Simulations and Virtual Labs: We acknowledge the pedagogical benefits of simulations in fields such as decision-making, financial strategy, and resource management. We are currently exploring the integration of simulation-based learning—either through existing platforms or the development of bespoke tools. Where appropriate, proposals will be submitted to the University’s technology and instructional design units to support simulation-based enhancements in future course offerings.</p> <p>Gamification Elements: We are exploring the use of light gamification frameworks across more courses, with a focus on rewarding learning progress and participation. We intend to present this to the University’s e-learning support bodies for further guidance on institutional implementation.</p> <p>Flipped Classroom Approach: Instructors are encouraged to use pre-class videos and readings to prepare students for live Zoom-based discussions, problem-solving tasks, and application exercises. This approach is already in use in selected modules and will be further reinforced through faculty training and shared best practices. The flipped classroom model is particularly suited to the distance learning environment and aligns with our goal of increasing interactivity during synchronous sessions.</p> <p>Student-Generated Content: We support the principle of peer teaching and content creation. Instructors are increasingly inviting students to produce short presentations, video explanations, visual summaries, and mind maps as part of individual or team assignments. These artefacts contribute to a shared knowledge base and foster student agency and creativity.</p> <p>In summary, the programme is already incorporating several of these engagement-enhancing strategies and remains committed to expanding and systematising them, with the support of relevant University units. These efforts are integral to cultivating a dynamic, inclusive, and learner-driven virtual environment.</p>
<p>Monitoring and adapting teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning analytics: Utilize the data available in e-class 	<p>We fully endorse the Committee’s recommendation to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and continuously improving teaching practices, especially in the context of a distance learning environment where responsiveness and adaptability are key to sustaining student engagement and academic success.</p>

<p>to track student engagement, performance on quizzes, and participation in forums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular feedback surveys: Conduct short, anonymous surveys throughout the semester to gather student feedback on the teaching methods, content, and online environment. Office hours with a focus: Instead of just open Q&A, consider themed office hours focusing on specific topics or assignment challenges. 	<p>The following initiatives and plans are aligned with the Committee's valuable suggestions:</p> <p>Learning Analytics through e-Class: The university's e-Class platform already provides instructors with dashboard tools to monitor student engagement, quiz performance, and forum participation. Faculty members are encouraged to make systematic use of these analytics to identify students who may require additional support and to adapt course delivery accordingly. We are currently proposing to the University's e-learning support bodies that training sessions on interpreting and acting on learning analytics be included in future faculty development activities.</p> <p>Regular Feedback Surveys: Short, anonymous student surveys are already implemented at the end of each course. To promote more timely feedback and adaptive teaching, instructors are now encouraged to include mid-semester feedback activities to gather input on teaching effectiveness, pacing, and learning environment quality. This allows for course corrections in real time, reinforcing a student-centred learning culture.</p> <p>Focused Office Hours: We support the idea of structured office hours around specific topics or assignments, in addition to general Q&A sessions. Many instructors have already adopted this practice in their Zoom availability schedules, and it has proven effective for addressing complex academic issues. These focused sessions will be further promoted as part of our recommended faculty practices, with the aim of maximising student benefit from synchronous interaction.</p> <p>Together, these practices demonstrate our commitment to evidence-informed teaching and continuous improvement. By fostering a culture of feedback and data-driven reflection, the programme aims to maintain high standards of teaching quality, while also remaining flexible and responsive to student needs.</p>
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>The programme would benefit from strengthening the level of interaction between students and teaching staff, as well as among students themselves. Integration of more structured and regular opportunities for live engagement for strengthening the level of interaction between students and teaching staff (such as virtual office hours, interactive webinars, and group discussion sessions, encouraging the use of collaborative platforms).</p>	<p>We fully acknowledge the Committee's recommendation to further enhance interaction between students and teaching staff, as well as among students themselves. We agree that structured engagement is critical for high-quality online education and are committed to reinforcing this pillar of the programme.</p> <p>To this end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme already integrates live Zoom-based sessions, including lectures, Q&A discussions, and consultation hours, providing direct real-time access to academic staff. • We are formalising the scheduling of virtual office hours and encouraging instructors to hold structured or themed sessions, particularly around key assignments and assessment phases. • The programme actively promotes interactive webinars and case-based discussions, especially in advanced-level courses, as a way of deepening understanding and enhancing live participation. • Our e-Class platform supports asynchronous discussion forums and messaging tools. In addition, we facilitate the formation of optional student study groups through course forums or Zoom links, with guidance from tutors on effective peer collaboration. • We are encouraging instructors to make greater use of collaborative platforms (e.g., Google Docs, shared drives, and wikis) to support group work, co-authored submissions, and brainstorming activities. • Importantly, for actions that involve system-level tools or formal platform integration, we are submitting relevant suggestions to the University's academic and technology bodies. These include the adoption of dedicated collaboration tools and enhanced virtual classroom features to better support student–student and student–faculty interaction. <p>These enhancements, both current and proposed, align with the programme's goal of creating an engaging, inclusive, and student-focused online learning environment, while maintaining the flexibility needed by our diverse learner population.</p>
<p>Feedback mechanisms, such as regular check-ins or surveys, could be implemented to monitor and improve the quality of interaction throughout the program.</p>	<p>We thank the Committee for highlighting the importance of systematic feedback mechanisms to monitor and enhance the quality of interaction throughout the programme.</p> <p>In response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We currently implement end-of-semester student evaluations for each course, which provide valuable insights into teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. • Building on this practice, instructors are now encouraged to incorporate mid-semester check-in surveys. These short, anonymous questionnaires focus on student experience, perceived interaction, and suggestions for course improvement. They enable timely adjustments during course delivery and foster a sense of responsiveness.

