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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:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (18 μήνες, Μεταπτυχιακό στη
Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων, 90 ΠΜ)

In English:

MBA (18 months, Masters in Business Administration,
90 ECTS)

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

In Greek: 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].

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following an invitation from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) was appointed to review a Master in Business Administration (MBA) offered by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM) in Nicosia, Cyprus. Established in 1987, the COTHM is a private, for-profit institution specialising in tourism, hospitality, and service industry education. The mission of the COTHM as stated on their website is “to provide a full educational experience to students, creating an environment in which students will develop intellectually and personally. Such an educational experience includes world-class instruction that will prepare students for the challenges that they will face in the world and open up opportunities for personal and professional growth and development.”

The EEC consisted of three academics and a student representative - the Chair of the Committee, Professor Fergal O'Brien (University of Limerick), the academic members - Associate Professor Alessandra Ferrari (University of Loughborough), Associate Professor Evangelia (Evi) Kopanaki (University of Piraeus), and the student member Ms Efstathia Papaefstathiou (Open University of Cyprus).

The evaluation for the programme took place at the COTHM premises in Nicosia on May 15, 2025. In advance of the site visit, the EEC received extensive materials and documentation on the programme under review. Follow-up requests for further information during the site visit, including all the materials presented on the day of the site visit, were acted upon.

The EEC met with the senior management team - the COTHM Director Savvas Adamides, the Academic Director, Antonis Thrassou, and members of the Internal Quality Committee (Elena Stavrou, Andreas Christoforou, Susan Elfving, Roxana Michaelidou, Lefteris Colocassides and Anastasia Halaii), a number of faculty, administrative and support staff, students from the MBA and BA programmes, and external stakeholders from industry.

The senior management team at the COTHM introduced the institution, its history and positioning, along with details of the programme under review. The team also referenced plans to pivot into the areas of digital transformation, innovation and the circular economy, which is also supported by a funded research project.

The EEC explored the structure of the programme, its academic features and characteristics, quality processes and procedures, staff profile and workload, administration structure, assessment strategies, and programme resources.

Where presentations formed part of sessions, they provided the basis for the EEC to engage in a questions-and-answers approach to seek clarity and garner more nuanced information around the programme under review. More specifically, the EEC inquired about various aspects of the MBA as follows:

- What is the pedagogical approach underpinning the delivery of the MBA?
- Are the necessary learning supports in place to help learners to successfully complete the programme?

- What innovative programme delivery approaches are being considered?
- What are the unique selling points of the programme?
- Are adequate resources in place to support learners through the programme?
- Are staff workloads appropriate?
- How is student recruitment undertaken in domestic and international markets, and what intake number trends prevail? What admission processes and procedures are in place?
- What recruitment strategies are in place for academic recruitment?
- What quality processes and procedures exist around programme design and review, admission, assessment, progression, etc.? How are external stakeholders included in these processes and procedures?
- What staff development activities take place to support faculty in programme delivery?
- What IT infrastructure is in place and how student records were managed?
- What student supports are in place for academic support and pastoral care?

During the site visit, the EEC engaged with current students (MBA and BA Hospitality Management), who shared their experiences at the COTHM. The students were very positive about their experience in the COTHM and are excellent ambassadors. External industry stakeholders were equally positive about the institution.

The final session of the site visit involved a meeting with members of the senior management team for any remaining questions and clarifications. The EEC members found the discussions to be fruitful and informative.

The EEC would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and positive engagement during the site evaluation. The committee would also like to express its gratitude to Dr. Lefkios Neophytou, the CYQAA coordinator, for his highly efficient management of the entire process.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Fergal O'Brien	Professor and Chair	University of Limerick
Alessandra Ferrari	Professor	University of Loughborough
Evangelia (Evi) Kopanaki	Professor	University of Piraeus
Efstathia Papaefstathiou	Student Member	Open University of Cyprus

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 programme.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programme.*
 - *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 programme 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 COTHM has an established MBA programme that has been successfully accredited previously. The programme is part of an expanding portfolio of programmes that the institution is currently running and planning to introduce, in order to enter new markets and rebrand. The programme runs over a period of 18 months (extendable up to 27 months according to government guidelines) and covers a set of courses worth a total of 90 ECTS credits. In the latest version these are distributed across two semesters as 5 compulsory courses per semester plus one elective, all worth 6 ECTS credits each, and a final dissertation worth the remaining 30 ECTS credits, in the third semester.

