Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Conventional-face-to-face programme of study

Date: 17/04/2023

- Higher Education Institution:

  Frederick University

- Campus: Nicosia

- School: Health Sciences

- Department / Sector: Pharmacy

- Programme(s) of study under evaluation

  Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

(4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (ΒΑ), Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:

Business Administration

(4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BA), E-Learning))

 Language(s) of instruction: English and Greek

- Specializations (if any):

  In Greek: -

  In English: -

Programme's Status: Currently Operating

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.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

    - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
    - *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. 300.3.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

1.a.	The EEC suggests grouping elective courses into specializations to make the program more compact and avoid courses that cannot be taught due to low enrolment. This would ensure the program's goals and create a clearer learning experience. This will also help to improve the program in a sustainable way

Department's Response:

Following the EEC recommendation, we have grouped the elective courses in two different areas as shown in Table 1 below and encourage students to select courses from these groups in a consistent manner. To enrich the set of management courses, in the list of electives we have added two new courses, namely DLABSIE458 Innovation and Entrepreneurship and DLABSMA458 Strategic Management. These two additions enhance the focus of the program in management and provide students with the knowledge to create their own businesses through solid strategic planning and entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, we have removed DLABSE355 Development Economics since it does not fit clearly with the focus areas with which have grouped courses.

We also thank the EEC for the suggestion that it will be beneficial for the program and the University in the long run if the program is accredited by international bodies such as ACCA regarding accounting exemptions. We have investigated the matter and at this stage ACCA does not provide accreditation for online programs, however, our renewed structure and content allows for integrating the exemptions as soon as such an opportunity arises.

Table 1 Concentration areas of elective courses

Accounting and Finance Courses

Course Code	Course Name	ECTS	Prerequisites Code(s)
DLABSA255	INTERMEDIATE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING	10	DLAFIN253
DLABSA357	ADVANCED ACCOUNTING PRACTICE	10	DLABSA255
DLABSA358	ADVANCED MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING	10	DLABSA254
DLABSA457	AUDITING THEORY & PRACTICE	10	DLABSA255
DLABSA458	TAXATION	10	DLABSA255
DLAFIN356	CORPORATE FINANCE	10	DLAFIN253

Marketing- Management Courses

Course Code	Course Name	ECTS	Prerequisites Code(s)
DLABSO355	ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	10	DLABSO356
DLABSO458	BUSINESS ETHICS	10	na
DLABSM457	ADVANCED MARKETING MANAGEMENT	10	DLABSM152
DLABSM356	SALES MANAGEMENT	10	DLABSO356
DLABSIE458	INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	10	n.a.
DLABSMA458	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	10	DLABSO253

Department's Response:

We have modified and improved the learning objectives of the program as shown below to better reflect the goals of the program. All learning objectives are associated with corresponding courses in the program as shown below.

Table 2 Learning Objectives

Learning Objective	Course Code – Course Title
Provide students with an understanding of forms and functions of business organizations, organizational behavior	DLABSO253- INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS ORGANISATION
Appreciate the contribution that strategy and management skills can make to successful performance, perform competitive and organizational analyses	DLABSMA458-STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DLABSO457-MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
Formulate and implement human resource strategies that help the firm to achieve a sustained competitive advantage	DLABSO356-HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
Provide students with knowledge of macro- and microeconomics, and develop an understanding of issues relating to economic policies	DLABSE151-MICROECONOMIC ANALYSIS DLABSE253-MACROECONOMIC ANALYSIS
Provide students with computer and statistical analysis skills for analyzing data, reading and understanding academic literature, and performing research	DLAMAT355-STATISTICS DLACSC152-COMPUTER APPLICATION PACKAGES DLABRM356-BUSINESS RESEARCH AND REPORT WRITING DLABSP458-SENIOR PROJECT
Equip students with foundation knowledge in accounting and finance necessary for making sound business decisions	DLABSA151-INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNTING DLAFIN253-BUSINESS FINANCE DLABSA254-COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

Learning Objective	Course Code – Course Title
Develop students' communication skills, craft presentations that inspire, learn to compose and structure business reports	DLABCO152-BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
Share with students the foundation knowledge of the legal framework as applicable to individuals and corporations	DLABSL254-BUSINESS LAW
Introduce students to methodologies, tools and technologies involved in marketing and marketing with digital technologies	DLABSM152-MARKETING PRINCIPLES DLABSM254-MARKETING RESEARCH & INFORM. SYSTEMS DLABSM355-INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the learning outcomes which are provided by the core (required) program, the program is also better organized to provide two concentration areas in the areas accounting and marketing-management (see details in response 1a above) with additional learning outcomes per area. In brief, within the accounting domain, students expand their knowledge in accounting topics relating to management accounting and financial management as well as in specialized topics such as taxation and audit. Under the marketing-management domain, we provide students the opportunity to expand their know-how in developing marketing strategies as well as their management skills, comprehend and apply ethical considerations in business decision making and develop their own business ideas through new ventures and innovation.

