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

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

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Culinary Arts Diploma

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Beginning 2023 (If Accredited)
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

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

A. Introduction

Early September, 2022 The CyQAA called together an External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisting of 4 members to serve as external evaluators of a programme of study in Culinary Arts to be offered at Ledra College, Nicosia. Following the formation of the committee, the EEC visited the college facilities on the 6th December 2022. The EEC held conversations with students, lecturers and management and administration staff of the college. In the following pages, the report details the EEC findings, strengths, weaknesses and recommendations as set out in the standards established by the CYQAA.

The report begins with a). an introduction, followed by b). a detailed evaluation of the study programme's design and development c). the assessment of the students' learning and methods of teaching used in the program, d). the teaching staff, e). student admission, progression, recognition and certification, f). learning resources and student support, and g). a conclusion of and recommendations made by the committee in helping to make the decision to deem this programme of study suitably appropriate to offer at Ledra College in Cyprus.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Professor Beverley Wilson-Wünsch	Chair	IU International University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Professor Ioannis S. Pantelidis	Member	Ulster University
Professor Theodoros Stavrinoudis	Member	University of the Aegean
Charalampia Karatzaidou	Member (Student)	Technological University of Cyprus

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

Findings

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

The programme under evaluation is a new programme in the English language. The college has established sufficient procedures for quality assurance. Ledra College has a clearly defined quality assurance policy which is also reflected in the college's objectives. This policy complies with the national accreditation systems ensuring that quality standards are followed. The college's teaching and administrative staff are aware of this policy.

While specific quality assurance procedures have been put in place it's not clear how college actually communicates these procedures to the main stakeholders. For example, the Quality Assurance Manual is available in the college's application but not on the website. The college executives assured the members of EEC committee that it is available in the moodle of the program but again only active students have access to it and not prospective students nor other stakeholders.

Ledra College has an adequate network of administrative services and procedures that aims on the one hand to strengthen the educational procedures and on the other to support both students and teachers. It collects data (both qualitative and quantitative) from the main stakeholders (i.e. students and employers) to improve and update quality standards.

The college can take advantage of cross-disciplinary learning opportunities derived by the already offered programmes.

Ledra College ensures academic integrity and honesty by preventing and detecting plagiarism via a clearly defined Policy on Plagiarism.

1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The programme under evaluation is aligned with the characteristics and potential of Cyprus as a tourism destination, and the increasing demand for well-trained employees. The majority of tourism employees come from abroad, which is compatible with the increased demand by foreign students to study in the college.

The updated feasibility study presented in the application is thorough and well-documented.

In the college's application the main learning objectives of the programme are clear and well defined. The learning objectives mainly focus on practical skills development and not managerial skills in the study area, that might be a field for future improvements. The practical dimension of the programme is also satisfied by the cooperation with local tourism enterprises and mainly by the compulsory participation of students in internship. The EEC considers the duration of the summer internship as insufficient for this particular programme.

The programme corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as far as the knowledge and skills acquired by the students. On the college's application certain procedures for the monitoring of each programme on an on-going basis can be found.

The content of the courses and their distribution in the semesters are largely balanced. However, the courses offered lack a few rather important courses (i.e. a course in local – traditional cuisine, and one in Greek language and culture). These courses will allow the sufficient integration, mainly of the foreign students, into the culture of the college and Cyprus as well.

The course analysis must be presented in a uniform way - style, following one of the internationally accepted standards (i.e., Harvard). In some courses analysis (Menu Planning for example) there is an imbalance between the learning outcomes and the course content. Also, the percentage assessment of a few courses ends up to 110%.

1.3. Public information

Because the programme has not been accredited yet, there is no public information. However, the EEC based this report on the available information concerning other courses of the College, considering the public information offered as satisfactory.

1.4. Information management

The same also applies to the information management (key performance indicators, profile of students, student progression rate, etc.).

Strengths

The college adapts a multi-level procedure of six mechanisms (namely a) External examiner reports and feedback, b) Programmatic reviews, c) Staff meetings, d) Principal's Office, e) Academic Council, f) Student responses) for the ongoing monitoring of the Programme.

