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Date: Date.

# External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** CDA College
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Executive Secretarial Studies (2 Years, 120 ECTS,  
Diploma)

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

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) invited the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) to evaluate the programme “Executive Secretarial Studies (2 Years, 120 ECTS, Diploma)”, offered by C.D.A. College at its Pafos campus (the programme is also offered in Limassol).

The EEC consisted of the following members:

Professor Frank Figge, ESCP Business School (France) – Chair of the Committee

Professor Periklis Gogas, Democritus University of Thrace (Greece)

Associate Professor Andrea Thorpe, Universidade Católica Business School (Portugal)

Mrs. Natalia Konstantina Daliani, Graduate Student, University of Cyprus (Cyprus) – Student Representative

The evaluation of the programme at the Pafos campus took place on 16 February 2026, as part of the two-day external evaluation process conducted across multiple campuses of C.D.A. College. Prior to the onsite visit, the EEC was provided with comprehensive documentation, which was carefully reviewed in advance.

The visit began with a meeting with the senior management of the institution and members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC), in accordance with the official evaluation schedule. The following participants were present:

Athanasios Christoforou – Chairman

Karolina Kyprianou – Director, C.D.A. Pafos Campus

Dr. Pavlos Panayi – Chairman of the IEC & General Director

Dr. Andreas Tofaris – Director of the “Aristotle Research Centre” and Member of the IEC

Efstathios Michael – General Director, C.D.A. Pafos Campus & Member of the IEC

Athena Koliandri – Director of International Affairs & Member of the IEC

Katerina Kyriakidou – Director, C.D.A. College Nicosia & Member of the IEC

Dr. George Mbosmalis – Head of the Programme of Study

During this session, the institution presented its structure, strategic planning, mission, and development processes, including quality assurance mechanisms and links with society.

The EEC then met with the Head of the Programme and the Coordination Committee specifically regarding the Executive Secretarial Studies (2 Years, 120 ECTS, Diploma) programme, as foreseen in the evaluation programme. The discussion covered:

Intended learning outcomes and ECTS allocation

Structure and content of the curriculum

Student-centred learning methodologies

Assessment practices

Practical training components

Admission criteria and progression rules

Student performance indicators

Graduate employment prospects

Internal feedback and quality improvement mechanisms

Particular emphasis was placed on compliance with ESG standards concerning programme design and development, student-centred learning and teaching, and student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

The EEC subsequently held a meeting exclusively with members of the teaching staff at the Pafos campus, in line with the scheduled meetings. The following staff members participated:

Dr. George Bosmalis – International Relations Specialist

Dorita Chrysanthou – HR

Dr. Andreas Masouras – Public Relations / Law / Management

Demetra Christofi – English Language

Tryfonas Moysi – Accountant

Chara Kyriakou – Secretarial Studies

Georgia Pavlou – Russian Language

Anasia Sokratous – Psychologist

Dr. Christos Papademetriou – HR / Management / IT

During this session, teaching staff presented their qualifications, research interests, and teaching responsibilities. The discussion addressed course design, learning outcomes, assessment methods, alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), teaching materials, prescribed bibliography, and the integration of practical and theoretical components. Compliance with ESG standards relating to teaching staff and student-centred learning was examined.

The EEC then met exclusively with students and graduates of the programme, as predetermined in the evaluation schedule. The following students participated:

Daria Suhavierha – Secretarial Studies, 2-year student

Marina Varnavidou – Secretarial Studies, 2-year student

Dayana Stavreva – Secretarial Studies, 1-year student

(The broader student meeting also included students from related programmes; however, the discussion addressed issues relevant to Executive Secretarial Studies.)

Students were encouraged to express their views openly regarding teaching quality, workload, assessment methods, access to resources, communication with faculty, practical training opportunities, and overall satisfaction with the programme.

A separate meeting was held with members of the administrative staff at the Pafos campus, in accordance with the official schedule. The following staff members were present:

Demetra Constantinidou – Senior Registrar, Student Affairs

Rebekka Facondi – Executive Officer & Erasmus Coordinator

Katerina Christou – Secretary

Alexia Charalambous – Librarian

The discussion focused on student admission procedures, progression monitoring, certification processes, Erasmus mobility, student welfare, and library and support services, in line with ESG standards concerning student support and learning resources.

The EEC also visited the premises of the Pafos campus, including teaching rooms, computer laboratories, and the library facilities. Discussions regarding infrastructure and support services were held with:

Karolina Kyprianou – Director, C.D.A. College Pafos

Andri Ioannou – Faculty Administrator

Throughout the visit, the EEC had the opportunity to examine documentation, review assessment materials, and engage in constructive discussions with all relevant stakeholders. The questions raised by the Committee focused on the coherence of the programme, the adequacy of resources, the alignment of learning outcomes with assessment methods, and the employability prospects of graduates.

The site visit concluded with internal deliberations of the EEC before proceeding to the next campus, in accordance with the official evaluation schedule.