> 1.c. Currently, the syllabi for the core and elective courses often lack continuity and connection to other modules in the program, particularly when students choose electives. A clearer mapping of how students progress through the program, from early introductory modules to later advanced ones, would be useful. The EEC suggests that a more compact structure and changes in syllabi over the semesters would help to demonstrate that the program meets its objectives, and identify areas where knowledge development and skills practice have not been sufficiently developed. This will allow the program team to address them in future revisions of the prog

Following EEC recommendation, we have revisited the syllabi's learning outcomes and ensured the continuity of the program building on previous knowledge. Table 3 shows the list of required courses and their prerequisites following our exercise of investigating the continuity of the program. Please note that the prerequisites for all elective courses are provided in Table 1.

As indicated in the table below the foundation courses require no pre-requisite is required since they built foundation knowledge in different areas. However, several courses build on prior knowledge and thus have pre-requisites courses based on this foundation knowledge.

Table 3 Pre-requisited for all required courses

Course Code	Course Name	ECTS	Prerequisites Code(s)
DLABCO152	BUSINESS COMMUNICATION	10	
DLABSA151	INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNTING	10	
DLABSE151	MICROECONOMIC ANALYSIS	10	
DLABSM152	MARKETING PRINCIPLES	10	
DLACSC152	COMPUTER APPLICATION PACKAGES	10	
DLAMAT151	BUSINESS MATHEMATICS	10	
DLABSE253	MACROECONOMIC ANALYSIS	10	
DLABSO253	INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS ORGANISATION	10	
DLAFIN253	BUSINESS FINANCE	10	
DLABSM254	MARKETING RESEARCH & INFORM. SYSTEMS	10	DLABSM152
DLABSA254	COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING	10	DLABSA151
DLABSM355	INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS	10	DLABSM152
DLAMAT355	STATISTICS	10	na
DLABSO457	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE	10	DLAMAT355
DLABRM356	BUSINESS RESEARCH AND REPORT WRITING	10	DLAMAT355
DLABSL254	BUSINESS LAW	10	na
DLABSP458	SENIOR PROJECT	10	DLABRM356
DLABSO356	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	10	DLABSO253

To better illustrate student progression in the program, Table 4, shows the progression of a typical student using a semester breakdown of study in the program. As it is evident, the program's first 3 semesters provide foundations in different domains such as accounting, economics, mathematics, marketing, finance as well as developing essential skills in business communication and computer applications.

In subsequent semesters (4th semester onwards) the program provides further deepening of knowledge in the areas of integrated marketing communications, managerial skills and developing management science technical techniques, managing human resources and managerial accounting. From this semester onwards,

we also provide students flexibility of choosing to deepen their knowledge in a certain area by selecting courses from our two concentration areas in accounting and marketing-management.

As students advance in their studies, it becomes increasingly important for them to develop the skills necessary to conduct research. To that end, our program places a strong emphasis on preparing students for this aspect of their careers. We offer a variety of courses that are specifically designed to build students' research skills, including advanced courses in statistics and business report writing. By completing these courses, our students will be well-equipped to conduct rigorous research and effectively communicate their findings to others in the field.

Table 4 Semester Breakdown and Student Progression

Num.	Course Code	Course Name	ECTS	Prerequisites
Semester 1				
1.	DLABSA151	INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNTING	10	NONE
2.	DLABSE151	MICROECONOMIC ANALYSIS	10	NONE
3.	DLAMAT151	BUSINESS MATHEMATICS	10	NONE
Semester 2				
4.	DLABSM152	MARKETING PRINCIPLES	10	NONE
5.	DLABCO152	BUSINESS COMMUNICATION	10	NONE
6.	DLACSC152	COMPUTER APPLICATION PACKAGES	10	NONE
Semester 3				
7.	DLABSE253	MACROECONOMIC ANALYSIS	10	NONE
8.	DLABSO253	INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS ORGANISATION	10	NONE
9.	DLAFIN253	BUSINESS FINANCE	10	NONE
Semester 4				
10.	DLABSM254	MARKETING RESEARCH & INFORM. SYSTEMS	10	DLABSM152
11.	DLABSA254	COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING	10	DLABSA151
12.	DLABSL254	BUSINESS LAW	10	NONE
Semester 5				
13.	DLAMAT355	STATISTICS	10	

