

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 3/05/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**

UCLan Cyprus

- **Town:** Larnaca

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

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό (Μάστερ) στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων
(90 ECTS, Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:

Master of Business Administration (MBA) (90 ECTS, e-Learning)

- **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.*

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) The MBA programme learning outcomes should be revised to ensure that they are effectively phrased and that they are at the appropriate level.</p>	<p>We would like to take this opportunity to thank the EEC for the constructive feedback leading to the improvement of our MBA provision. Following the re-structuring of the programme, the academic team has proceeded with the revision of the Learning Outcomes (LOs). In this respect, Bloom's taxonomy has been used to ensure both that the appropriate level is reflected in the LOs, and that the appropriate wording is used. In addition, the LOs have been revised to reflect the updated structure (modules and content), which addresses the recommendations of the ECC. The updated LOs are presented in Appendix I.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>2) UCLan UK has a policy of that modules are 20 credits (10 ECTS) minimum. This limits the number of modules that can potentially be offered which is important for a programme like the MBA which aims to cover a broad range of business administration subject areas.</p>	<p>We agree with the ECC that the 20 UK-credit (10 ECTS) module policy can potentially limit the number of modules that can be offered as part of an MBA Program. Yet, and despite this policy, we ensured that our revised and proposed programme structure showcases a broad area of business and management subjects. To address this, we have introduced new modules which combine a critical and broad range of business administration subjects such as 'Managing Operations and Supply Chains in the Digital Age', 'Business Intelligence and Data Analytics', 'Enterprise, Innovation and New Venture Creation', 'International Strategic Management and Sustainability', and more. We illustrate the new suggested programme structure (see Appendix I) in the next point.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>3) MBA should be strengthened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repositioning research and study skills and management coaching skills as workshops and not credit bearing modules. • (Following on point 2 above) Splitting the existing 10 credit modules into two or three separate sections that address MBA module content such as Organisational behaviour, Marketing, Strategy, Leadership, Finance, CSR/Sustainability or 	<p>We would like to thank the EEC in offering recommendations on how we can strengthen our MBA programme and make it more holistic, practical, focused, interactive and transferable skills-bearing. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Research and Study Skills</i> module it will no longer be offered as an independent module, but rather it will be embedded through a series of workshops offered as part of the dissertation module. These workshops will be essential not only for smoothly introducing the students into the necessary skills and mindset involved in conducting research at a Master's level, but also for integrating them onto the course, particularly in terms of 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>Law/Ethics, Supply Chain Management, Operations, International management, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Economics, Data Analytics, Knowledge Management, Human Resources Management and Human Resources Development etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including opportunities for peer-to-peer interactive synchronous symmetrical learning. • Considering where the development of transferable skills (e.g. ability to manage change; communication; leadership; teamwork; dealing with ambiguity; negotiation; problem solving; critical thinking; values) could be nurtured. 	<p>facilitating their accessibility to university resources, academic writing skills and referencing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We embrace the EEC’s recommendations for a richer MBA content by proposing the below MBA structure: <p><u>Semester 1</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Managing People and Leading Organizations</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Contemporary Marketing in Organisations</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Business Intelligence and Data Analytics</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Project Management</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Semester 2</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Operations Management, Supply Chains and Digitalisation</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Financial Management</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>International Strategic Management and Sustainability</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Enterprise, Innovation and New Venture Creation</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;">10ECTS</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>YEARLONG</u> – <i>Dissertation</i> 30ECTS</p> <p>The above proposed structure is available in the format of Table 2 in Appendix I.