The Committee would also like to express its sincere appreciation to Mr. George Aletraris, Education Officer at the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), for the flawless organisation and excellent preparation of the evaluation process.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Frank Figge	Professor	ESCP Business School (France)
Periklis Gogas	Professor	Democritus University of Thrace (Greece)
Andrea Thorpe	Associate Professor	Universidade Católica Business School (Portugal)
Natalia Konstantina Daliani	Graduate Student	University of Cyprus (Cyprus)
<b>Name</b>	Position	University
<b>Name</b>	Position	University

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  - (a) sub-areas*
  - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

### **Findings**

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

### **Strengths**

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

### **Sub-areas**

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

### **1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

#### Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- *benefits from external expertise*
- *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
  - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
  - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
  - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
  - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - *selection criteria*
  - *intended learning outcomes*

- *qualification awarded*
- *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- *pass rates*
- *learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

*In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that*

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

## 1.4 Information management

### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b)*

*whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*

- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The College has established a formal quality assurance system at institutional level. Quality assurance policies and procedures are described in the application and appear stable and embedded within the governance structure of the institution. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQC) is formally constituted, with defined membership, responsibilities, and meeting procedures. The Committee is responsible for overseeing programme development, monitoring academic standards, coordinating self-evaluation reports, and ensuring compliance with national quality assurance requirements.

Formal quality assurance structures are clearly articulated at institutional level, including internal monitoring mechanisms such as faculty evaluation processes, classroom observations, student evaluation forms, programme reviews, and regular academic meetings. These structures indicate that quality assurance is not ad hoc but institutionally organized and regulated.

The programme documentation includes clearly stated objectives and intended learning outcomes. The purpose of the Diploma in Executive Secretarial Studies is defined in professional and academic terms, outlining the knowledge, skills, and competences students are expected to acquire. The intended learning outcomes are described in relation to subject knowledge, practical skills, and professional readiness, and are presented in the submitted material in alignment with the qualification level.

The curriculum structure is coherent and aligned with the stated qualification level and ECTS workload requirements. The programme comprises 120 ECTS credits distributed across two academic years, including compulsory courses, electives, and practical training. The structure of the programme, as presented in the course distribution tables, demonstrates consistency between workload, contact hours, and credit allocation.

Public information regarding the programme, including course content, admission requirements, assessment procedures, and programme structure, is made available through institutional documentation and the College Prospectus. The transparency of core academic information contributes to clarity for prospective and current students.

Stakeholder involvement in programme development is referenced in the application. The College indicates that employers, industry professionals, alumni, and other stakeholders contribute to curriculum updates and programme rebuilding processes. This reflects an awareness of labour market needs and professional expectations. At the same time, stakeholder demands—particularly from industry—highlight the importance of ensuring that course content remains up to date and responsive to evolving administrative technologies and workplace practices.

With regard to Artificial Intelligence (AI), the College acknowledges the growing importance of AI within the professional environment and has begun incorporating related elements into certain courses. However, the institution appears to be in a transitional phase regarding the systematic integration of AI into the curriculum. During the review process, it was observed that issues of AI use and plagiarism are sometimes treated as equivalent. While both relate to academic integrity,

they represent distinct pedagogical and ethical challenges. The College is still developing a coherent institutional approach to addressing AI use in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Overall, the programme demonstrates established and structured quality assurance mechanisms, clearly articulated objectives and learning outcomes, an ECTS-aligned curriculum, publicly available programme information, and reference to stakeholder engagement, while ongoing curricular modernization—particularly regarding emerging technologies—remains an area of continued development.

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

A key strength of the programme lies in its long-standing operation and its close connection to the long history of the College. The Diploma in Executive Secretarial Studies is a well-established programme with institutional continuity and accumulated experience in its delivery. This longevity contributes to its stability, recognisability, and credibility within the local educational landscape.

The programme benefits from a good reputation in the local labour market. Evidence indicates that graduates secure employment relatively quickly after completion of their studies, often shortly after graduation. Strong relationships with employers and stakeholders, including internship providers and local businesses, appear to facilitate smooth transition into employment and enhance graduate employability.

The structure of the programme is well established and stable. Course delivery follows a clearly defined semester system, and teaching responsibilities appear consistent over time, contributing to continuity in academic provision. The stability of the teaching staff further supports coherent programme implementation and institutional memory.

The curriculum is clearly structured and aligned with the duration of the programme (two academic years, 120 ECTS). The distribution of courses across semesters demonstrates logical sequencing and progressive development of knowledge and skills. The inclusion of practical training in the final semester further strengthens the applied orientation of the qualification.

A defined assessment framework is in place, combining continuous assessment and final examinations within a clearly articulated semester structure. Examination periods, grading criteria, and progression rules are formally described, providing transparency and predictability for students.