Num.	Course Code	Course Name	ECTS	Prerequisites
14.	DLABSM355	INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS	10	DLABSM152
15.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	
Semester 6				
16.	DLABRM356	BUSINESS RESEARCH AND REPORT WRITING	10	DLAMAT355
17.	DLABSO356	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	10	DLABSO253
18.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	
Semester 7				
19.	DLABSO457	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE	10	DLAMAT355
20.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	
21.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	
Semester 8				
22.	DLABSP458	SENIOR PROJECT	10	DLABRM356
23.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	
24.	BUSINESS ELECTIVE		10	

(*) Note: A full list of all business elective courses are provided in Table 1

> 1.d. The EEC suggests that the program should enhance its computer skills training in relation to business administration topics such as accounting, finance, etc., by incorporating a simple series of tools, e.g., Excel and/or STATA.

Following the comments of the ECC, we have enhanced the computer skills training in relation to business administration courses.

In the courses DLAFIN253 and DLAFIN356 we have added the use of spreadsheets for analysing real investment decisions and the usage of statistical software such as R programming or Stata for analysing the performance of portfolios of investments in financial assets.

In the courses DLAMAT355 and DLABRM356 we have added the usage of SPSS for statistical data analysis.

In the course DLABSM355 we have added the CANVA software, a free tool that allows the user to design logos, small videos, and other material for business promotion on social media.

Finally, in the course, DLACSC152 students are introduced to Excel, Word, Powerpoint, Microsoft Outlook, Virtual Computer Lab, and Virtual Private Network.

Please refer to Annex 1 – Course Descriptions.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching, and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 2.a. In addition to participating in online classes together, ways to enhance international experiences for distance learners could be explored such as inviting international experts and guest lecturers for virtual interactions (virtual internationalization).

Department's Response:

We accept the EEC recommendations. It should be noted that a series of lectures in areas relevant with programme have already been organized in recent years.

As examples of these seminars that the Department of Business Administration has already organised in recent semesters as part of an ongoing effort to maintain a regular seminar series, we point to the following guest speakers:

- Prof. Marianna Makri (University of Miami)
  (Profile: https://people.miami.edu/profile/5e62b9d064d0d28d22559722a1c73303)
- Prof. Constantinos Kutsikos (University of Aegean)
  (Profile: http://www.ba.aegean.gr/cv_gr.asp?pid=11)

The following link provides the info from the website of Frederick University for the above conducted seminars:

https://frederick.ac.cy/en/centre-of-research-in-entrepreneurship,-finance-and-strategy

Following EEC recommendation, we plan to expand the series of lectures in various domains which will be renewed every year. For the academic year 2023-2024 we have planned the following invited talks:

Table 5 Planned Guest Lectures

Guest Speaker	Institution	Speaker information	Area of seminar
Dr. Florina Silaghi Assistant Professor in Finance	Universita Autonoma de Barcelona	Her research summary can be found here: https://www.researchgate.net/ profile/Florina-Silaghi	Finance

Guest Speaker	Institution	Speaker information	Area of seminar
Mrs. Olga Dynyak Founder of IQsha and Cyproplan	IQsha Cyproplan	Founder of IQSha and Cyproplan app, serial entrepreneur. Her profile can be found here: https://cy.linkedin.com/in/olga-dynyak-074304b9	Entrepreneurship
Constantina Kottaridi, Associate Professor of Economics	University of Piraeus	Her Profile can be found here: https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/en/kottarid.html	Economics

In addition to the above guest speaker series, the Department maintains an internal seminar series for member of faculty and PhD students who present their research work.

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 3.a. While research is appreciated and encouraged, there is space for improvement in terms of how research is evaluated. In broad terms, quantity receives equal credit as quality. Although this approach has virtues as quantity has a quality of its own, focusing on higher quality publications informed by international metrics (i.e., ABS UK list of journals' evaluation) could further enhance the reputation of Frederick University in the long term.