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-to-peer interactive learning: Peer-to-peer learning strategies is a very effective way to promote active learning and engagement in MBA modules and topic areas, while helping students to develop their communication, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. MBA EL students are encouraged to provide feedback to their peers through discussion forums on blackboard for formative components of assessment, such as for example on weekly activities reflecting on material learnt and sharing their views on particular topics/videos/case studies/debate topics/conflicting views/applicability of managerial tools in different real-life situations etc. <p>To provide more opportunities for peer-to-peer interactive synchronous learning, the team uses a series of activities at the module level which encourage students to engage with their peers in real time and create an equal learning experience for all. Some examples of such activities include creation of “private channels” on MS Teams where the class participants can meet in couples and a specific time is given to each party to articulate thoughts/ideas on a particular topic. Each participant provides then feedback to the other by using personal knowledge and experience. The outcomes</p>	<i>Managing People and Leading Organizations</i>	10ECTS	<i>Contemporary Marketing in Organisations</i>	10ECTS	<i>Business Intelligence and Data Analytics</i>	10ECTS	<i>Project Management</i>	10ECTS	<i>Operations Management, Supply Chains and Digitalisation</i>	10ECTS	<i>Financial Management</i>	10ECTS	<i>International Strategic Management and Sustainability</i>	10ECTS	<i>Enterprise, Innovation and New Venture Creation</i>	10ECTS	
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	<p>of this discussion will be then shared with the rest of the cohort via the discussion forum. For further exercises to the above, groups will consist of different students, so that there is interaction with as many members of the cohort as possible. This important learning tool allows the promotion of an interactive and symmetrical learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferable skills: We agree with the EEC that transferable skills can help students become effective leaders, collaborators, and decision-makers, and adapt to change in a dynamic environment while making ethical and value-based decisions. In recognition of the above, transferrable skills are part of the programme’s learning outcomes, which in turn are mapped against certain MBA EL modules, while they are also developed via extra-curricular activities. The MBA EL promotes the development of transferrable skills relevant to problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork in a real-world context via experiential learning opportunities such as case studies, simulations, and consulting projects. The programme also facilitates the development of skills relevant to communication, leadership, and teamwork via group projects that feature as summative or formative components of assessment. As presented during the re-accreditation event, there are several professional development workshops and seminars taking place on campus (also available via live online streaming) or online on topics such as entrepreneurial skills, innovative thinking, managing change, negotiation and many more. Further to the few examples provided here, we are committed to constantly enhancing the transferable skills embedded in our MBA EL programme in terms of diversity, range, functionality, applicability, proficiency, and effectiveness, as we consider them critical in promoting the development of competent business leaders. At the core of our programme design lies the need to prepare students for the complexities of the business world, and developing transferable skills is essential for achieving this goal. 	
<p>4) External stakeholders (e.g. industry representatives) are not involved in informing and shaping the MBA curriculum.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for pointing to the importance of a formal participation of external stakeholders (e.g., industry experts) on curriculum design. It is important to clarify at this point that the academic team leading the programme considers it vital too to develop and maintain a strong network of collaborators and enduring partnerships for both curriculum design and student employability purposes. Since the development of the MBA program, the team established a large network of national and international partners and collaborators, especially industry partners, which have been informally engaged with the programme</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>in terms of providing advice on curriculum content and putting forward skills and competencies that are critical for success in the industry, as well as employability aspects. These informal contributions have been valuable in shaping or changing the content of modules, or assessment topics, module and course learning outcomes etc. In addition, our industry partners have been engaging in other educational activities, such as guest lectures, workshops, real case studies, real life student projects, student competitions, student awards and many more.</p> <p>We welcome the Committee's constructive recommendation to adopt a more formal and systematic approach towards external stakeholders' involvement in curriculum design. As such, the programme team along with the Head of the School will proceed to create an Advisory Board. The role of the Advisory Board will be to provide formal feedback and recommendations to the programme team in relation to its existing curriculum, suggest further enhancements, share news on industry developments and point towards any changes required in terms of developing targeted transferrable skills.</p>	
