

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 03/05/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Δημόσιες Σχέσεις, Μάρκετινγκ και Διαφήμιση (4 έτη,
240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing (4 years,
240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



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.*

Introduction

We refer to the report of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the evaluation – accreditation of the Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing following the visit at the University of Nicosia by the members of the EEC on 31/1/23.

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the constructive feedback and valuable discussions given during the accreditation process. The EEC found the major strength of the program provides students with a comprehensive understanding of Public Relations, Advertising, and Marketing, covering the major concepts, theories, research methodologies, and industry trends.

As a result, upon completion Students master the required abilities to practise in these areas, utilise critical and creative thinking, act ethically, and communicate effectively at completion. They also develop an understanding of the general practise of public relations, advertising, and marketing, including the implementation of strategies based on multi-cultural, financial, and socio-political settings.

In order to formulate an efficient social media strategy, the programme also emphasises the analysis of media disciplines and the evaluation of social and digital media content development, which makes it up to date and more competitive.



The EE also recognises the program has good governance through effective Internal Regulations for Undergraduate Studies regarding its organisation, management, and functioning.

The performance and graduation rates of students are commensurate with EEC standards and information about the programme is available to the public.

We have read the report and the comments carefully, and in the following sections, we respond to all points raised by the EEC.

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>1. Although the breadth of the program can potentially be a strong point, as things currently stand, PRAM’s underlying structure and module selection results in a broad programme. As a result, the modules and their distribution among the three areas that the program aspires to cover do not fully justify the title of the programme.</p> <p>It is recommended that the programme team look at either:</p> <p>i. retitling the programme or ii. increasing the number of compulsory modules in each of the three areas, public relations, advertising and marketing so that the subject area weightings are similar.</p>	<p>The findings of the EEC on the Study programme and study programme’s design and development conclude the Program provides students with a thorough understanding of Public Relations, Advertising, and Marketing, including the major concepts, theories, research methodologies, and industry trends. This is viewed as a distinguishing strength by the EEC because it gives students the possibility to study modules in three distinct fields.</p> <p>The Program Committee fully appreciate the EEC’s concerns to improve this with regard to PRAM’s underlying structure and module selection. As a result, we have restructured the Program based on the EEC’s recommendations regarding compulsory modules – please see attached Annex 1 ‘New Academic Path PRAM’ and Annex 3 Revised Semester Breakdown. This change is grounded in the idea that compulsory courses should reflect the three core aspects of the Program’s identity, namely PR, Advertising, and Marketing, which compared to the old pathway, now have similar weightings</p>	
<p>2. Following on the above recommendation, the program learning objectives need to be revised and narrowed down, so that they correspond with the subjects taught. The objectives and learning outcomes for each module should be considered in</p>	<p>The suggestion of the EEC on revising the underlying structure outlined above in 1. is welcomed in terms of enabling us to revise and narrow down the program learning objectives to correspond with the subjects taught – please see revised</p>	

<p>this respect and evidence should be provided with respect to the various assessments used and their contribution to the learning objectives.</p>	<p>“Learning Objectives” Annex 2 document.</p> <p>The Program’s learning objectives are based on Bloom’s taxonomy structure in order to provide a common language for faculty to discuss and exchange learning and assessment methods, as required in all Universities. In addition, all courses syllabi use the classification system to define and classify the various stages of thinking, learning, and understanding in humans. As a result, this encourages more advanced thinking methods in the classroom, and involves assessing and evaluating concepts, methods, procedures, and principles that both Faculty and students can use. In other words, we use a common language among educators for discussing and exchanging methods of teaching and assessment.</p>	
<p>3.The team should consider streamlining the program, removing non-essential major streams that result in a more complex than necessary and resource intensive structure that does not add value to the overall proposition. Instead, they should focus their attention on the three core areas of interest.</p>	<p>Following the EEC’s recommendation, the program has been streamlined with less non-essential major stream which allows students to focus more attention on the three key areas of interest, PR, Advertising and Marketing. Please see document Annex 1 ‘New Academic Path PRAM’ and Annex 3 Revised Semester Breakdown. More relevant modules have been added in the three specialist areas of the program (PR, Advertising and Marketing) in Sections A (Major Requirements/compulsory courses) and B (Major Electives), and we limited the number of General Business, Humanities and Social Sciences sections (C, D & E).</p>	

	<p>In addition, we have included only 10 relevant modules in Section B, as also suggested by EEC, where students may choose between 24-36 ECTS.</p>	
<p>4.If the program team chooses to keep generic business content, this could be packaged in one (or more) dedicated module(s) that will offer all of the necessary knowledge for PRAM students. Such an approach will create space to add more relevant modules in the three specialist areas.</p>	<p>The suggestions by the EEC with regard to general business content has been addressed by limiting the number of courses required. Please see Annex 1 'New Academic Path PRAM' and Annex 3 Revised Semester Breakdown</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>1. Assessment could be more relevant to the subject taught and focus on applying the knowledge and skills taught (e.g. instead of writing about advertising campaigns students can create one).</p>	<p>The findings of the EEC on Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment are generally positive with an appreciation of the University’s learning management system supporting teaching, learning and administrative processes. The EEC highlights a major strength and best practice is our more qualitative teaching approach to be the provision of personalized feedback on submitted tasks, small-group lab-based instruction, as well as feedback based on rubrics and peer evaluation.</p> <p>The PRAM Program adheres to principles that provide practical guidance for all students, facilitates student-learning workshops, and encourages students to reflect on the purposes of feedback and how to develop their understanding in each course, along with the real-world design and implementation of Marketing Communication strategies.</p> <p>For example, we use this student – centred learning model in core courses such as COMM 322, COMM 395, COMM 422, COMM 445, MKTG 301, MKTG 310, MKTG 400, MKTG 493 & 496.</p> <p>As we discussed with the EEC team, we collaborate with the industry in a number of courses so that students, working in teams, plan and simultaneously implement actual strategy campaigns. The faculty</p>	