Department's Response:

The Department updated its research policy in a Departmental meeting taking place on the 7th of June 2021. The updated policy of the Department has offered guidance and targets for its faculty members that relate to key performance indicators (KPIs) in the following:

- The number of publications as listed in Scopus

- High impact (quality) publications as measured by Schimago journal and Country Rank (SJR)   index in Scopus and British Association of Business Schools Ranking (ABS)

- Submitted funding proposals & funding

- h-index (measured in Scopus)

- Citations (measured in Scopus)

- PhD supervision (Number of students)

The Department has measured and assessed all KPIs listed above for each faculty member.

In addition to the above Department actions, the Senate of the University has set specific measurable goals for promotion of academic staff along four pillars: i) teaching, ii) research, iii) administrative contribution to university and iv) contribution to society. Each category is clearly evaluated along several quality measures. The specific measurable goals have been proposed by the Department of Business Administration and have been ratified by the senate.

As is evident from the above, with respect to the research pillar there are very specific and transparent measures concerning the performance evaluation of staff members. These specific goals give special emphasis to the quality of publications as measured by high impact ranked journals using international ranking systems using the Schimago journal and Country Rank (SJR) and the British Association of Business Schools Ranking (ABS) along with other measures such as for example h-index and citations among other.

Clearly, the above measurable targets set by the Department provides transparency and clarity to faculty members regarding their research evaluation. In addition, the same criteria apply for new recruitments and hence place a priority on high quality research output in an effort to further build the research profile of the Department in the coming years.

> **3.b.** The University should enhance the quantifiable criteria about promotion, research output, etc.

The University already has procedures in place for the evaluation of its academic staff. As per the Mission, the Regulation and Rules and of the University, the academic staff are evaluated based on four (4) pillars:

(1) Teaching, (2) Research, (3) Administrative Work, (4) Contribution to society.

These procedures are publicly available at the University's website (Link) and indicate specific criteria for the evaluation for each rank. These criteria include publications in peer reviewed journals, funded research projects, international recognitions, doctoral studies supervision, contribution in teaching and administrative work of the University, professional achievements, and social contribution.

The University's Council has decided to further expand and specify the evaluation criteria and at the 150th Senate Meeting, after a first discussion the suggested framework of evaluation of each pillar was:

Teaching

•   Student evaluation reports for the last 3 years

•   Educational material that has been developed since the last evaluation

•   Samples of two (2) detailed course descriptions

•   Presentation of a sample course on the online learning platform

•   Participation in training programmes

•   Design and development of innovative courses

Research

•   Total number of publications

•   Number of scientific publications since the last evaluation

•   Percentage of publications submitted, that appear in international databases (eg. Scopus, Web of Science)

- Number of Citations

- Scientific recognition

- Research Work Autonomy

- Research projects

- Funding

- Laboratories

- Doctoral Student Supervision

- Creating / leading a research team

Administrative Work

- Election to an academic position such as Head, Dean etc

- Participation in Senate / Council Committees

- Participation in Departmental Committees

- Committee Chair

- Program of Study Coordinator

- Participation in the planning and submission of a new programme of study

- Participation in the design and delivery of training programmes

- Participation in activities for the development of the University

Social Contribution

- Participation and planning of programmes and actions for the society

- Representation of the University in National Committees

- Representation of Cyprus in European and International Committees

- Organizing events, open to the public

- Commons Participation (ex. Non-scientific articles, media presence etc).

> **3.c.** The link between research, education and business sector can be stronger.

Since 2022 the University has launched a new Lab called FULL (Frederick University Living Lab). FULL is a Frederick University pedagogical initiative that is based on a student-centred learning and teaching (SCLT) approach. It combines project-based, participatory, and experiential learning through community connections and partnerships. It challenges students to use their disciplinary knowledge and skills and tackle real-world problems and issues through interdisciplinary approaches and activities. Through FULL students partner with companies and organizations who act as clients and are assigned "real" problems on which they must work using the theoretical knowledge they receive in class throughout the semester in the context of the relevant courses in marketing, management and finance. Students have regular meetings with company/organization directors, during which they update the "clients" on their progress and receive feedback. Once the project is completed, the outcome is delivered to the clients, and the students are marked for their work as part of their formal course assessment.

In addition, students participate in European Funded Projects where they develop skills such as entrepreneurial skills, skills on design thinking and innovation, personal organization, and others. In particular, students have participated in training in the EU-funded projects HEInnovasport https://eit-hei.eu/projects/heinnovasport/, in Organize yourself! Time and self management as a key to your success https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-PL01-KA226-HE-096055 (Good Practice) and in Development of an Entrepreneurial Mindset In higher education https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2017-1-CY01-KA203-026768.

Students in recent years have also participated in the Annual Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Research Challenge competition which presents students with the challenge of assessing the financial position of a company using techniques developed in finance modules.

