**Doc. 300.1.1**

**Date:** 01 June 2023

# External Evaluation Report

# (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  College of Tourism and Hotel Management

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

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

  **In Greek:**

  Ξενοδοχειακή Διοίκηση (2 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 120 ECTS, Δίπλωμα)

  **In English:**

  Hotel Administration (2 academic years, 120 ECTS, Diploma)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):** n/a

**ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**
**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

## A. Introduction

*Agenda*

The site visit took place on Tuesday the 30th of May 2023 according to the following schedule of meetings:

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC).
- A meeting with the Director and members of the Internal Evaluation Committee that included a short presentation and subsequent discussion about the College, its mission, structure, and development planning; its quality assurance processes and strategy; and its relations with the society, the industry, and other external stakeholders.
- A meeting with the coordinators of the Diploma in Hotel Administration that included a short presentation and subsequent discussion on the feasibility of the programme and its curriculum (i.e. philosophy, the programme's standards, allocation of courses per semester, weekly content of each course, the learning outcomes and ECTS, teaching methodologies, admission criteria for prospective students, student assessment, final exams, the people involved in the programme's design and development) and the methodology and equipment used in teaching and learning (i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching material, evaluation methods, projects).
- A meeting only with members of the teaching staff on each course of the programme for all the years of study (Q&A session) discussing their CVs (i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, continuous professional development, compliance with staff development goals), on any other duties in the College and teaching obligations in other programmes, the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with learning and teaching objectives), the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the European Qualifications Framework and the assessment criteria, as well as other teaching material and resources.
- A meeting with two (2) members of the administrative staff regarding the administrative policies of the College with emphasis on issues related to third country students as well as students facing learning, financial or other difficulties.
- A meeting with four (4) students of the College regarding their impressions of the College, the staff - student relations, the quality of the studies, the employability prospects, Erasmus+ mobility issues and the overall support provided by the College to its students and graduates.
- An exit discussion with the senior management team where members of the EEC had the opportunity to ask further questions and clarify any pending issues.

During the site visit, the EEC visited the library, teaching rooms, computer laboratories, kitchen, and housekeeping facilities of the programme under evaluation.  The EEC did not have the opportunity to attend a live lecture at the College, as the evaluation took place after the end of semester.

The EEC confirms that staff were available during the whole day of the site visit for queries and the College provided short presentations in the sessions needed, so that adequate time remained for questions by the EEC members and productive discussion.  The College was well prepared for the visit and was open to questioning, with additional materials being provided where requested. The College should be commended for the amount of work they had undertaken to prepare for the visit, and the quality of the documentation.  The EEC were made to feel welcome, and the discussions were open and collegiate.

*General remarks*

The EEC made it clear from the start of the visit that the purpose was not only confirmation of compliance with the required standards, but also to help the College further improve the proposed programme content and delivery. The discussions that took place were hence in line with a "peer review", i.e., very open, future-focused and in a broader context than just the standards. Some trends and evolutions in the world of higher education have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., online delivery, hybrid learning), changes in the immigration legal framework and issues regarding globalization and internationalization, knowledge transfer and knowledge creation, impact of education and research and employability were equally discussed to better frame the importance of the standards and of continuous improvement.

In general, the EEC found some evidence of standard compliance of the programme under evaluation although there is room for further improvement as discussed later in the various sections of this report.  The EEC was also satisfied by the relationships (personal touch and individual attention) between staff and students at the College. This is, of course, due to the small number of students in the College, but it is also "embedded" in the institution´s approach to higher education.

The EEC commends the College for developing connections to the business world and to higher education partners in Europe through the Erasmus programme and effectively supports its students throughout the whole learning experience (work-study support). The EEC was also satisfied by the engagement of academic faculty and administrative staff.

Points of discussion and areas for further improvement:

1. The EEC suggests that the College should develop a roadmap to ensure that its operations and academic credibility will not suffer from the strain on time, human, financial and infrastructure resources that the continuation and scale-up of this programme undoubtedly entails in a competitive environment.