Finally, formal approval, monitoring, and review procedures are described at institutional level. The existence of documented quality assurance mechanisms, including internal committee structures and structured academic oversight, supports systematic governance of the programme and contributes to its overall stability and consistency.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

While the programme benefits from stability and established structures, certain areas require further attention to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards and responsiveness to evolving sector demands.

Firstly, the teaching load of some members of the teaching staff appears high. During the review process, teaching hours of up to 28 contact hours per week were reported on certain campuses. Such workloads may exceed recommended limits and could affect teaching quality, preparation time, curriculum development, and professional development activities. The College is strongly encouraged to review staff workload allocation in line with the recommendations of the accreditation authority, ensuring that teaching hours remain within sustainable limits and support high-quality academic delivery.

Secondly, although elements of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have been introduced in certain modules, the College currently lacks a clearly articulated institutional policy regarding AI in teaching, learning, and assessment. The handling of AI-related issues appears at times to be conflated with plagiarism policies, despite the fact that AI use and plagiarism represent distinct academic and pedagogical challenges. The College is encouraged to develop a coherent, forward-looking policy that addresses AI use transparently, distinguishing between acceptable pedagogical use, academic integrity concerns, and assessment design implications. Such a policy should be formally documented and communicated to both staff and students.

Related to this, when considering future curriculum updates or redesign of existing modules, teaching staff should systematically reflect on how AI tools and automation are reshaping the professional roles for which graduates are being prepared. Many administrative functions are increasingly supported or transformed by AI-enabled technologies. Therefore, courses should integrate relevant digital competencies and critical understanding of AI-enhanced workflows where appropriate. While there was some evidence of good practice in this regard (for example in IT-related teaching on certain campuses), these initiatives should be accelerated, formalized, and disseminated across all relevant modules to ensure consistency and strategic coherence.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, although the application references collaboration with employers and industry representatives, there is limited documented evidence of systematic employer survey analysis. Regular, structured collection and documented analysis of employer feedback would strengthen curriculum relevance and provide measurable input for programme

improvement. The College is encouraged to establish formal employer feedback cycles with documented outcomes and action plans.

Similarly, the application does not provide documented evidence of a formal alumni tracking mechanism, even though support staff indicated that informal contact with graduates exists. Establishing a structured alumni database and systematic graduate follow-up process would enable more robust evaluation of employment outcomes and long-term programme effectiveness.

Furthermore, there is no documented evidence of published graduate employment statistics or systematic long-term Key Performance Indicator (KPI) trend analysis (e.g. enrolment trends, progression rates, completion rates, employment rates). While anecdotal evidence suggests strong employability outcomes, transparent publication and internal analysis of such data would significantly enhance evidence-based quality assurance and strategic planning.

Finally, while formal policies and procedures are described at institutional level, there appears to be uneven awareness and implementation in practice among some staff members. It is important that all documented policies—particularly those relating to quality assurance, curriculum review, and academic integrity—are clearly communicated, regularly discussed, and consistently followed. Strengthening internal communication and policy dissemination would enhance institutional coherence and compliance.

Overall, the recommended improvements focus on strengthening strategic planning, workload sustainability, data-driven quality assurance, structured stakeholder engagement, and systematic integration of AI into curriculum development, thereby ensuring that the programme remains robust, forward-looking, and aligned with accreditation standards.

**Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:**

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

### Sub-areas

**2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

**2.2 Practical training**

**2.3 Student assessment**

### **2.0 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

#### Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

### **2.1 Practical training**

#### Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

## 2.2 Student assessment

### Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- **Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?**
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- **Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?**
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has noted that the programme has a structured and coherent approach to teaching, learning, and assessment. The framework of assessment incorporates, continuous, assessment and final examinations, which gives students the opportunity to show the achievement of intended learning outcomes through a variety of assessment methods. The re-examination opportunities and student appeals procedures are formally defined and documented within institutional regulations.

The students are given information on their rights and responsibilities, including procedures for complaints and grievances. The EEC observed that students are actively involved in institutional quality processes through evaluation procedures targeting teaching staff, administrative staff. However, although evaluation procedures are in place, there is limited evidence on the analysis of data and the documentation of corrective measures when performance criteria are not met.

Other observations made include:

- The teaching staff members are actively involved in self-evaluation processes at the course level, which helps in reflective teaching practices and the improvement of teaching delivery.
- The departmental meetings are held on a regular basis, which helps in academic coordination, program-related issues, and monitoring of teaching and learning processes.

- The institutional meetings are also held at the college level, which helps in communication, alignment, and the dissemination of academic and administrative information on the campus.
- The teaching staff members receive feedback on their teaching activities, which helps in professional reflection and the development of teaching effectiveness.

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

The programme is also strengthened by the presence of transparent grading and assessment policies that are well defined and communicated to students. This is an important aspect that contributes to a clear understanding of academic expectations, assessment criteria, and performance standards.

The examination periods are also well-structured and formally scheduled, which is an important aspect that supports predictability, academic organization, and effective study planning. This clarity is also important in enhancing the students' ability to manage their workload and prepare well for assessment requirements.