> **3.d.** Promotion policies criteria are not always very clear to all faculty members.

All policies and criteria are published in the University's website (Link), as well as in the internal document management system of the Universities. All related Council / Senate decisions are communicated to all academic staff.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> **4.a.** Some of the students mentioned that there was a lack of accessibility to the online platform and/or with the email communication with instructors. A better technical assistance should be ensured in this case, since the program is delivered solely online.

Department's Response:

The programme is fully supported by a team of IT professionals as well as the Distance Learning Unit of the University, comprised of academics with experience in distance learning delivery of the courses.

Although technical issues, may occur, these are in rare occasions and do not affect in any way the delivery of the courses and the teaching procedure.

> **4.b.** Some of the students mentioned that a main motivation to join the other DL programmes was the reduced cost (a discount to fees). This should be carefully reviewed by the senior management because it concerns the sustainability of the new program.

Department's Response:

Indeed, our research has shown that key factors for students to select distance learning programs at undergraduate level are the financial costs, together with the need for students to maintain employment. This is factored into the department's sustainability plan and it is to this end that the university allocates a large number of scholarships and financial assistance to the program.

4.c.	Some students mentioned that the online assessment that replaced the physical exams is better. However, the University must ensure that the exams will be delivered on time, transparent and achieve the learning outcomes of the program.

Department's Response:

We would like to clarify that the physical exams were mandatory in distance learning programmes, as per the previous legislative framework. The new legal framework offers the flexibility to the Universities to provide all final exams, for distance learning programmes, online.

Frederick University prides itself for developing a robust and concrete online exam model, both in terms of technical provisions as well as invigilation procedures. The exam timetable is published to the University's website (Link), at least one month in advance, and the Studies and Welfare Services of the University ensures that all students are informed about it.

Students are trained on how to download, install and use the relevant online exam software and the academic staff is also trained by the DLU (Distance Learning Unit) on how to prepare, create deliver and invigilate online exams.

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 5.a. Given the rapid growth of distance learning and the high workload in this area to provide professional student and faculty support services, the university should consider investing more resources into the ODLC. Having one full-time instructional designer for each of the four Schools would be adequate.

Department's Response:

The University acknowledges the need and works towards to achieve that purpose. At this point, three instructional designers work at the Center. The last one was hired in December 2022. The university has 5 schools. It is expected that within the next 2 years, this goal will be achieved.

> 5.b. The opportunities that learning analytics afford to implement an early warning system for students at risk could be exploited more systematically. Student data should be fed back to the Learning Support Unit and used to provide proactive student support, guidance and counselling.

Department's Response:

The Distance Learning Committee in collaboration with the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs developed and suggested a Plan towards a more systematic collection of data via the LMS in order to proactively address students demands, concerns, and effectively guide and support them. The plan will be presented and approved by the Senate within June 2023. The goal is to start its implementation at the academic year of 2023-2024.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

5.c.	Although Frederick University qualified for the E-xcellence Quality label for distance learning programs, the University is not a member of EADTU. Membership and participation in EADTU annual conferences (next one 2023 in Istanbul) would give Frederick University more international visibility in terms of good practice and also (practitioner) research into open and distance learning

Department's Response:

The University is working towards submitting the documents needed in order to become a full member of EADTU. Two abstracts are being prepared to submitted to the Innovating Higher Education Annual Conference (I·HE2023: Innovating Higher Education Conference (eadtu.eu))

The titles of the abstracts are:

1.   Digital Pedagogies and Competencies for Quality Education and Life-Long Learning

2.   Factors that Influencing Distance Learning Programs Implementation in Higher Education

5.d.	Access to more databases would be a welcome addition. This could be on subscription fee basis or through bilateral agreements with other Universities in Cyprus. Especially in doctoral programs (say in Finance) such access can be a game changer

Department's Response:

The University of Cyprus Library is the sole higher education institution in the Republic of Cyprus that purchases access to highly specialized databases such as COMPUSTAT and CRSP achieved via subscription to WRDS (Wharton Research Data Services, Wharton University of Pennsylvania). It follows that their subscription is not facilitated by CALC – the Cyprus Academic Libraries Consortium- which is consortium of Cyprus universities where Frederick U. is a current member. We intend to explore the possibility of arriving at a special arrangement with University of Cyprus Library to cater for the remote access requirements of our students and researchers although this may not be possible based on the current agreements with providers. We also plan to raise the issue within the CALC consortium and explore whether some solutions can be reached at the consortium level.