- Where appropriate, instructors also use informal tools (e.g., polls, discussion forums, or short reflective prompts) to assess engagement levels and identify students who may need further support.

These feedback mechanisms serve a dual purpose: they promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices, and they strengthen the connection between students and academic staff by showing that student voices are heard and valued.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>To ensure teaching staff remain informed about advancements in distance learning and can apply them effectively, a minimum requirement of yearly pedagogy-focused training should be implemented for all teaching staff.</p>	<p>We fully agree with the Committee's recommendation on the importance of ongoing pedagogical development, particularly in the context of distance education where instructional approaches and technologies are continuously evolving.</p> <p>In response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teaching staff currently receive initial training and orientation on the University's digital learning environment and tools. • We would like to note that yearly pedagogy-focused training sessions are already organised by the University, and teaching staff participating in the programme are required to attend. These sessions address course design, digital tools, learning analytics, and communication strategies in online learning. • We also encourage sharing of innovative practices and peer learning through faculty workshops and thematic webinars, reinforcing a culture of reflective teaching.
<p>Each course should incorporate interactive activities that move beyond legacy e-learning methods, as outlined in Section 2.</p>	<p>We appreciate the Committee's emphasis on enhancing interactive learning across all courses and agree that moving beyond traditional, passive e-learning methods is essential for maintaining student engagement and improving learning outcomes in a digital environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of the programme already reflects a commitment to active learning, with many courses including case studies, simulations, group projects, discussion forums, and synchronous sessions to encourage interaction and application of knowledge. • In line with the Committee's guidance, we are in the process of further reinforcing the use of interactive instructional strategies in each course, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scenario-based decision-making tasks, ○ Peer evaluation, ○ Group collaboration on real-world problems, ○ Online debates and role-playing exercises, ○ Asynchronous discussion tasks guided by structured prompts. • Additionally, we are encouraging instructors to adopt technology-enhanced interaction tools such as live polls, whiteboards, shared documents, and breakout rooms during Zoom sessions. • Where broader integration of new tools or features is required, we are submitting recommendations to the University's Distance Learning Unit and instructional design team to support the adoption of modern, scalable solutions aligned with best practices in online education. <p>Our objective is to ensure that each course includes meaningful, well-aligned interactive elements that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and deep learning — fully in line with the pedagogical standards referenced in Section 2 of the Committee's report.</p>
<p>A policy document may be developed detailing proactive interaction and communication strategies for teaching staff to ensure students are aware of their progress and receive timely</p>	<p>We thank the Committee for this thoughtful and forward-looking recommendation. We fully agree that structured and proactive communication strategies are key to ensuring that students feel supported, informed, and academically guided — especially in a distance learning context, where regular touchpoints are vital for engagement and retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In existing programmes of study, many teaching staff already apply such practices informally, including regular announcements, check-in messages, targeted feedback, and proactive outreach to students who appear disengaged. These