<p>5) Students' satisfaction with their modules is recorded. However, student participation in evaluation is rather low.</p>	<p>As discussed during the meeting, we agree that there is a need to increase student participation in the evaluation process. In this respect, the University's Student Experience and Engagement Committee (SEEC), as well as Student Support Services are currently investigating alternative ways to motivate students to increase their participation in the University's evaluation of student satisfaction. The efforts taking place at the moment are centred on the provision of incentives to students and the revision of the Module Feedback Questionnaire (MFQ) with the aims of making it more appealing to the students.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>1) The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is good practice. Therefore, the University is urged to apply for external and voluntary accreditations, such as EADTU and EFQUEL, to evaluate and keep improving its distance learning quality assurance.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the Committee for suggesting us to seek accreditations, such as EADTU and EFQUEL. This has been communicated to the Head of the School of Business and Management and has been considered recently in the School’s meeting. We value these accreditation options, as we consider it essential exploring opportunities to ensure the continuous enhancement of the programme and its distance learning quality assurance.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>2) The EEC would like to draw attention to the issue that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and that formative continuous assessment during the course could be reinforced instead. In this sense, the formative assessment strategy based on different and complex instruments, such as portfolios, mid-term examinations, weekly activities and a variety of assignments, could be confusing for students across the different courses. The University is urged to clearly inform students about the learning benefits of this assessment ecosystem.</p>	<p>Each MBA EL module consists of one assignment (usually a portfolio) and one final exam (aside of the dissertation module). Both components have equal weighting (50%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exams: Final exams are a CY QAA requirement for a e-learning Master programme. Onsite final exams were a CyQAA requirement in the past, which have now been replaced with the opportunity to arrange for online exams. The relevant announcement is available here. In this effect, we ensure that we follow all requirements for conducting online exams precisely and carefully and employ online invigilation systems in line with CYQAA guidelines and requirements. Assignments & Portfolios: The assessment approach adopted by the MBA EL programme’s team is aligned with the CyQAA’s guidelines regarding embedding in the programme weekly interactive activities. <p>CyQAA enlists the below interactive activities which are recommended to be used for modules offered through e-learning delivery more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Scenarios for problem-solving</i> <i>Activities with image and sound and reconstructing reality, processing based on assumptions</i> <i>Simulations in virtual environments</i> <i>Real-life situations and decision making</i> <i>Building skills, experiences, and attitudes as in real life and through personal experience, not just memorization of knowledge”</i> 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>The same announcement also clearly states: <i>“The weekly interactive activities should be evaluated and graded by sections that correspond to the expected learning outcomes and/or as a whole with satisfactory percentage. Otherwise, they are not taken into account by the student and the learning outcomes are not achieved.”</i></p> <p>As such, most of the modules in MBA EL include a portfolio of activities as an assessment component. At the module level, and in line with the above guidelines of CYQAA, we have introduced a variety of activities across the study weeks which contribute to the creation of the portfolio (summative assessment), while the rest of the interactive activities are formative components. Through this approach we ensure that we keep our students engaged with the materials, maintain their interest across study weeks, while giving them the opportunity to gradually build on their knowledge, understanding and enhancing their capabilities to apply models/tools/techniques of analysis and decision making.</p> <p>During their induction session on the programme’s learning objectives and requirements, students are well informed about the benefits of the student-centered programme’s learning and teaching approach, the benefits of the assessment methodology used and additional extra-curriculum activities and opportunities that the MBA team and the School of Business and Management offer them through the School’s network of collaborators.</p> <p>Therefore, students are well-informed regarding formative and summative assessments, and we can guarantee this since:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from students indicate that there is clarity and precision in assessment strategies – no issues/challenges/concerns have been reported yet regarding the module assessment strategies. • Tutors during the welcome and introductory messages explain to students what to expect of the module and what they need to do per week. • Students are aware which weekly activities are contributing to their summative assessment (e.g., via the recorded assessment guides per module by the tutor). <p>In conclusion, we would like to thank the EEC for this recommendation and to emphasise that in our efforts to continuously improve the program, we acknowledge and make sure that summative and formative assessments are</p>	