	welcomes this, and views it as essential for developing comprehension and capacities to evaluate and act on feedback regarding learning.	

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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<p>3. The University could articulate all aspects of faculty workload in a single place. In turn, workload management could be organised in a more structured and transparent system.</p>	<p>We appreciate the positive findings of the EEC Teaching staff which highlights the qualitative character of smaller student centred (8-16) classes and the valuable research outputs and funded projects faculty are engaged with. One of our major strengths as a program, and department is the cutting-edge facility of Mediazone which provides not only technical support to courses taught but also a unique opportunity for students to enhance their skills as studio assistants. We agree with the EEC comment on faculty workload. Currently this is governed by Chapter 6 of the Internal Regulations on research time release and the collective agreement on the normal teaching load. We will pass this recommendation through the Department and School to the Rectorate and Senate with a view to draft an amendment to the Internal Regulations that will incorporate all relevant aspects into a single text. We, as a Department, already manage Faculty workload by scheduling courses in advance. In addition we monitor faculty workload and strive that each faculty member's workload corresponds to his/her ranking. Also, at the University level there is an ongoing effort to monitor and manage the workload of all faculty members.</p>	



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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
<p>1. In such a broad programme it is critical to have clearly articulated education pathways communicated to students so that they can pursue the career of their choice. Student choices should be supported within the school by a nominated faculty member.</p>	<p>We appreciate the EEC's recognition that the PRAM Program is fully compliant in this area highlighting rigorous admissions criteria, and thorough support for students. The EEC recognized our system of gaining feedback from students as a major strength, as well as the benefits of a "very good student-teacher ratio", and having dedicated faculty coordinating internships.</p> <p>The PRAM Program Coordinator plays a catalytic role in disseminating and discussing pathways along with the Head of Department through regular one on one advising sessions with students. The Coordinator liaises closely with the Academic Affairs Department, which offers students advice on a daily basis from Monday to Friday during the hours from 8:00 to 19:00</p>	
<p>2. Although there is much feedback received by students, evidence of the effectiveness of this information in terms of specific measures for improvement and actions plans taken by the University was not provided during the evaluation. Such measures can be more systematically captured and good practices identified and shared among members of staff.</p>	<p>We appreciate the EEC's recommendation on the issue of student feedback and will seek to explore ways for improvement. The participation of students in our department's decision-making processes is highly valued. For instance, students actively participate in the Internal Program Review (IPEP) and Department and School Council meetings.</p>	

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>1.Members of staff providing academic support and pastoral care need to be regularly updated about both the course and University services so that they can direct and advise students in an appropriate manner.</p>	<p>The EEC concludes the PRAM Program, as fully compliant with regarding to Learning resources and student support. This is very important to us as a Program, Department and University, particularly the recognition of our excellent facilities.</p> <p>We appreciate the EEC's recommendation on academic support and pastoral care, an issue that we value highly. The Department holds regular meetings with Academic advisors, particularly following course and pathway developments.</p>	
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG) N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY



7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC has diligently considered all the evidence provided related to the program under evaluation while preparing this report. The report details the key findings, outlines the main strengths identified, and recommends improvements. The EEC believes that this feedback, especially when it comes the recommendation provided in section 1, will shape future progress and contribute to the program's success. If the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education needs clarification on any points in the report, the EEC will be very happy to comply. Last but not least, the EEC members would like to express their appreciation to the CYQAA coordinator for his smooth management of the evaluation process.</p>	<p>The Faculty of the PRAM program would like to thank the EEC for their positive and thorough review of our program and for the constructive recommendations addressed in the report. In producing it, the EEC has carefully analysed all of the evidence given in relation to the programme being evaluated.</p> <p>The report describes the significant findings, identifies the major strengths, and makes recommendations for improvements. We agree fully that the EEC's recommendation, as suggestions for change can only improve the Program, particularly regarding the section 1 recommendation, which will shape our future progress and contribute to the success of the program. Based on these we have responded with changes to the pathway, learning outcomes/objectives and an overall streamlining of the program as recommended by the EEC.</p> <p>We fully appreciate the EEC's acknowledgement that the main strength of the program In principle, is that it offers an opportunity to study modules in three different areas. This makes it unique and is one of our main attributes that appeals to the students enrolled.</p> <p>We thank the committee for their positive evaluation and constructive suggestions, which will allow us to continue to improve the PRAM program.</p>	



C.



D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Klimis Mastoridis	Dean of School	
Dr Mike Hajimichael	Head of Department	
Dr Marcos Komodromos	Program Coordinator	

Date: 03/05/2023