The MBA student intake comes almost entirely from outside of the EU, especially from Southern Asia, and the content and difficulty of the courses is adjusted to adapt to the varied needs and levels of this heterogeneous cohort. The programme has internal quality assurance processes, and updates the content and structure according to the market's evolving needs, although some of this activity is informal and unstructured.

The MBA is a generalist programme and designed in line with similar programmes in this area. It covers standard areas in Business and Management necessary for future managers to provide leadership in private and public sector roles. The aims and objectives of the programme are well-understood by the faculty and staff and clearly articulated in the review documentation. The learning outcomes at course and programme level are well-defined. Faculty and support staff are dedicated and committed to both the programme and the COTHM, and actively support the programme and planned future organisational initiatives.

The students participate in the quality assurance process through course evaluations at the end of each semester. The questionnaire is divided into different sections allowing the students to evaluate the lecturer, the course, student resources, administration services and the programme of study as a whole.

The internal quality committee follows processes to ensure the quality of the programme of studies. However, these processes are not conducted on a regular basis but are initiated when needed, e.g. to address issues arising from student feedback, to meet recommendations of external evaluation committees or to prepare the programme for accreditation. The Institution's Internal Quality Committee, together with the Coordinator of the Study Programme, the Academic Director, and the Academic Committee evaluate the goals and objectives of the programme and carry out relevant revisions where necessary. In this way the institute monitors and reviews its programme, including its academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities offered to students.

The last internal evaluation of the programme was conducted in November 2024. Taking into consideration the student feedback, the distribution, content and outlines of courses, as well as the current market trends, the committee proposed amendments to the programme and discussed them with the director and members of staff in a dedicated meeting. These amendments included the introduction of three new courses, including "Research Methodology", "Emerging Technologies, Innovation & Entrepreneurship" and "Sustainable & Circular Business Models", which replaced courses such as "Organisational Communication", "Entrepreneurial Studies" and "Project Management". To comply with previous evaluation recommendations, the committee also suggested the change of some courses from compulsory to elective, shaping the overall study load of the programme to 90 ECTS credits. Further improvements were related to updating the course bibliography and ordering new books.

An additional important improvement conducted by the internal quality committee in collaboration with the teaching staff was the identification of key soft skills and their integration into the curriculum and learning outcomes for the programme of study and the individual courses.

Strengths

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

- The programme has a solid established structure that covers the standard portfolio of courses one would expect in an MBA. It has been reviewed, updated and improved to incorporate business trends and developments. It has well-defined programme objectives aligned with the learning outcomes. It is a well-structured curriculum, with a range of courses in business and management.
- Important information relating to admission criteria, programme structure, and learning outcomes is available to the students. Moreover, the content of courses is specified in the course outline and made available to the students.
- The institution is clearly dynamic and ambitious, with great positive energy and plans for the future.
- There is a positive collegiate atmosphere helped by the small size of the college and student cohorts.
- Both academic and non-academic staff are friendly, professional and committed to the job and to the students.
- Competitive prices and a variety of discounts offered to different categories of applicants.

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.

- Although in existence, many processes are quite informal (quality assurance, programme upgrades, students progression, etc.) and need be formalised and structured. This will increase clarity, fairness and manageability in the future if expansion plans come to fruition. The formalisation and standardisation of internal quality processes is important for an improved more systematic monitoring and review of the programme of study.
- Along similar lines, it was unclear how the progression process worked for students. Clarity should be provided to explain this formally (pass marks, the timing, structure and regulation of resits) and possibly bring it in line with the rest of the sector. A formal exam board should be considered too.
- There was some ambiguity with respect to student intake and graduation numbers and how they fluctuated because of the 18-27 month completion times. Also, we only got to meet two MBA students during the site visit.
- It is recommended that data on the employability of their graduates, 6 or 12 months after graduation, is collected. This is an important quality indicator for marketing purposes, and an essential piece of information for the institution in terms of programme effectiveness and updates.
- If the college aims to increase the quality of provision, more rigorous admission criteria might be a good idea.
- The institution could identify and measure important quality data and key performance indicators on an annual basis, to improve monitoring and contribute to more informed decisions.
- The development of a Student Management System is important for effective information management.
- The development of a platform/system (instead of Excel) for managing student evaluations will facilitate the effective monitoring of student satisfaction regarding lecturers, courses and the programme of study.

- The programme could benefit from an expansion of its academic staff to include more PhD holders, especially in view of the planned growth.
- Regularly updating course content to include emerging trends like digital marketing, artificial intelligence, practices will keep the programme relevant.