The implementation of peer review methodology.

The fact that Ledra College acts as an approved centre for City & Guilds London in the fields of Culinary and Hospitality Programs in Cyprus is an important strength towards attracting students and delivering courses of high standards. They also seem to collaborate with a UK based University adding strength to their quality procedures.

The students evaluate teaching staff every semester for every course offered.

Every student is assigned to a faculty member – advisor, who supports him/her throughout his/her studies.

The existence of the Research Ethics Approval Committee.

The programme is located in an attractive tourist destination thus offering good practical training opportunities.

The programme is targeting domestic and international students as well.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC members appreciate the efforts of the college's team towards offering a competitive syllabus. In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered.

-The EEC members are concerned by the fact that the programme offers only compulsory courses and no elective courses at all. That is considered a weakness of the curriculum.

-Public information should focus more on providing specialised knowledge for each course and not just about the college.

-More on-line information on quality assurance approach is needed. The Quality Assurance Manual must be available on-line.

-The EEC members strongly suggest the differentiation of their programme by introducing local cooking methods and by adding the following courses:

- A. Local – traditional cuisine
- B. Greek language and culture
- C. Coping with diversity.

-Contacting, on a yearly basis, a survey on the programme's graduates in order to have feedback of their experiences and also collect suggestions for improvement is a crucial part for quality assurance procedures.

-The college should prepare guidelines on syllabi writing and teaching staff must implement them.

-The college should consider increasing the duration of the practical training of its students.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially Compliant
1.3	Public information	N/A
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

Findings

The EEC found the approach and processes for learning and teaching appropriate and well-aligned for this level of study. The methods of delivery and approach of the programme are appropriate for the learning objectives set by the college delivery team.

The learning environment seems supportive and the camaraderie of the staff was evident. The newer facility clearly caters for the needs of this programme. The EEC notes that the main building needs some minor updating at parts but overall it is fit for purpose.

The library resources in subjects covered by this programme need a thorough update. The structure of the programme reflects the student and industry needs but does not clearly communicate that all the necessary skills are taught and that the college considers the local expertise in cookery methods and traditional recipes.

The department does seem to operate a flexible approach to learning and teaching with some needed technology upgrades over the pandemic crisis that helped with the delivery of courses. The teaching and assessment methods is appropriate for some courses but there are errors throughout and each course will need careful scrutiny to fix the percentages of assessment and simplify the assessments (a number of courses assessment adds to 110%). The EEC feels that the team needs to consider the simplified balance of assessment to limit the possibilities of over-assessment. However the EEC recognises the updated assessment schedule provided on the 7th December 2022.

Strengths

-Good projected student-to-tutor ratio

-Strength of the teaching team

-The general approach to student learning as witnessed by the students interviewed

-The well thought out processes of student feedback and peer review processes

Areas of improvement and recommendations

In order to improve the student learning experience the EEC recommends that the college design team consider that:

- Butchery and fishmonger skills are included in the programme as a distinctive course.
- The breakfast and brunch course (CUL 202) can be eliminated to provide space for the above.
- Cooking methods and Preparation courses I, II and III can be renamed to clearly reflect the content of advanced cooking methods and preparations. Possibly merging some of the elements to make space for one course that focuses on people, diversity and bullying and harassment.
- The course CUL201 title and content to be redesigned as International and **Local Cuisines** to include the distinctive Mediterranean and Cypriot diets.

Furthermore the EEC recommends that:

- All courses are to be scrutinised to ensure assessment percentages add to 100%.
- Referencing needs to be consistent and correct and at Harvard style.
- At least two sources per course need to be less than three years old.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	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)

Sub-areas

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

Findings

The EEC established both via the application and in meetings, the great experience and breadth of industry posts held by each of the lecturers, members of the delivery team.

There is little evidence of research and or scholarly activity for a course of this type. Even product development and innovation is scholarly activity and should be noted by the tutors and explained how it informs the teaching.