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	<p>clearly distinguished, comprehensibly described, but also, and particularly for formative assessments, regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain effective and relevant. As new technologies and teaching methodologies emerge, it is important to assess how they can be incorporated into the formative assessment process.</p>	
<p>3) From the documentation provided and the information gathered in the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. Such innovations can be used to enhance the delivery of the program.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the Committee for this suggestion. We consider gamification an important aspect of online teaching and learning, and an area which we are dedicated to being constantly improving as new technologies and methodologies emerge.</p> <p>One important gamification strategy we are introducing as of September 2023, is the badge system. Our modules will employ the badge system, which will be part of the university-wide badge system (currently being structured and designed for implementation by next Sept.). The badge system will comprise the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining badges: students will collect stars helping them to reach the bronze, silver, and gold level – plus a special diamond level of exceptional cases 2. Badges visibility: each student’s progress on the badge system will be visible in the online profiles with the intention of motivating them and creating a sense of achievement. 3. Rewards: depending on achievement e.g., silver, different rewards will be given to students, such as prizes, internships, opportunities to attend specific events, gift vouchers, discounts to shops etc. 4. Areas for improvement: by monitoring the badge system, students can identify areas which their performance has been lower and motivate them to engage more with those. <p>Some of the categories through which students will collect stars (to reach their targets) are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades in assessment components. • Attendance (online) – engagement with activities. • Participation to university competitions. • Helping or supporting new students (online); • Being a student representative. • Answering and providing complete feedback on MFQs. • Clips or posts (e.g., on social media) promoting the University. <p>The badge system is designed and expected to be an effective gamification strategy to increase student engagement and motivation. The development team ensures that there are equal opportunities for e-learning</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>students to engage and badges specifically designed for them. We have contacted the Badge System development team and request for provision to the use of badges within each module’s activities (over and above grades and attendance) as well as on the overall programme in relation to, e.g., program’s learning outcomes, transferable skills and overall, an enhanced student experience. The MBA EL academic team is frequently discussing and sharing ideas for gamification, such as the above, of the online weekly activities to encourage engagement and motivation.</p>	
<p>4) More sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their progress.</p>	<p>The current learning management system (LMS) used by the programme (i.e., Blackboard) allows for real-time automatic feedback to be provided to students for different types of assessments (e.g., formative, self-evaluation). For example, and when it comes to formative assessments, which are utilised by students for learning and self-reflection, and which may include a variety of activities, such as online quizzes (e.g., multiple choice or right/wrong choices) and other activities such as case studies, feedback may take the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For online quizzes - these are automatically checked, therefore students are instantly aware of their performance and obtain feedback. • For other activities (such as case studies) - specific rubrics are utilised so that students can self-evaluate their performance. These rubrics allow the students to identify if they have met the learning outcomes set for the specific activity, if they have completed and documented their practical activities at a good standard, if they followed a methodological approach to investigate the given problem and offered an appropriate solution, and if they have documented their findings demonstrating detailed knowledge and depth of understanding. To further assist the students, exemplar answers for each formative assessment are provided. Students can also discuss their answers with the module tutor and their peers through the discussion forum or one-to-one sessions. <p>Therefore, there are plenty of opportunities for students to engage with reflection and self-evaluation. In addition, due to the small cohorts, which enable tutors to provide close mentoring, feedback is provided to students via several tools, in addition to the automatic one. As the programme grows in student numbers the University is committed towards utilising more advanced and sophisticated tools such as an intelligent tutoring system and conversational pedagogical agents to</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	facilitate the workload of its academic team, which will inevitably find it harder to be providing the same level of individualized feedback that it currently provides.	