> **5.e.** The University should provide more administrative training and more specialized administrative support (e.g., education psychology)

Department's Response:

Frederick University is committed to providing personal and professional development opportunities for employees in order to be able to reach their full potential, enhance their personal job satisfaction, optimize their performance and achieve their career aspirations and the strategic goals of their departments and of the University. The Personal and Professional Development Center (P2DF) coordinates all training sessions offered on-campus to staff members, in accordance to the provisions of the 'Rule for Staff Training', approved by the Board of Directors. Given our academic environment, personal and professional development activities can take the form of training opportunities, both supply and demand-driven (workshops, seminars, informal discussions, Teaching and Learning Day), mentoring programs, service opportunities (Active Citizenship) to maximise interaction and active participation. Examples of trainings implemented during this past year include student advising for student success, customer service in higher education, use of online digital tools, incorporating SDGs in the curriculum etc. New staff orientation is mandatory and takes place every semester. More on the Center can be found here.

In addition to the above, administrative staff members participate in off-campus trainings that are specific to their duties and professional development. For this purpose, each Administrative Service has a staff training budget that is allocated by each Service Director accordingly.

The training of staff providing administrative and support services to Distance Learning students focuses on the use of the learning management systems (Moodle-LMS) and the digital tools employed, on developing guides, on managing students' portals, and on identifying issues and challenges faced by the adult online learner and resolving them through timely and effective services. The trainings and support is offered through the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching (CIET) in collaboration with the Student and Studies Welfare Services, the Distance Learning Committee and the P2DF.

It is noted that all staff members have access, are encouraged, and actively participate in Erasmus+ training programs.

Student support and disability services is offered by the University's Counselling Centre. The Centre employees two full time social workers, one part time educational psychologist and one part time Clinical Psychologist and uses a network of community resources to which students are referred to for more specialized support. All services (individual sessions and group workshops) are offered in-person and remotely through synchronous and asynchronous means. The Counselling Centre is also responsible for developing resources and training sessions for faculty members on disability-inclusive practices and on how to best facilitate learning and examination accommodations in face-to-face and in online teaching.

6. Conclusions and final remarks

The e-learning program in Business Administration is a currently running Bachelor degree with a 4-year content design and structure, provided by the Frederick University.

The EEC appreciates the significant progress that has been made on the program since it started by the Frederick University, including drawing upon external expertise, quality assessments and program structure consistent with comparable programs. This evaluation is to keep delivering the program with some changes as suggested, under the supervision of Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

The EEC welcomes positively the program as it holds the potential of allowing the University to promote its DL programs and reputation. It also provides an opportunity to foster collaboration with the industry and business. Similar to most program proposals, there is space for improvement. Indeed, we have identified some areas for which reflection, elaboration, and further development is recommended. We have elaborated on those in each section above. We expect that the program will be supported in these areas.

(i) the delivery of all the elective courses;
(ii) the program's general orientation, instead of the specializations that would be more suitable to a professionally-oriented program;
(iii) the sustainability of the program, bearing in mind the increased competition of educational services in Cyprus.

All the above issues can be reflected in the program content, as well as the course content in the current proposed curriculum.

We also recommend Frederick University to promote the program to the local and international market (using Greek and English languages as delivery language), and if possible, to professionals. It will be beneficial for the program and the university in the long run if the program is accredited by international bodies (such as ACCA, CIMA, CFA and ACA) rather than just being a member. Even though the fees may be higher, the program will benefit from these accreditations. Additionally, the University should consider investing in more database subscriptions in the future to support the research and teaching of the faculty and the graduate and undergraduate programs. Some steps have been taken in this direction, but more work is required.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA
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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The EEC would like to take this opportunity to thank the CYQAA coordinator, Mr Lefkios Neophytou, for managing the process both efficiently and effectively. His facilitation has been exemplar and has made it possible for the evaluation to run smoothly.
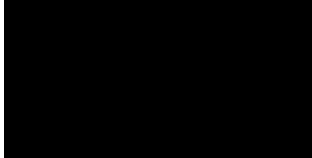
Finally, should the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education require any clarifications with regards to the points raised in the report, the members of the EEC remain at the Agency's disposal.

Department's Response:

We would like to sincerely thank the EEC for their dedicated work and invaluable comments provided both within their evaluation report and during the frank discussions held throughout the visit. All suggestions made by the EEC have been adopted and implements, as seen by the answers throughout sessions 1-5.

B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. George Demosthenous	Rector	

Date: 17/04/2023