There are Chefs in the team that could easily produce their own books if they were appropriately mentored and there does not seem to be an established scholarly activity mentoring programme by the college.

The student surveys and external examining as seen in other programs is a good practice that helps teaching staff monitor and assess their skills.

Strengths

- The experience of many of the teaching staff and the collegiality amongst the members of the teaching team.
- The approach utilising external examiners' reports and feedback.
- The program reviews and staff meetings planned and the existence of an Academic council.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends that the team:

- Develop a mentoring programme that helps staff maintain research and scholarly activity
- Develop clear guidelines and procedures for staff development and conference funding opportunities including criteria for staff to be successful when applying.
- The college engages with TURIN in the same way they have done for ERASMUS to enable staff development and exchange to continue with UK based institutions.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3	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

Findings

4.1 Student admission

Ledra college has not enrolled students in the programme yet, so the information for this section is based on a meeting with four students enrolled in another programme of the college.

The students' admission criteria – requirements are clearly presented in the college's application and the website. To better understand the potential of its students the college applies placement tests as far as the English language knowledge is concerned.

During the site visit and based on the communication with the students it became clear that the students' admission criteria are available, and the students are familiar with them.

The college's website is well-designed offering sufficient information for the admission of the students. The college has proved very effective in attracting foreign students and thus creating a truly international student community. Along the same lines, students consider the international affairs department capable.

The tuition fees are clearly presented on the college's website.

The college has a well-documented policy and procedures concerning student's mobility for studying abroad by taking advantage of Erasmus+ but the students participation in the programme is rather limited, partially because of the nationality of the students (non-Europeans) and the associated visa requirements - difficulties.

4.2 Student progression

Ledra college has established sufficient procedures and has available regulations on the students' development and progression.

The limited number of students (around thirty) per programme - course facilitates the monitoring of students' progression by the teaching staff and the undertaking of corrective actions. The low students/teachers ratio also facilitates the student progression procedures.

The student drop-out rate is low (estimated around 5%).

Ledra College has an established students' complaint procedure, but the college must improve the support towards international students.

According to the students' responses, the college's reaction to the Covid-19 crisis was positive, enabling attendance via an on-line platform.

4.3 Student recognition & 4.4 Student certification

Ledra College has established all the necessary recognition and certification procedures and the students are informed accordingly.

Ledra College offers to the students the opportunity to transfer credits from another department of the College (and from other institutions).

Strengths

-Ledra College offers a well-structured student welfare policy that satisfies many of its students' needs (for example, the academic advisors - mentor, the counselling support, the disability support office etc) and probably that's why the students are satisfied with the services offered.

-The procedures regarding and supporting students with disabilities and/or specific learning needs are in place with guidelines for the teaching staff and the students as well.

-The low students/teachers ratio.

-The low dropout rate, the administrative staff are aware of the key statistics concerning students.

-The students attending the meeting with the EEC members were familiarised with the mentoring opportunities offered by the college and they also knew the name of their mentor.

-The college has established a code of conduct and ethics.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

In line with the above-mentioned comments, the following recommendations could improve the program offered:

- The teaching staff must improve and enhance the presentation and the learning outcomes of several courses.
- Teaching staff and students must be exposed in a more intensive way to academic literature and research. It goes without saying that the opportunity offered by Cyprus University, via its library, to the academic community should not be wasted.
- The participation of teachers and students on Erasmus+ and Turin mobility programme should be further strengthened.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4	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)

Sub-areas

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

Findings

The planned program will be housed in two separate buildings at two different physical locations. The actual set up of each building is described below.

Building 1: This is a fairly new physical location of the program, which accommodates all students and staff activities, so can be considered the main building. In this space, several classrooms, lecturers offices, the main computer lab, the library, and the main reception are located

There are elevators in the building and some wheelchair access.

Because they have recently moved into this building, there are lots of aesthetic hitches that still need to be addressed so that the building appears physically a bit more inviting. For example, the name of the college, parking facilities, and directional signs are still missing. The classrooms and rest rooms are clean and tidy and have good standards. Also, lecturers' offices are nicely designed and ergonomically well set up.