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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
<p>1) The EEC would like to note that the University does not provide faculty staff with formal and organised training programs on distance learning in order for lecturers to maintain and improve their technological skills and abilities in supporting distance learning and improve the quality of online teaching. Therefore, the University is urged to provide technical training and support of distance learning to faculty members so that they can participate in training programs. It is recommended that these training programs are certified in terms of professional development relevant to distance learning.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the Committee for bringing this forward. The University considers academic development, and more importantly, the cultivation of pedagogical skills, including distance learning skills, an essential element for the successful delivery of its programmes and the provision of an effective student experience.</p> <p>As such, academic development and most importantly, the cultivation of pedagogical skills and availability of tutor training tools and resources, are considered by the University as essential elements for the successful delivery of an online programme and the provision of an effective student experience.</p> <p>Firstly, all academic staff undergo compulsory pedagogical training through the UK HEA and they all <i>must</i> achieve Fellowship level.</p> <p>Beyond that, the University operates the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee (TLEC) which provides <i>compulsory</i> for all academic staff e-learning technical and pedagogical training. Further than compulsory seminars and trainings, TLEC establishes forums for the exchange and sharing of information between academics who deliver on distance learning programmes. This takes place through interactive workshops as well as a monthly bulletin/newsletter where academics can write about their own classroom experience.</p> <p>Furthermore, TLEC at UCLan Cyprus has a close cooperation with UCLan UK's Centre of Collaborative Learning (CCL), and most importantly the Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching (TELT) unit of CCL. Tutors access via TELT a variety of professional development resources including in the following categories: Inclusive Learning (producing inclusive and accessible content); Teaching Technologies; Creating and re-using e-learning content; E-learning packages and interactive apps; Graphics and animations; Video production; Classroom Technologies; Case Studies.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>Further to the resources available, through e3Hub (part of TELT), academics have access to seminars and trainings focusing on areas such as, but not limited to: Feedback and assessment; Content creation and curation; Collaborative practice; Digital learning environments; Student engagement; Learning design and development.</p> <p>All academics are <i>required</i> to be accessing these professional development resources, especially academics delivering modules on e-learning programs such as the MBA EL. Furthermore, the TLEC is exploring training programs which are certified as professional development relevant to e-learning.</p> <p>Another useful resource and opportunity for sharing examples of e-learning best practices is the active blog that is shared between both campuses (UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK), which is available: https://msuclanac.sharepoint.com/sites/CentreforCollaborativeLearning2/SitePages/Learning-Technologies.aspx</p> <p>Beyond all the above, academics receive support (financial or otherwise) by the University to attend external seminars and trainings, according to their individual needs.</p> <p>The MBA EL academic team meets before the start of the academic year to ensure that everyone is in line with the weekly delivery approach and the need for consistency across modules. During the meeting, the pedagogical tools are discussed, and any updates, ideas or new tools are reviewed and shared among colleagues. Furthermore, the course leader collects from tutors by the end of the academic year their insights on “what worked best” and “what could be used more effectively” in terms of engaging techniques and educational tools (e.g. via blackboard or MS Teams) so as to complete the annual course leader report. These insights are shared with the whole academic team during the beginning-of-the-year team meeting. Therefore, this meeting acts as an informal training workshop.</p> <p>Besides, the training workshops and opportunities provided by UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK, we thank the Committee for pointing to the importance of certified training programs and we acknowledge that this would be a strengthening addition to the training and development of the academic team and as such the School and the University are committed to support the continuous development of the academics on technical and pedagogical tools and skills, that will further enhance the provision of e-learning</p>	
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<p>2) The University has a very detailed workload policy document. Still, its operationalization could have been underpinned by a more structured and transparent system.</p>	<p>The School operates an academic workload model, which follows an interactive process of defining the academics' yearly workload and considers each academic's individual plans. The structured approach and transparency of the workload model is ensured by following University-wide standards, but it is also personalised depending on the planned activities of each member of the academic team. This is done during the appraisal period before the start of the academic year, where the academic completes the workload and appraisal document enlisting all activities (teaching, research, and admin). This is then discussed in detail during the meeting with the line manager and once agreed the workload is submitted. Note that the workload model is revisited during the academic year to control for changes in planned or unplanned activities.</p> <p>As a result, the workload model provides the necessary foundations and processes to be able to adjust the distribution of academics' time among teaching (e.g., delivery of lectures, assessment marking, student support, student feedback, etc.), research and administrative duties.