2. The role of (active, practice-focused) research activities and experiential (practical) learning in the context of "blended" learning pedagogies: the College is recommended to further extend and

continue to integrate the kind of research activities aligned with its mission and vision and to ensure faculty and staff have the necessary time and financial resources to successfully do so. Leveraging the academic calibre and business networks is a sensible strategy for the College to follow, certainly when the College is set to scale-up its operations; research time and academic publications in professional/trade and reputable academic journals will become more crucial to achieve success.

3. Although not directly relevant to the Diploma programme under evaluation, the development of a clear strategy for new faculty to obtain a PhD is still recommended. The recruitment of PhD holders, and research active faculty will become necessary for the College to improve its academic credibility ahead of the continuation and scale-up of its entire offering. Being able to attract and compensate faculty (competitive, cost-of-living adjusted wages) with the necessary qualifications for high quality delivery of such programmes and research (in terms of both time and output) will be key to success (reputation and attractiveness) in the College's future.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| Name | Position | University |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Andreas Papatheodorou | Professor, EEC Chairperson | University of the Aegean, Greece |
| Adele Ladkin | Professor, EEC Member | Bournemouth University, UK |
| Nevenka Čavlek | Professor, EEC Member | University of Zagreb, Croatia |
| Polina Panagiotou | Student, EEC Member | Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus |

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

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**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**

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**1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

*Standards*

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *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*

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*
  - *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)*

- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *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*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *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*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

## 1.3 Public information

*Standards*

- ● *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*
  - o *qualification awarded*
  - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *pass rates*
  - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*

## 1.4 Information management

*Standards*

- ● *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

> o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
> o *learning resources and student support available*
> o *career paths of graduates*
>
> - *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

*Findings*

The College has laid-out policies to ensure quality assurance (QA); nonetheless, these are not publicly available on the College website. There is an Internal Committee of Quality Assurance supporting QA and a student representative is involved in this. Staff were aware of some of their responsibilities in these processes in terms of module design, modification, and moderation of assessments. The small size of the College makes it relatively easy to keep control of processes.

There are some plagiarism guidelines provided to members of academic staff. Students are informed about the essence of plagiarism, what it means in practice and how to avoid it. Students confirmed that plagiarism is taken seriously.

The College has clear statements of non-discrimination, including on admission.

The programme of study does have learning objectives; nonetheless, these should become better aligned to the College's objectives. It is also recommended that the achievement of the seventeen (17) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be somehow reflected in the learning outcomes especially considering recent experiences through the pandemic.

The programme team had designed the programme based on similar Diplomas offered elsewhere in Cyprus and their own knowledge of the industry (some staff have industry backgrounds). The faculty were involved in the development and/or modifications of the individual courses making up the programme. The inclusion of foreign languages into the Diploma programme is useful for students moving into positions in the international as well as local hotel sector.

Arrangements for student progression are clear and give students opportunities to retrieve less good performance. The courses state the ECTS each course comprises and are designed to reflect the relevant ECTS. Student workload is monitored through regular student reports on the level of work required in a course. Work submitted in individual courses is assessed by the course leader and a sample of 10% is internally moderated. There is no indication about how marks link to evaluations (e.g., 70- 79 equates to 'Satisfactory') and individual courses do not seem to use specific marking criteria. There are no generic grade descriptors to indicate what, e.g., good, looks like at each level of study and it is recommended that these are developed to ensure consistency in marking levels between staff and to help students understand the expectations at each level.

The programme does not include any compulsory internship; this is optional due to work permit constraints related to third country students. In any case, internships in local businesses are supported by the College.

There is a formal approval process for both new programmes and modifications to existing programmes or courses. Minor changes, e.g., a change of textbook, do not need to go through the entire formal approval, but are reviewed. Programmes are regularly monitored based on student feedback, staff feedback and developments in the field. In addition, major revisions may be made during the re-accreditation process.