In addition, the structure of the assessment components is also documented. This is an important aspect that supports consistency, fairness, and the overall transparency of the assessment process. The transparency of the assessment weightings is also important as it allows students to understand the relative importance of different assessment elements and supports a fair approach to academic assessment.

The EEC has identified some of the notable strengths as follows:

- Open grading and assessment criteria, leading to fairness, consistency, and clarity in the assessment process
- A clear and well-structured examination schedule, leading to predictability and effective academic planning
- A documented and transparent assessment weighting structure, adding to clarity and students' understanding of the assessment priorities
- Institutional support for staff development, including workload and financial support where appropriate

Moreover, the programme shows a high level of responsiveness to individual students' needs. The institution shows an appropriate level of sensitivity and support in cases where students face financial problems. Relevant factors are considered, and appropriate actions may be taken, if applicable, to address individual needs.

The EEC also highlighted that the institution fosters a culture of accessibility and approachability. This culture seems to be encouraged by an open-door policy, with both teaching and administrative staff being viewed as accessible. Students felt comfortable when approaching staff members for academic or administrative support, suggesting a supportive and student-friendly institutional environment.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

While the programme shows a great deal of alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), there are areas that the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has identified as needing a greater degree of formalization and documentation to improve the effectiveness of the institution. These areas include, but are not limited to, the need to improve the processes that exist between student feedback and improvements in teaching and learning practices.

The main recommendations of the EEC are as follows:

- The processes involved in the post-evaluation of teaching staff performance need to be further formalized and documented. There should be clear procedures on how the results of the evaluation are reviewed, monitored, and implemented as professional development.
- The institution should have clear and auditable evidence on how student feedback is collected, analyzed, and effectively utilized in the enhancement of teaching methodologies, course design, and learning activities.
- The placement aspect is viewed as a positive and relevant initiative that is aligned with student expectations and labour market needs. However, its implementation should be flexible and adaptive, considering the different profiles, prior learning, and professional experience of students.
- For students who already meet the placement requirements through employment, alternative academic pathways should be explored. These may include elective modules, project-based learning activities, or Erasmus+ mobility programs.
- Although student support structures are in place, better communication channels should be explored to ensure that students are aware of which campus services to contact depending on the nature of their academic or administrative concerns.
- Collaboration between campuses is encouraged, especially through the establishment of shared repositories of teaching resources, case studies, and examples of good practice. This may help improve consistency, innovation, and knowledge exchange among teaching staff.

- Teaching staff are encouraged to consider the responsible, ethical, and sound integration of AI-enabled tools to improve teaching resources, learning activities, and student engagement, ensuring alignment with academic integrity principles.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

### 3.0 Teaching staff recruitment and development

#### Standards

- Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

### 3.1 Teaching staff number and status

#### Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

### 3.2 Synergies of teaching and research

#### Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

- **Recruitment:** Procedures for teaching staff are formally described, nonetheless, the EEC is not convinced that they are followed in practice. The ECC did not see any evidence of that in any position already recruited.
- **Staff qualifications:** Faculty appointments are contingent upon academic and professional credentials that align with, or exceed in some cases, the specific requirements of the programme's cognitive level. The ECC believes that they are appropriate to the programme level.
- **Professional development:** relevant opportunities are mentioned in institutional policies and also several members of the teaching staff reported that they did participate in the past or they are now scheduled to participate in professional development programmes. Moreover, they seem to be genuinely enthusiastic in participating to professional development programmes.
- **Longevity and Stability:** The institution benefits from a highly stable workforce, with many staff members employed for over 10 years, and some spanning 20 to 30 years.
- **Institutional Culture:** There is a palpable sense of "family" within the college; staff report high levels of happiness to be members of the "family" and participate actively in the institutional culture and rapport with one another.
- **Recruitment Discrepancy:** While formal recruitment procedures are documented, they are not followed in practice; hiring is largely driven by the college owner's discretion rather than the established transparent processes.
- **Policy Gaps (AI):** There is no dedicated official policy regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in coursework; currently, AI issues are informally attached to the existing Plagiarism policy.
- **Workload Concerns:** Many teaching staff carry excessive workloads, with classroom time alone reaching 22, 25, or 28 hours per week, excluding preparation and marking.
- **External Commitments:** Some staff members hold additional teaching positions at other colleges on top of their full load at CDA.
- **Research Integration:** Although the "Aristotle" research centre has been established as per CYQAA requirements, its practical application in teaching, learning, or staff development remains unclear and mostly limited. There is no clear strategic vision of how the research centre and its activities can be used by college members and enhance the teaching and learning activities and experience for both the students and the teachers of the college.

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### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

- **Real world experience:** The teaching staff seems to have the necessary academic and applied business experience in relation to the courses they teach. They do not seem isolated from the market.
- **High Staff Motivation:** Teaching staff demonstrates strong commitment and high levels of satisfaction within their roles despite the long hours of teaching time.