</p> <p>The standard target distribution of the academics' workload hours is 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% administration, but during the annual review, other adjustments can be made according to the academic's research output and engagement. The workload model considers several aspects of the responsibilities of the academics on the aforementioned three areas, including:</p> <p>Teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Regular Teaching Hours • Direct Evening/Weekend Teaching Hours • Direct Distance Learning Hours • Preparation for Modules (conventional and distance learning delivery) • Coursework assessment marking, verification, and moderation • Undergraduate and Postgraduate thesis supervision • Annual curriculum update <p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantity and Quality of Scientific Publications (includes factors such as journal quality, length of work, number of authors and first authorship, monographs, etc.). 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparation of research bidding (includes factors such as type/size of proposal, first submission/re-submission, contribution to proposal writing, academic's role (principal investigator, local coordinator, work package leader, scientific contributor, etc.)). ○ PhD external supervision ● Scholarly Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External research activities (e.g., organisation/delivery/chairing of research seminars, research conferences, workshops, and round tables) ○ Peer Esteem activities (e.g., editors of journals, reviewers for journals, participation in external research committees/boards) ● Research Income generated activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External Research Funding (e.g., EU, RIF) ○ Contract Research ○ Research Exploitation ○ Research Consultancy <p>Administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course Leadership ● Module Leadership ● Personal Tutoring/Academic Advising ● Office Hours ● Preparation/Validation of new courses ● Preparation of paperwork for minor changes or re-validation of existing courses ● Panel membership ● Lead/Participation in University Committees ● Other administrative activities (team meetings, assessment board attendance, training sessions, e-mail enquiries by students, data input, report preparation, attendance and student at risk monitoring and input, writing references for students, etc.). <p>Once the workload model is prepared, academics who are above the allocated 40% research-active, can request a teaching reduction and increase in research allocation hours. It is the responsibility of the academic and the Head of School to ensure during the annual review meeting that academics are allocated the needed time to conduct research and be productive in this area. This is a transparent process as we consider it important for the sustainability</p>	
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	and strengthening of our research environment, and as such, we are committed in continuing and improving.	
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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	For official use Only
<p>1) The EEC would like to note the low response ratio of online surveys (15-20%), which raises doubts of the reliability of the feedback collected from students and in turn of the effectiveness of the specific measures for improvement and actions plans taken by the University. The evaluation form can be shortened, so that it is easier for more students to complete it.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that the response rate is low, and the University is taking various actions to provide incentives to students. These have been covered in point 1.5 (see pages 6-7 above).</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>2) More sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning are encouraged to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly recommended in light of the University's plans to expand by increasing its academic portfolio and the number of online students.</p>	<p>With the School's and University's plan to expand its academic portfolio and grow its number of online students, the use of such sophisticated learning analytics mechanisms, such as AI and machine learning, is considered highly important. As the volume of student cohort increases, it will become more challenging for tutors to monitor student engagement and provide personalised feedback to each student for formative assessment components. We acknowledge that learning analytics can help to fill this gap by providing automated feedback and intervention to support students who may be struggling. To this end, therefore, the University is committed to investing in Machine Learning resources to predict student performance and dropout as soon as student numbers justify this.</p> <p>Currently, however, we use the below student performance and engagement mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via blackboard metrics (as mentioned in point 2.4. above), tutors can easily determine which students engaged with materials and when they engaged, thus giving them a clear image of who is not interacting with the course • Formative assessments: formative assessments (as explained in point 2.4 above – see pages 11-12) are also helpful in identifying students' engagement with the program, the modules, and materials. As such, they are a valuable tool in quickly identifying students that have not been engaging and are contacted by their tutor or course leader. • The SEAM meetings: The Student Support Services office, along with tutors, collects information for online students and then the School SEAM Board (Student Engagement 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>and Attendance Monitoring Board) convenes to evaluate each case separately. The SEAM board takes place every couple of months during which all students-at-risk are discussed (students-at-risk are identified in relation to attendance, interaction, and academic performance), and actions are taken to contact and provide support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advisor scheme: each academic advisor informs the course leader and the SEAM in case a student is struggling or has not been engaging. <p>The above tools have been critical to predict student performance and potential dropouts, allowing tutors to intervene early and provide support or any other corrective measures timely. In addition to the above that are already implemented, such as blackboard metrics, automatic grades for online quizzes, rubrics for self-assessment on activities, the university considers the use of learning analytics mechanisms as important assets in online education and can significantly benefit students and tutors. As numbers of online students grow, the use of AI and machine learning tools will also increase and we will act accordingly, as the University is committed towards student progression, support, and retention and to investigate more advanced on-line systems to complement our existing LMS (Blackboard).</p>	