Publicly available information is readily found on the College website covering regulations, programmes and their learning outcomes, assessment, student rights and expectations of students, learning resources and support services available to students.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were not seen; however, the College is small, and these could be misleading. Going forward, these should be developed (e.g., target progression rates) and monitored, especially as student numbers increase. The profile of the student population comprises almost exclusively students from third countries. Satisfaction is assessed for each course, but not at programme level. Students confirmed that the College took their feedback seriously and actioned it as appropriate. There is a satisfaction questionnaire relating to academic and non-academic elements of the student experience, but it is recommended that an academic programme-level assessment of satisfaction should also be provided. Learning resources are monitored for adequacy and considering changing student behaviours or advances in technology. Support services are currently sufficient, but if student numbers increase, these may need to be reviewed. There is no Alumni Association, and the College is recommended to stay in contact with its graduates to track their employment status and engage them as business coaches.

*Strengths*
- Involvement of students in the Internal Committee of Quality Assurance.
- Assessment of student satisfaction with courses and actioning student feedback.
- Inclusion of an optional assessed internship in the Diploma programme.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

The EEC recommends that the College should:

- make the quality assurance policy publicly available on the College website.
- clarify and streamline its policy regarding plagiarism.
- revise and streamline programme and course learning outcomes to be consistent.
- devise generic grade descriptors for each level of study to improve marking consistency and guide students in expectations.

- include a programme-level measure of student satisfaction.
- devise appropriate KPIs for the programme.
- involve alumni in further revisions to the programme to ensure it is fit for purpose.

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

| Sub-area | | *Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant* |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | Policy for quality assurance | Partially 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
> **2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.3 Practical training**
> **2.4 Student assessment**

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### 2.1 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.*

### 2.2 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.*

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## 2.3 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.*

*Findings*

The programme would benefit from revisions to better reflect the expected pillars of a Diploma in Hotel Administration (economics, management, marketing, operations, and finance/accounting). At present eighteen (18) ECTS are related to four (4) compulsory courses related to writing techniques, i.e. *The Technique of Writing and Language Studies I* (6 ECTS); *The Technique of Writing and Language Studies II* (4 ECTS); *Speech and Language Practice* (4 ECTS); and *Effective Speaking and Advanced Language Practice* (4 ECTS) – this is rather extensive and denies the students from studying courses which are directly related to the subject of their Diploma studies. A general concern is the writing of learning outcomes in course outlines. These are often too many and at times read as a list of course content that will be covered. These should be reviewed accordingly.

Staff and students confirm that different approaches are used in the classroom, including didactic teaching, case studies, discussions, activities, and student presentations. A class is of 3-hours duration and would include a range of these activities, thus ensuring students from a range of learning styles can benefit. Group work is also included in activities, which is an important management skill. Similarly, in-class activities can include presentations, another valued soft skill. Currently, the staff can easily judge the engagement of students owing to small numbers and will adapt delivery accordingly. Activities enable students to actively participate in developing their knowledge and skills in a supportive environment. Invited speakers should become regularly invited to deliver classes and more fieldtrips should be organised to enrich the student experience.

The College does subscribe to recent teaching technologies, including bibliographic search engines (EBSCO). Students also have access to the University of Cyprus Library. The EEC recommends

that training software relating specifically to systems used in the hotel sector should be introduced. General classrooms were equipped with computers and projectors and sockets were available for student laptops. Digital skills are developed using Microsoft Office applications, including use of WORD and EXCEL, and with bibliographic search engines.

Speaking to staff and students suggested a positive relationship, where students felt able to approach staff for help and advice. Where specific learning needs were identified, these were addressed through changes in exam arrangements. Rooms were also accessible to students with physical disabilities.

A student complaint procedure was in place linked to module delivery and assessment appeals.

Practical training is included by virtue of an optional internship. The industry background of some staff allowed them to contextualise theoretical material for students and to demonstrate application of such theory to practice. This is also an aim of the internship. The employer report, and often personal contacts with employers, can evaluate the knowledge and skills of students in relation to industry needs and help guide potential course modifications. The College has many contacts with employers in the area that may facilitate the internship.

In addition, the College has the Erasmus+ Charter allowing both staff and student mobility. This has been taken up by both staff and students and improved the student experience and offered valuable new skills.