- **Strong Rapport:** The "family" atmosphere fosters an environment where students feel exceptionally comfortable approaching any member of the teaching or administrative staff for support regarding their studies, administrative issues or personal issues that they may have.
- **Experience:** The long tenure of the staff ensures a deep-rooted understanding of the college's history and student demographic.
- **Small Class Sizes:** A favourable teacher-to-student ratio (typically 7–8 students per class) allows for personalized instruction.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

#### 1. Research

- The EEC did not find any documented evidence of structured linkage between research output, current research trends in the relevant fields or the "Aristotle" research centre with course delivery, teaching staff development and student exposure to relevant research.
- We acknowledge that in this field and level of study the link between research and teaching can be difficult to establish. Nonetheless, especially teaching staff must be exposed to relevant research in their field, even if they do not actively participate in research. This will ensure that they deliver to their students the state-of-the-art relative to their subjects of study.
- The EEC did not encounter any documented evidence or specific policy regarding the workload distribution balancing teaching and research.

#### 2. Teaching

- The EEC is very concerned about the high number of teaching hours for some staff members. This needs to be addressed and teaching hours need to be brought in line at least with the requirements for maximum teaching hours of the accreditation agency (CYQAA) and international best practices and standards. This will prevent burnout and ensure the quality of instruction; 25–28 hours of class time is unsustainable.
- **Research-Teaching Synergy:** The institution needs to provide documented evidence of how the "Aristotle" research centre relates to course delivery and keeps staff updated on recent developments in their fields.
- **Market Competitiveness:** Staff should be required to incorporate recent industry developments into their curricula to maintain a competitive advantage in the Cyprus market.

#### 3. Recruitment

- The EEC identified a significant gap between the official policy and the actual administrative practice.

- Adherence to Recruitment Policy: The college must move away from owner-centric hiring and strictly follow the "fair, transparent, and clear" recruitment processes described in their official documentation.
- A formal process protects the college from the perception that hires are made based on personal loyalty rather than teaching or research excellence.
- For accreditation, the application of the rules in place is just as important as the existence of the rule.
- Given that the market is highly saturated, the CDA, to remain competitive in the Cyprus market, must demonstrate to stakeholders (students, parents, and the CYQAA) that its faculty were chosen through a rigorous, merit-based competitive procedures.
- While the "family" atmosphere and high staff motivation are strengths, they can become a weakness if they lead to a "too comfortable" environment where professional standards are relaxed, ambition is restricted and personal development is impaired. Especially for a competitive environment as the one the CDA college operates, this is very important for sustainability.
- Formalizing recruitment ensures that new "family members" are brought in based on their ability to contribute to innovation, teaching methods and research activity rather than just fitting in personally.

#### 4. Other recommendations

- **AI Policy Development:** A formal, standalone policy for AI usage in education should be developed to move beyond the limitations of the standard plagiarism policy.
  - To align with the educational standards of the CYQAA and the ESG (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area), CDA College must modernize its regulatory framework regarding AI.
  - The current reliance on a general plagiarism policy is insufficient for the complexities of Generative AI.
  - Students must be prepared for the competitive Cyprus market. A robust AI policy allows the college to teach students how to use AI responsibly, professionally and ethically, creating a competitive advantage.
  - Standard plagiarism policies focus on "copying" work. AI usage often involves "unauthorized assistance" or "content generation" that doesn't always trigger traditional plagiarism detectors, creating a grey area for both staff and students.
- **Erasmus Participation:** The teaching staff should be encouraged and supported to participate more actively in Erasmus mobility programs to enhance their professional development to both their and their students' benefit.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

##### Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

##### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

###### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

##### 4.2 Student progression

###### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

##### 4.3 Student recognition

###### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

#### 4.4 Student certification

##### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

##### Findings

Overall, the regulations for student admission are clear and transparently communicated, especially online. The helpfulness of the front-line staff is also an asset and they are equipped to direct student enquiries for any walk in enquires. To a great extent, geographical proximity drives student choice.

Students enter the college in a variety of ways, but all are well established. For example, the course is presented at student fairs and also by representatives of the college who go into high schools to talk to prospective students. This is well established and processes are applied consistently.

Progression is clearly communicated by teaching staff and support staff and students are well versed in their options. In some cases students return after several years. For eventual progression to the bachelors programme is dependent upon student mobility as this is currently only offered in Nicosia, despite strong student interest in such progression. It is somewhat unfortunate therefore that – because most students are working alongside their studies – most students will not progress to the bachelors because of geographical constraints.

Internal progression is well documented, with examination systems and re-examinations policies and procedures in clear evidence and transparently communicated.

It was difficult to find clear pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition. It was difficult to establish whether formal and clearly communicated guidelines were in place.

Whilst there was clear enthusiasm from Erasmus staff for the programme to have a greater degree of international mobility amongst its student (and staff) population, students were unsure whether this was an option. However, Erasmus staff clearly maintained links with overseas institutions. Furthermore, there are clear and proactive links between the college and other appropriate institutions to ensure national recognition. The college is well established in this respect and has a good reputation.