<p>support, even without direct requests.</p>	<p>practices have proven effective in building a supportive learning environment and encouraging continuous progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the launch of this new programme, we are committed to formalising these approaches through the development of a programme-level framework for proactive academic communication. A policy proposal will be submitted to the University's academic and quality assurance bodies, outlining recommended strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor-initiated communication at key academic milestones; Guidelines for using learning analytics to identify students who may benefit from additional support; Suggested intervals for feedback and academic follow-up; Practices that ensure timely responses even in the absence of direct student requests. <p>The proposed policy will also be aligned with ongoing staff development efforts, to ensure that instructors are supported in the implementation of proactive and student-centred communication practices.</p>
<p>Given the program's fully online delivery, the university should prioritize updating and diversifying its digital resources to facilitate innovative teaching strategies, as detailed in Section 2.</p>	<p>We thank the Committee for highlighting the importance of continuously enriching the digital teaching and learning environment, especially in the context of a fully online programme.</p> <p>We fully agree that the use of updated and diverse digital resources is essential to support innovative and engaging teaching strategies, such as those outlined in Section 2 of the Committee's report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University already provides access to a robust e-learning platform (e-Class) and integrated tools for communication, assessment, and feedback. Instructors also have access to Zoom, Turnitin, and a range of open educational resources. However, we recognise that greater variety and pedagogical alignment of digital resources is key to advancing more interactive, student-centred practices in this new programme. In response, we have decided to submit targeted recommendations to the University's Distance Learning Unit and IT Services, advocating for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing or integration of tools that support simulation, peer review, gamification, collaborative work, and real-time analytics; Expansion of interactive content libraries, including case studies, videos, and branching scenarios; Increased support for instructors to develop or adapt multimedia learning resources aligned with course objectives.

Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
The two institutions can consider in the future modifying and updating slightly the program, its structure and mode of delivery as new technologies are in place and can enable this.	<p>We thank the Committee for this insightful recommendation. We agree that the continuous advancement of educational technologies offers new opportunities for enhancing programme structure, delivery modes, and learning experiences.</p> <p>While the current structure reflects careful design aligned with the pedagogical strengths and strategic priorities of both institutions, we fully recognise the importance of flexibility and responsiveness to emerging digital tools, student needs, and global trends in online education.</p> <p>As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, the programme's academic team — in collaboration with both universities' committees — will regularly review opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate new technologies that support immersive, interactive, or personalised learning; • Adapt instructional approaches to improve flexibility, accessibility, and engagement; <p>Such future adaptations will be guided by pedagogical evidence, student feedback, quality assurance mechanisms, and developments in the international higher education landscape.</p>

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution
<p>The EEC also recommends senior management to provide more human capital resources and funding to the administrative staff and faculty members that would enhance their tasks and productivity.</p>	<p>We sincerely thank the Committee for highlighting the importance of sustained institutional investment in human capital and operational support.</p> <p>We fully agree that the successful delivery and long-term sustainability of an online academic programme depend not only on the quality of its curriculum and pedagogy, but also on the capacity and wellbeing of the academic and administrative teams that support it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From its inception, the programme has drawn on the expertise of experienced faculty and dedicated administrative staff, whose contributions have been essential to its development. However, we recognise that the evolving demands of high-quality distance education — particularly in terms of coordination, instructional support, digital engagement, and student services — call for strategic reinforcement of resources. In this regard, the programme's leadership has already raised the matter with the senior management of both institutions. <p>We view this recommendation as aligned with our shared vision of academic excellence, and we will continue to advocate for the resources necessary to ensure the programme operates at a high standard of quality, responsiveness, and innovation.</p>

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 08/07/2025