Assessment is clearly laid out and different weights are used for the various assessment modes (e.g., in-class assignments, case studies, mid-term exams, final exams). This may prove beneficial for students with different assessment preferences as they are given the opportunity to perform well. It was reported that exams went beyond the need to relate knowledge, also requiring evidence of understanding and application.

Assessment criteria are released in advance and marked coursework includes good feedback, notably on how to improve. As indicated previously, generic grade descriptors would help students understand what is required at each mark band and each level, as well as ensure marking consistency. Work is marked by the course leader, and 10% of the work is moderated to ensure consistency and fairness. There is a clear process to resolve differences in opinion over mark levels. There is a process allowing students to defer exams/assessments where there is a verifiable issue preventing the student completing at the normal time.

Students should be given further opportunities to become engaged in practical assignments and staff should be further incentivised to conduct research through reduced teaching hours. In any case, they try to keep abreast of developments in their fields through conference attendance and Erasmus+ mobility and use of the bibliographic search engines and access to the University of Cyprus Library.

*Strengths*

- Industry background of some staff allowing them to link theory and (the realities of) practice.
- Variety of classroom activities to ensure engagement and to cater for a range of learning styles is evident.
- A range of assessment modes with different weightings is in use.
- Student access to Erasmus+ mobility opportunities is apparent.
- Feedback on work pointing to areas for improvement is provided.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

The EEC recommends that the College should:

- introduce changes to the curriculum to reduce the emphasis on writing style courses and increase the focus on courses directly related to the subject of the Diploma programme.  This will also prove of benefit to Diploma graduates interested in continuing their studies at a Higher Diploma and/or Bachelor programme level.
- further develop the student-centred learning approach.
- further use its industry contacts to provide guest lectures or fieldtrips, enriching the student experience.
- review all learning outcomes to ensure they are at the appropriate level and are written appropriately.

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

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

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

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

3.1 **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.*

3.2 **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.*

3.3 **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.*

*Findings*

Out of the ten (10) members of academic staff currently working in the College, eight (8) work as full-timers and two (2) as part-timers. Moreover, six (6) members of staff are at the level of Senior Lecturer and four (4) are at the level of Lecturer. The College has three (3) PhD holders; the remaining academics hold a Masters' degrees except for one (1) academic who holds a degree of lower level. Only one (1) academic in the College has solid research aspirations in terms of publishing in highly ranked refereed academic journals. The EEC advises that the College should undertake an effort to help existing members of staff upgrade their educational level and research profile. This is important to increase the academic credibility of the College in a competitive academic environment.

There is a Research Centre in place, but it is the impression of this EEC that this Centre is not very active and has not produced a set of clearly defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at this stage. The EEC would like to commend the College on participating in the Erasmus+ programme for staff mobility to improve the academic prospects of its staff. Further emphasis on the existing agreements with colleges and universities around the world for collaboration on research activities and student and staff exchanges may also help in this direction. Building a proper research culture in the College will help instigate similar spirits among recruited students in the Diploma programme; when and where possible, members of academic staff should not only inform the curriculum based on their own research but actively encourage students to produce practical assignments of added value.

*Strengths*

The EEC commends the College on acknowledging the need to improve its research profile by encouraging and financially supporting its members of staff to attend conferences, undertake research activities, become members of professional bodies, and engage in continuous professional development activities.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

The EEC strongly advises the College:

- to undertake an effort to help existing members of staff to upgrade their educational level.
- to support and coordinate research activities based on solid KPIs and to encourage publication in industry/trade and peer-reviewed academic journals of a certain calibre.

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

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

> o *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.*

*Findings*

The College does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, disability, or national origin when admitting students. To be admitted to the College, applicants must have a secondary school diploma or equivalent qualifications. In addition, if the programme language is English, students must provide evidence of proficiency in English, such as a high score on the TOEFL or IELTS exams or a grade of "C" or higher in the GCE/IGCSE English Language exam. Students for whom English is their native language or who received their secondary education in a country where English is the native language are not required to provide proof of English proficiency. The College has two (2) intakes. Transfer credits from other accredited colleges and universities may be accepted, but students must complete a minimum of 60 ECTS for a Diploma programme. Students may transfer to the College from other tertiary education institutions in Cyprus or abroad. The transfer process involves submitting transcripts and other documents for evaluation by the College, which will determine which credits will be transferred.