Students each receive a certificate that clearly states the qualification gained, the level and credits attained, etc after the completion of the studies. Transcripts are kept by the college for six years, after which they are archived centrally, but which are still accessible by students.

The college remains “close” to their alumni: They know where they work etc. However, whilst mindful of data protection laws, records are not systematically kept.

### Strengths

- With the exception of whether prior learning (in all/some cases, as below) is taken into account, there is a transparent admission framework, communicated clearly in the materials given to prospective students.
- The requirements for graduation are clearly defined and communicated.
- Internal progression is also clearly defined and communicated.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

- The application does not provide documented evidence of recognition procedures explicitly aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Again, the program's small size enables a more advanced hoc approach to be taken in terms of the recognition for prior learning, work experience etc. However, the EEC would like to see more formal documentation in place that is clearly communicated to students. Whilst there might be an implicit understanding that ECTS credits can be used without such documentation, the circumstances of transferring credits cannot be assumed (e.g. credits from vastly different courses). Further, the relevancy of work experience is likely to be considered on an individual basis, but this should still be communicated clearly to prospective students. Thus, the EEC would like to see some

formalized procedures and documentation established – in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention – that are also clearly communicated to prospective students.

- The application does not provide documented evidence of progression, completion, or drop-out statistics. During the EEC visit, support staff communicated that some support systems are in place but noted these were not very well formalized or structured or digitalized. The EEC recommends that the college should consider adopting IT management systems to digitalize – and somewhat formalize – the tracking of progression, completion and drop-outs. Support and administrative staff expressed strong support for this and, as the college expands, it will become essential.
- The application does not provide documented evidence of Diploma Supplement issuance aligned with European standards. The EEC recommends that this is rectified.

Overall, the recommendations prioritize more systematic document keeping. Digitalization will go some way to rectify this in that it will ‘force’, or at least strongly encourage processes to formalize record keeping and to introduce more systematic documentation that can be more easily communicated.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Partially compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Partially compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

### **Sub-areas**

#### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **5.2 Physical resources**

#### **5.3 Human support resources**

#### **5.4 Student support**

### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **Standards**

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

### **5.2 Physical resources**

#### **Standards**

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

### **5.3 Human support resources**

#### **Standards**

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

## 5.4 Student support

### Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The teaching facilities and IT infrastructure available are generally adequate to support the delivery of the programme. Classrooms are appropriately equipped with projectors, screens, air-conditioning units, whiteboards and sufficient seating capacity. The computer laboratory includes networked computers with updated operating systems and standard office software applications relevant to the programme's learning objectives. Wireless internet access is available to students, and administrative offices are supported by appropriate technological equipment. Overall, the existing infrastructure supports the operational needs of the programme; however, continued and systematic modernization of hardware, software, and digital tools will be necessary to ensure alignment with evolving technological standards and workplace requirements.

Library resources are available through the College's multi-campus library system, including physical collections, interlibrary loan arrangements, and access to electronic databases such as EBSCO and Emerald. The library provides structured classification systems and digital cataloguing tools. While the breadth of resources appears satisfactory in relation to the size of the student body, it was observed that the physical library space is currently under-utilized. The extent to which students actively use the library facilities as a study and research environment appears limited, suggesting potential for improved engagement strategies or enhanced integration of library services into coursework.

Administrative and academic support structures are clearly described in the application. Defined roles exist for academic coordination, quality assurance, internship supervision, and programme management. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee, departmental meetings, and structured administrative processes provide a formal framework for programme oversight. Administrative services include admissions support, student registration processes, examination procedures, and welfare services. These structures demonstrate a defined governance and support system at institutional level.

Student support mechanisms are outlined comprehensively at institutional level. The College provides student welfare services, counselling support, assistance with accommodation, financial aid schemes, scholarship opportunities, and participation in student representation bodies. Procedures addressing attendance, academic progress, disciplinary matters, and complaints are formally documented. Students are informed of their rights and obligations through institutional regulations and the College Prospectus. These mechanisms indicate that student support is embedded within the institutional framework rather than limited to the programme level.

With regard to international mobility, the College participates in Erasmus+ activities and maintains international collaborations. However, for students enrolled in this programme, mobility opportunities appear limited in practice, although many students showed enthusiasm in principle. Many students combine their studies with employment or other personal responsibilities, which reduces flexibility for participation in exchange programmes. Furthermore, differences in academic expectations and learning environments between institutions may present additional challenges.

As a result, while mobility structures formally exist, the practical uptake and feasibility for students in this programme remain constrained.

Finally, the College acknowledges the importance of Artificial Intelligence and has begun integrating AI-related elements into certain courses. Nevertheless, as is the case in many higher education institutions, the systematic and pedagogically coherent inclusion of AI across the curriculum remains a developing area. The programme appears to be in a transitional phase, where awareness of AI's importance is evident, but structured integration, staff training, and clearly articulated learning outcomes related to AI are still evolving.