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	Partially 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

2.1 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.*
- *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.*

2.2 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.*

- *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.*

2.3 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.*
 - *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.

This is an in-person programme, although plans are in vitro for future online delivery. As stated before, the content and level are adjusted to the specific needs of the students whose backgrounds vary greatly in terms of quality and type. Students are involved in their learning through helpful interaction with staff, and are encouraged to bring their own work experience (previous and current) into the picture. They can offer feedback and are well cared for.

Overall, the students expressed predominantly positive opinions about their studies, the programme itself, and the support provided both by academic and administrative staff.

The course outlines are detailed and describe the course objectives, learning outcomes, content, methods of teaching, methods of assessment, bibliography and include a weekly outline of the class topics. The courses employ a variety of teaching methods including a blend of lectures, case studies, project-based learning, group discussions, hands on workshops etc.

In most of the courses, assessment methods include a written examination (60%/50% of the grade) and assignments (40%/50% of the grade). The number and type of assignments are not explained in detail and their percentage towards the final grade is not always clear in the course outlines.

Lecturers, in collaboration with the academic director, have flexibility in determining how the coursework for assignments is divided, which can include tests, mid-term exams, assignments, and presentations. In the beginning of the course students are given details regarding the assignments and the grading criteria.

Dissertation guidelines are provided to help the students prepare their dissertation. However, some improvements need to be made to the proposed guidelines on the structure of the dissertation, e.g. 'discussion' should be written after 'findings'. Moreover, a distinction should be made between quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies, as well as to their corresponding methods of data collection.

Practical training opportunities appear to be limited and mainly related to the hospitality sector.

Strengths

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

- The heterogeneous composition of the student cohort makes for a vibrant, socially inclusive programme whose benefits extend beyond the national confines.
- The involvement of staff in Erasmus and funded research projects is testament to a dynamic effort to elevate the quality of provision and create stronger links between research and teaching.
- The development of language classes in English and Greek, as well as the collaboration with the nearby sports centre, are evidence of the effort and care put into making the student experience as comprehensive, rewarding and pleasant as possible.

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.

- Continuing to establish exchange programmes and collaborative projects with international institutions can provide students with diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Practical training opportunities appear to be still mainly related to the hospitality sector. Stronger links with broader industry would be beneficial both to the MBA programme and to the institution's plans for development.
- Improvements could be made in the dissertation guidelines, mainly related to the dissertation structure, research methodology and methods of data collection.
- The assessment criteria for course assignments and student performance should be clearly detailed in the course outlines and communicated more effectively to students.
- Additional questions could be added in the student questionnaire allowing them to evaluate whether the programme helped them achieve specific knowledge, skills, and competencies.

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	Partially 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

3.1 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.*

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.

The teaching staff involved in the MBA comprises of 7 lecturers. Efforts are made to match personal expertise and research interests with courses taught. Staff are committed to their teaching activities and many of them have links and cooperation with other institutions.

Many of the teaching staff hold doctoral degrees and serve as full-time faculty at the institution. The teaching staff possess teaching experience, while some of them also hold positions in industry.

Teaching staff are involved in research projects (national or European), providing them with real-world case studies and examples to enhance their teaching. The connection between teaching and research is also attained through the dissertation.

The institution supports teaching staff development by providing seminars, via HRDA, on contemporary topics in business and management, as well as on research project proposal writing and handling.

The institution also gives incentives to teaching staff for quality publications and other activities.

Strengths

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

- The teaching staff are experienced and enthusiastic about the job they do, and grievances are more sector related than college related. Furthermore, the teaching staff have both academic and professional experience.
- Links with external institutions and funded research projects are a testament to the dynamic nature and ambition of the college.
- The teaching staff are engaged in faculty exchanges through Erasmus initiatives.
- All faculty cultivate and support a student-centred environment.
- The participation in research projects strengthens the link between research and teaching.
- It is commendable to see the COTHM publishing a research journal – “Tourism Today”.

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.

- Staff numbers may need to increase as workloads appear quite substantial already. That is also dependent on student intakes, which were somewhat unclear to the EEC.
- Further efforts should be made to attract and retain high-quality teaching staff.
- More emphasis and support could be given to research time and research outputs.

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	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially 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

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 entry requirements for candidates are quite broad. They must hold any recognised Bachelor's degree and an IELTS score of 5. The admissions criteria are publicised and are available through the Admissions Office and are also available on the website.