*Strengths*

- Non-discrimination policy: the College has a policy of non-discrimination in admitting students, which is a good practice that promotes diversity and inclusivity.
- English language requirements: the College has specific requirements for English proficiency for students whose program language is English, which ensures that students have the necessary language skills to succeed in their studies. The requirement for applicants to demonstrate proficiency in the English language may help to attract candidates who are fluent in English and able to communicate effectively in the language.
- The College accepts a range of qualifications for regular admission, which allows students with different academic backgrounds to apply and potentially be accepted.
- Transfer credits: the College allows students to transfer credits from other accredited colleges and universities, recognizing the knowledge and skills students have gained elsewhere.

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- Flexible start dates: The College offers two (2) intakes, providing flexibility for students who may have different schedules or preferences.
- Transfer process: The transfer process at the College involves evaluating transcripts and other documents to determine which credits will be transferred, which in general is a fair and thorough approach to recognizing a student's prior learning. It further helps to maintain the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered.
- Lecturers follow up if students are not coming to class. This is a strength of being a smaller college.


*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

- Difficulties in recruiting third country students due to government policies.
- The process for evaluating transfer credit may be subjective and may vary based on individual cases and the documentation provided, which could lead to inconsistency in the admissions process and potentially result in some students being unfairly denied transfer credit.

To streamline the transfer credit evaluation process, the EEC recommends that the College should implement a more detailed process for reviewing transcripts and other documents. This could potentially save time and resources and ensure that transfer credits are accurately evaluated.

The College could consider offering additional support services for students who may struggle with the English language, such as language tutoring or language-specific study groups during the semester. This could help students who may not have strong English skills to succeed in their studies. This approach would be preferable to the current one which dedicates a large number of ECTS to English writing-style courses.

The EEC advises the College to continue tracking progression rates of students in the programme regularly, and to also make plans to increase or maintain progression levels, and to evaluate why targets were (not) met.

The EEC recommends adding to the College regulations clear indications of what can and cannot be put forward as extenuating circumstances, and the evidence required to support an application.

Within regulations, the College should clearly state the basis on which a grade petition can be made – e.g., bias, and the evidence that will be needed to support the petition.

Learning of soft skills is important to the College. The EEC recommends that the College should formalize how learning of soft skills is facilitated at the College and through the educational process.

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

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

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

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### Sub-areas

5.1 **Teaching and Learning resources**
5.2 **Physical resources**
5.3 **Human support resources**
5.4 **Student support**

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### 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*

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- *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.*

*Findings*

The College provides several learning resources and student support services to its students. These include a library with various materials and online databases, Google Classroom for virtual learning, tutoring services, practical labs, and administrative services. At present, the facilities used by the College for the practical element of the Diploma programme would benefit from investment and modernisation. The College also has a student support mechanism to address student needs and concerns by offering counselling, problem-solving, accommodation assistance, job placement, and complaint handling. Moreover, the College participates in the Erasmus+ programme for student mobility. Other services offered to students include Wi-Fi and library access. The College has mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students. Overall, the student support at the College appears to be comprehensive and aimed at addressing a wide range of student needs.

*Strengths*

The Learning Resources at the College are adequate and include a range of resources such as a library, online databases, and tutoring services. The library has a variety of materials, including books, journals, and electronic resources. The online databases (Ebsco etc.) provide access to a sufficient range of information. Tutoring services are also available to students. Further, the library is linked with the library of the University of Cyprus.

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The College also offers a range of administrative services to support students. Students indicated that they found staff approachable and helpful. Additionally, the College has a mechanism to address various student needs and concerns. The aims of these services are to help students with their problems and concerns, and to identify and address student issues as soon as possible, with the expressed aim to foster a friendly and supportive environment, and to strengthen the faculty-student relationship.