Overall, the programme benefits from established learning resources and institutional support mechanisms, while ongoing modernization, enhanced resource utilization, strengthened mobility implementation, and clearer strategic integration of emerging technologies remain areas of continued development.

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

- The physical learning environment constitutes a clear strength of the programme. Classrooms are well maintained, appropriately equipped, and provide a comfortable and pleasant environment conducive to learning. IT laboratories are functional, organized, and not overcrowded, supporting effective delivery of practical components of the curriculum. The overall physical infrastructure creates a positive educational atmosphere for students.
- Although some library resources may benefit from continued modernization, the physical library spaces themselves represent a valuable asset. They offer significant potential for further development as dynamic learning hubs that could enhance independent study and collaborative learning. The presence of committed and dedicated library staff further strengthens this area, providing a solid foundation for future enhancement and modernization of services.
- There was little evidence that students expressed unmet needs regarding additional specialist software or advanced technological tools to support their learning. The existing technological resources appear to be aligned with programme requirements. At the same time, certain initiatives, such as the provision of Russian language training, demonstrate responsiveness to specific student or regional needs and illustrate the institution's capacity to adapt its offerings where appropriate.
- The College demonstrates a clearly defined and structured student support framework at an institutional level. Student welfare services, scholarship schemes, counselling provisions, and participation in committees are formally embedded within institutional procedures. Academic advising structures are available, enabling students to receive guidance regarding academic progress, course selection, and professional development.
- A notable strength of the programme is the strong commitment of both administrative and teaching staff towards supporting students. During the review process, evidence indicated a

student-focused culture, characterized by accessibility of staff, willingness to provide guidance, and close interaction between students and faculty. This supportive environment contributes positively to student experience and progression. Overall, the programme benefits from a supportive learning environment, well-maintained facilities, dedicated staff, and structured student support mechanisms that collectively enhance the quality of the student experience.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- While the College maintains library facilities across its campuses, their current use and development could be significantly enhanced. The physical spaces appear under-utilized, and several periodical collections (e.g. journals and magazines dating back to the early 2000s) suggest that parts of the collection are outdated. Given the evolving study habits and digital expectations of contemporary students, the College is encouraged to reassess the strategic role of its libraries. Conducting structured student focus groups or surveys could help better understand current needs and expectations. Based on such feedback, the College could modernize both the physical environment (e.g. collaborative spaces, digital access points) and the content strategy (e.g. updated digital subscriptions, current professional publications), thereby transforming the libraries into more dynamic learning environments.
- The application outlines various student support services at institutional level; however, there is limited documented evidence of systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of these services. While support structures exist, formal mechanisms for measuring impact, student satisfaction, and service outcomes are not clearly evidenced. The College is encouraged to implement structured monitoring tools (e.g. annual satisfaction surveys specifically targeting support services, performance indicators, follow-up reports) to ensure that support mechanisms are not only available but demonstrably effective and continuously improved.
- Although the College participates in Erasmus+ activities and international collaborations, the application does not provide documented evidence of structured mobility support mechanisms tailored to this programme. There is limited information on preparatory guidance, academic recognition procedures specific to mobility pathways, or targeted advising for students considering exchanges. The College is encouraged to develop clearer programme-level mobility strategies, including documented procedures, mobility advising, and proactive encouragement of participation, taking into account the constraints faced by working students.
- Furthermore, the application does not provide documented evidence of forward-looking resource planning linked to enrolment trends or projected programme growth. While current resources appear adequate for the existing student body, strategic planning for infrastructure, library development, and digital tools should be clearly aligned with anticipated changes in student numbers or programme expansion. Establishing documented medium- to long-term resource planning mechanisms would strengthen institutional sustainability and compliance with ESG expectations.
- Finally, it is evident that students are well supported in practice, largely due to the relatively small size of the student body and the strong commitment of staff. However, reliance on informal practices and personal familiarity may lead to inconsistencies and limited awareness

of formally established rules and procedures. There appears to be insufficient awareness among some students—and occasionally staff—of documented regulations, rights, and procedural frameworks. The College is encouraged to strengthen communication and training regarding institutional policies, ensuring that procedures are consistently followed and clearly understood. Increased visibility of regulations (e.g. through student handbooks, induction sessions, and staff briefings) would reinforce transparency, fairness, and institutional robustness.

Overall, the recommended improvements focus on strengthening documentation, strategic planning, and systematic evaluation, while building on the College’s existing supportive culture.

**Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:**

<b>Sub-area</b>		<b><i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i></b>
<b>5.1</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Compliant
<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	Student support	Compliant

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
- 6.3 Supervision and committees**

### **6.0 Selection criteria and requirements**

#### Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

### **6.1 Proposal and dissertation**

#### Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

### **6.2 Supervision and committees**

#### Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?

### Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

n/a

### Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

n/a

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

n/a

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

Overall, the programme meets the criteria to be re-accredited. The programme has benefited from many years of input from experienced staff with expertise in their particular fields, supported by, in many cases, a vibrant and enthusiastic support staff. The EEC found many examples of inspiring staff including (but not exclusively) within library, Erasmus and student welfare divisions, who care deeply and genuinely about the students, their learning and welfare -- regardless of whether it is within their job descriptions or not. Similarly, the commitment of administrative staff to the smooth running of the programme and student management is also to be commended. The leadership of the programme across the campuses, is also clearly an asset to the college itself and she will be vital for the implementation of continuous improvements over the coming five years.

Key to moving forward is a theme of modernization. In general terms, some of the buildings and infrastructure could benefit from an upgrade. Library spaces need to be more in tune with the needs of today's students. In this case, the college needs to leverage the enthusiasm and commitment of its staff to 'do better' – both teaching and support staff – to brainstorm and re-imagine how library spaces can bring value added to the student experience. This may involve more digital resources, for example, or a reorganization of the space, but the EEC urges a close collaboration with current students (e.g. in focus groups) to better understand their needs as it is these which should drive the change.

Processes, frameworks and documentation need to be upgraded and digitalized urgently. Indeed, this was expressed consistently across all campuses and job functions as a key need. Whilst computer labs were well equipped and used, technology needs to find a more visible space within the classroom. Teaching staff should be encouraged to collaborate in updating their materials, as simply as using AI tools to generate more engaging slides, gamification, self-assessment quizzes and tests, and other material (e.g. case studies), within the classroom. They should also think about ways in which students can become more comfortable with using AI tools in a general way, as well as in ways that will directly relate to their future roles.

This latter point is especially important. In their professional roles, students will be expected to be comfortable with automated AI driven systems and tools -- and further expected to bring new and innovative knowledge to their workplace to improve existing systems and effectively and efficiently take advantage of this new technology. This was stated clearly and consistently by the external stakeholders who further employ graduates and with whom the EEC met. The EEC encourages cross campus collaboration to aid this process as there are one or two examples of good practice already in place. The IT tutor on the Larnaca campus, for example, already teaches students how to automate calendars and other basic administrative functions. These will need to be advanced as better and newer tools are developed continuously.

In this sense, a balance between proactivity (seeking out new tools and techniques to incorporate within course material) and reactivity (what the market wants, as communicated by employer stakeholders) will be ideal. Clearly this is difficult, but if achieved, has the capacity to enrich the programme and empower its student graduates in the workplace. Again, this will partially depend on the programme's leadership -- and perhaps one or two people who could be identified as 'AI champions' who could also help drive changes within courses -- but also the willingness of teaching staff to embrace change where appropriate. A formal policy will additionally help drive these changes.

Changes to the course content also involves updating the topics taught -- aside from AI -- and in some cases deleting some topic areas. Shorthand, for example, is largely redundant and such deletion was strongly supported by employer stakeholders. The EEC thinks that employer stakeholders could be valuable in an assessment of what topic areas go and stay and perhaps in the development of additional electives.

This latter point leads to the desirability of a re-think of the new placement credited 'course'. Whilst, students, external employers, teaching staff, etc, all thought this was a good idea -- and something which the EEC agrees with -- there is room for more innovation here. For some students, especially those who are already working in an office environment or other context related to the course, such a placement is likely to add nothing to their learning experience. During the campus visit, we heard and discussed alternatives such as a public/private sector placement, additional electives, or an overseas placement (using Erasmus). These are clearly exciting and have the capacity to enrich the programme. The EEC urges the college to profile their students in more detail to see how the needs of all students can be met through a placement or alternative in a way that adds value.

Moving away from modernization per se, the EEC noted that some teaching hours are excessive -- up to 28 hours per week contact time with students. This is a serious concern and exceeds the expectations of the CYQAA that enable time for proper feedback, etc. This needs to be rectified quickly and without negotiation to ensure that all teaching staff teach less than 18 hours per week.

Some procedures that are described in the handbook seem not to be followed in practice. Furthermore, some documentation needs to be better developed or, in some cases, better communicated to students.

Some of the EEC's requested changes might be difficult to leverage, ironically because of the cultural climate at the college overall. The EEC constantly heard words such as "family", "community", etc, and this is somewhat of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, of course a mutually supportive 'happy' 'family' type environment is to be commended and offers much value in terms of generating a deeply pleasant working environment. But on the other hand, it can hinder progress and innovation -- especially when disruptive change is needed, as with various dimensions of modernisation that the EEC is suggesting. One way forward is to leverage the culture that you have into mobilising change, supported by policy development, strong leadership and more collaboration across campuses.



In compiling this report, the EEC has extensively discussed the points we have proposed throughout this document. We hope our visit, on-campus discussions and subsequent report enable a new period of growth and development and we wish you the best of luck going forward.



## E. Signatures of the EEC

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