Students who have started their college education elsewhere and wish to apply for admission to the College as transfer students must submit the following items to the Admissions Office:

- A completed application form together with a non-refundable fee.
- Official transcripts of all academic records from each institution previously attended, including high school, college/university.
- Official course descriptions or syllabi in English for all work completed at the college/university previously attended.

Students enter an 18-month programme but it was unclear how many progressed to graduation on this timeline. There was some evidence many students took up to the maximum allowed 27 months to complete their studies.

Strengths

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

- The COTHM benefits from a wide network of agents helping in the recruitment of students especially from Asia.
- The admission process is well documented online and in the programme materials.
- An appropriate level of fee payment flexibility is available in certain circumstances.

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.

- A clearer, more formal specification of student progression rules and processes should be considered, as there were some conflicting messages throughout the site visit.
- A more proactive and systematic approach to tracking students after graduation should be considered, as this would provide valuable insights into career progression and be a source of valuable long-term feedback on the programme. It would also lead to useful employability statistics.
- Investment in a general alumni network should also be considered. The international profile of graduates should not hinder this if implemented properly.
- Actions could be taken to improve graduation of students in a timely manner, i.e., over 18 months.

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	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Partially compliant
4.3	Student recognition	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 IT infrastructure of the COTHM is currently expanding. A Student Management system is being developed along with a system to handle student evaluations. At the moment, the absence of an information system is being compensated for by the experience and capacity of the administrative staff.

The Institution uses Google classroom as an LMS platform.

The main plagiarism detection tool used by our staff is Dupli Checker (<https://www.duplichecker.com>). The COTHM has a paid subscription and gives the credentials (username and password) to teaching staff. In addition, lecturers are provided with access to the paid version of ChatGPT-4, which includes various plagiarism detection tools for which they have received training.

While students currently benefit from informal and ad-hoc support from faculty and administrative staff, there is a need for a structured and institutionalized personal tutoring system. Such a system would provide each student with a designated academic mentor or advisor who can offer consistent guidance on academic performance, career planning, and personal development. This would also ensure equity and continuity in the level of support provided.

Both teaching and administrative staff demonstrate dedication to the programme's planning and execution. Students reported their satisfaction for the supportive environment of the institution.

Strengths

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

- Students have access to physical as well as electronic resources. Access to online resources is supported.
- Google classroom is used as the LMS platform.
- Significant technological investment is planned.
- Great support to students not only on their academic pathway but also in pastoral care, helped by the small size of the college.
- The commitment and competence of administrative staff is commendable.
- Establishment of a friendly and supportive environment.
- Students maintain effective communication with the faculty, who provide support related to assignments and assessments.

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.

- An integrated IT infrastructure will enable the COTHM not only to efficiently and effectively handle the day-to-day processes, but also to improve information management and quality processes.
- A formal system of personal tutoring should be introduced to help students on a variety of issues including pastoral care. The reliance on the administrative staff is not sustainable.

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

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

6.1 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*

6.2 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.*

6.3 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.

COTHM has a track record of successful programme delivery. The MBA programme under review is running successfully underpinned by international student intakes. The faculty and staff at COTHM are very dedicated to their students and the institution. It was clear from the participating undergraduate and postgraduate students at the site visit that they are satisfied with their experiences at COTHM and the relatively small student numbers allow staff to provide students with highly personalised support. This includes not only academic guidance but also attention to students' mental health and well-being. Students report feeling valued and supported, which positively affects retention and academic outcomes.

Given the relatively small size of COTHM there is some informality in their processes and procedures. This is quite common in these circumstances, but more formal standard operating procedures would be better, e.g., more formal exam boards and programmatic reviews. The lack of an integrated IT infrastructure hinders efficient information management in the institution.

COTHM is at a significant point in its development, with highly ambitious and likely challenging projects. They plan to pivot from their historical focus on tourism and hospitality into digital transformation, innovation and the circular economy. This ambition is commendable, but lends itself to brand ambiguity. This is something that COTHM has already considered and the roll out of a new brand identity and branding messages will be important to its future success. Furthermore, the institutional strategy is to enter the online education space. There was evidence that COTHM understood the technical and pedagogical underpinnings required to do this.

The ability of COTHM to succeed in competitive funding applications is commendable and is enabling it to pursue the ambitious plans set out by its management team.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Fergal O'Brien	
Alessandra Ferrari	
Evangelia (Evi) Kopanaki	
Efstathia Papaefstathiou	

Date: 16/05/25