<p>3) Despite references to corrective measures during the meetings, the specific corrective measures were neither shown nor the positive impact in terms of improvement of student success.</p>	<p>As a University and School, we take a proactive approach to addressing issues or suggestions for improvement and continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions or actions taken. Through the years, and in response to student and tutor feedback, there have been several actions taken and tasks completed in relation to improving student engagement, student attainment and, thus, progression. These actions refer to, for example, increasing the number and variety of online guest speakers, organising more online social events or get-together meetings, international field trips, enhancing the online resources repository at the Library, resolving issues with accessing materials due to Library changes or Blackboard updates, improving student feedback/communication between tutors and online students (such as online office hours), enhancing the role and interaction with academic advisors, introducing specific workshops or seminars following student demand, providing more useful videos on all the available resources available to students and how to access them and many more.</p> <p>The above are examples of specific measures taken as a result of the University's Annual Monitoring process of student engagement, attainment and progression that emanated from both student and tutor feedback. The annual monitoring process involves collating student feedback via MFQs and Student-Staff-</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>Liaison-Committee (SSLC) meetings (i.e. a live student feedback forum whereby course student reps share feedback with the Head of School and academics), as well as feedback from academic members of staff via the Course Leader and the Module Leader Continuous Course and Module Enhancement Reports.</p> <p>Apart from the MFQs, all the above feedback fora involve the collation of <u>Action Grids</u>, whereby specific actions are assigned to responsible members of staff for implementing these actions. Finally, the progress and outcomes from these actions are clearly explained, and the status is constantly updated until completed. The results from actions undertaken are then communicated to students by uploading them on blackboard (on the MBA EL general blackboard space).</p>	
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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) The EEC suggests that some considerations should be given to the provision of entire volumes as basic materials in some courses it is recommended that the relevant parts of these volumes be identified to students, in order to facilitate students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the EEC for pointing out this very important improvement for our Program. It is a priority for us to ensure that students can get a solid understanding of the key concepts and ideas within the course without being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of material.</p> <p>As such, we have revised the Module Descriptors (see Appendix I) and “Essential Reading” has been refined to indicate <i>specific</i> relevant chapters or pages. This will also contribute to student motivation as they will be able to effectively see the relevance and practicality of the topics they are studying.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose an item.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>In this report, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) provides feedback on the Masters in Business Administration programme that is currently offered by the University of Central Lancashire Cyprus. The report outlines the key findings, identifies the program's strengths, and proposes actions for improvement. The EEC believes that the programme team should carefully consider the recommendation made with regards to the programme structure and content as per our feedback in section 1.</p>	<p>The academic team has carefully considered the valuable suggestions and recommendations received from EEC and has revised the programme's structure (see Table 2 in Appendix I) in order to ensure that the content will provide our future MBA students with a comprehensive and rigorous education.</p> <p>We are highly committed to continuously improving and enhancing all aspects of our programme to ensure that it meets the changing demands and needs of our MBA students and the business community. It is our intention to persistently advance and upgrade our modules, the learning environment, and all professional development activities preparing our MBAs for future success.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>The EEC hopes that the feedback will be useful in shaping future developments and maintaining a strong program. The EEC wishes the best for the UCLan Cyprus team as they continue to improve the program. If the CYQAA needs clarification on any points raised in the report, the EEC is readily available. Finally, the EEC thanks the CYQAA coordinator for efficiently managing the evaluation process, and for his exemplary facilitation that ensured a smooth evaluation.</p>	<p>We would again like to express our appreciative thanks to the committee for their valuable input and contributions to our program.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr Anthi Avloniti	Course Leader of MBA E-Learning	
Dr Panayiotis Kontakos	Course Leader of MBA	
Prof Loukas Glyptis	Head of School of Business and Management	
Dr Cosmina Theodoulou	Chair of UCLan Cyprus Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	

Date: 3/05/2023