The College also participates in the Erasmus+ programme, which provides mobility opportunities for students in other European countries. Other services offered to students include Wi-Fi and a library. The College has established statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students. Overall, it appears that the student support at the College is sufficient and aims to address a range of student needs.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

However, the EEC also sees challenges regarding the Learning Resources and Student Support at the College. For example, the library is not open 24 hours a day, which is important especially for students who work to finance their studies and therefore need extensive library opening hours. Further, it is not clear if all services are available to all students or if there are any limitations on access. It is not fully specified how students can access these services or what the process is for seeking assistance or support. Further, the EEC expresses some concerns with the challenges of balancing competing needs and interests of students. Student life is less vibrant compared to other larger institutions, although events targeted at mixing students with the local community help here. Moreover, while the College aims to foster an international atmosphere, and allow students the benefits of meeting new cultures and viewpoints (almost all current students are international), attracting Cypriot students remains a major challenge; this may deny the College's students the opportunity to socialize with peers from the local community.

Having the above in mind, the EEC recommends the following:

- Based on the discussions held between the EEC and the students, the College is advised to improve its IT facilities from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Among others, hotel, and other simulation platforms relevant to the hospitality sector and other hospitality-related systems used in the industry should be introduced in the College.
- The College should consider expanding the library's hours to include evenings and weekends, as many students have busy schedules and may not be able to access the library during regular business hours.
- The College should consider offering flexible tutoring hours or alternative methods of tutoring (e.g., online tutoring) to make it easier for students to access this service.
- The College should work on creating a more vibrant college life for students by organizing more social and extracurricular activities on campus (including dining options).
- The College should consider ways to increase Cypriot student enrolment.
- The College should make efforts to address the challenge of balancing competing student needs and interests, such as by seeking input from students on priorities and implementing policies or initiatives that address the most pressing issues.
- The College should facilitate and encourage the establishment of an alumni association to further relations between current students and graduates of the College.

- The College can introduce a survey among its students at the time of graduation to measure their satisfaction from the overall programme delivery.

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

| Sub-area | | *Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant* |
|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | Teaching and Learning resources | Compliant |
| 5.2 | Physical resources | Partially Compliant |
| 5.3 | Human support resources | Compliant |
| 5.4 | Student support | Compliant |

## C. Conclusions and Final Remarks

The EEC confirms the evidence of standard compliance at current levels of staff and students.

The EEC specifically commends the College of Tourism and Hotel Management:
- for its connections to the business world; nonetheless, the College is encouraged to formalize this relationship by establishing an External Advisory Board consisting of members of the industry;
- for its efforts to support students throughout the whole learning experience;
- for its appreciated "family" approach and direct, personal connections between staff and students.

The EEC discussed the following points of improvement and/or concern:

- The role of (active, practice-focused) research (academic output-oriented) activities and experiential (practical) learning based on solid KPIs – these should be explicitly introduced.
- The development of a clear strategy that will effectively enable the College to attract and compensate faculty (competitive, cost-of-living adjusted wages) with the necessary qualifications for high quality delivery of its Diploma programme and related activities (in terms of both time and output).

More specifically, the EEC recommends the following:

- The College should formalize and explicitly identify how the different learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies link to Learning Objectives, of which there was informal proof: rationalize the number of learning goals and objectives, while at the same time more explicitly

linking those Learning Objectives and Learning Goals with respect to sustainability/resilience, diversity, inclusion, etc. - in short, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

- The College should assist academic staff to produce professional/trade and research outputs of added value through the newly established Research Centre. Moreover, the College should carefully redesign its curriculum to increase the number of courses that are explicitly related to the subject of the Diploma programme.

## D. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|---|---|
| Professor Dr Andreas Papatheodorou, Chairperson EEC | |
| Professor Dr Adele Ladkin, Member EEC | |
| Professor Dr Nevenka Čavlek, Member EEC | |
| Ms Polina Panagiotou, Member EEC | |

**Date:** 1st of June 2023