The main computer lab is also well set up and the machines are clean and tidy and seem well maintained.

The main reception area is basic but is well manned by friendly, welcoming staff.

Building 2: Is a new, two storied, state of the art kitchens/offices that really shows that Ledra College is serious about delivering a fine culinary arts program. Modern, open kitchen, with different stations, e.g Gardmanger, Patisserie, laid out in a functional set up to facilitate teaching, demonstration as well as practice for the students. The area is set up with workstations, wash stations, receiving, storing, and production. It is all connected in a logical flow. Upstairs, this production lab, is a small dining room that allows students to learn how to set up and serve meals. Additionally there is a class room for lectures, as well as a lecturers office. The building is designed with a welcoming reception area.

Teaching and learning resources with the exception of library books are adequate. The students and staff in the production kitchen seem to have access to the resources they need to conduct the program.

Staff are given support for improvement and professional development, through programs such as Erasmus. They are able to study at the college through grants and discounted fees.

Strengths

-What was missing in the actual main building which was more plain and institutional, Ledra College brilliantly made up for in building 2, which will house the culinary arts program. It is a place where the EEC think learning can be fostered. Well designed, modern, open facilities, lots of possibilities to work in an area that is well lit. Students who were in class were quite happy with the facilities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

-The main building would benefit greatly from a bit of face lift.

-The library collection needs to be greatly expanded, book shelves, well lighted and a comfortable learning and study environment created.

-IT facilities seem available. Updating and using the facilities seem (slow). In other words, they seem to have the facilities but they do not seem to use it.

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

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

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC is quite impressed with the efforts made by the team at Ledra College. This is a programme of study that can help defray some of the labour market issues in the tourism and hospitality industries as it relates to the lack of qualified staff here in Cyprus. Below, the EEC makes some recommendations that we believe can help make the programme of study even more marketable.

Specifically, the EEC recommends that:

- All courses are to be scrutinised to ensure assessment percentages add to 100%.
- An investment in the library with up-to-date books relevant to the proposed course needs to be made.
- Referencing needs to be consistent and correct and at Harvard style.
- At least two sources per course need to be less than three years old.
- The EEC suggests that some elective courses be offered.
- That public information should focus more on providing specialised knowledge for each course and not just about the college.
- More on-line information on quality assurance approaches is needed. The quality assurance manual must be available on-line.

Furthermore, the EEC members strongly suggest the differentiation of the programme by introducing local cooking methods and by adding the following courses:

- a. Local – traditional cuisine
- b. Greek language and culture

- The breakfast and brunch course (CUL 202) can be eliminated to provide space for the above.
- Cooking methods and Preparation courses I, II and III can be renamed to clearly reflect the content of advanced cooking methods and preparations. Possibly merging some of the elements to make space for one course that focuses on people, diversity and bullying and harassment.
- The course CUL201 title and content are to be redesigned as International and **Local Cuisines** to include the distinctive Mediterranean and Cypriot diets.
- The college should consider increasing the duration of the practical training of its students.

- Encourage students to take advantage of Erasmus and other exchange programs etc.
 - Provision of more specific mental health preparation, especially for a profession such as culinary arts, that the known hazards are not always physical, but psychological. Have students do personality and emotional intelligence tests. Teaching and learning individual assessment tools that can help students understand their learning style. The more the students learn, the better prepared they will be to manage their staff in the future to become better professionals.
 - Students already enter competitions locally in Cyprus. We would encourage participation in International competitions. Competition within the European Union should be encouraged. Cyprus could showcase their International and local flair.
- Finally, the EEC would encourage the administration and lecturers at Ledra College to begin to forge greater relationships with the local industry. For example, industry partners can sponsor competitions, industry speakers can come into the classroom and share their knowledge and experience.

C. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Beverley Wilson-Wünsch	
Professor Ioannis S. Pantelidis	
Professor Theodoros Stavrinoudis	
Charalampia Karatzaidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: December 8, 2022