Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 29-07-2020

External Evaluation Report (Programmatic)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  P.A College

- **Town: Larnaca**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Business**

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

  In Greek:

  ΠΤΥΧΙΟ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΝΙΚΟΥΣ ΥΠΟΛΟΓΙΣΤΕΣ ΓΙΑ

  ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΙΣ

  In English:

   Bachelor's in Business Computing

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

- **Programme's status**
  New programme: No
  Currently operating: Yes

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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the evaluation of the Bachelor's in Business Computing (hereafter BBC) at P.A College took place virtually via a Zoom meeting coordinated by Mr. Avramis Despotis. The virtual meeting took place on July 14, 2020.

We were supplied with a number of documents beforehand which included the internal evaluation of the program, a list of compulsory and elective courses together with their description and faculty qualifications, among others. During the meeting, we were given presentations by faculty and management.

The following P.A. College stakeholders participated in the Zoom meetings: Mr. Loizou Filippos, Mr. Toumbas Demetris, and Dr. Andreas Patsalides. The presentation of the BBC program was given from the program coordinator Dr. Markos Markou. We also had a session with faculty members where Dr. Eleftheria Atta-Ioannidou and Dr. Andriani Riki had joined.

We found the presentations, the discussions and the documentation to be thorough and very helpful in enabling us to understand the program structure, its management and the wider context.

We were also provided a set of pictures of the College's premises which were accompanied by a video as a virtual tour. Again, these were helpful in allowing us to better assess the infrastructure of the College and its offerings to the student population.

We have met and interviewed four students from different years of study, including the student representative, in the absence of faculty or administrative/managing members.

Our overall impression of the submitted material is that it conforms to the assessment requirements stated by the agency and contains the desired documentation and information, and we acknowledge all the efforts that have gone into the production and presentation of the material.

The faculty, administration and school leadership were generous with their time and we appreciate their hospitality.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Dimitrios Kousenidis	Professor	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Christos Kolympiris	Associate Professor	University of Warwick
Dionisis Phillipas	Associate Professor	ESSCA School of Management
Christos Hasapis	Student	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:*
  - *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)*
  - *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*

- 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.*

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?*

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 undergraduate program of Business Computing is a 4-year full-time program and requires a minimum of 240 ECTS. The program is well structured, its objectives are in accordance with the overall strategy of the College and the intended learning outcomes are consistent to the content of the program. The purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes are clearly communicated and well-justified. The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students in advance (the first week of the semester) through the course syllabi, the course outlines, the website of the College and the College's electronic platform. Overall, the program seeks to prepare students for job market positions in data science, web development, and information systems, business of computing, IT in corporations, profit and non-profit organizations and so on, in the global competitive environment.

The content of the program includes an appropriate number of core and elective courses. The program runs in parallel with the Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) program provided from the College, starting even from the first year. The BBA and the BBC have common courses (particularly in the first two years of the program) which are essentials to link business with computer science. In the first two foundation years of study, the program provides students with valuable knowledge in computer science and business. The next two years, students are specialized in the topic of their interest through dissertations, elective courses and projects. The College's faculty appear to steer students towards the specialization that best fit one's interest and qualifications. The outcome from the presentation was that students have real-life projects which is perhaps one of the strongest components of the curriculum because it links the students with the market exceptions and needs. This is also (and mostly) achieved with the introduction of a 'hybrid form' for students' dissertations, that gives them the opportunity to work on both theory and practice (projects) in real-life problems.

The admission criteria are adequate and indeed the College has made the strategic decision to keep these criteria at a high level as indicated by the small number of students that enrol in the program every year (about 5 to 10 students per year). This small cohort size allows for nearly personalized teaching per student and this is another strength of the program. Moreover, the students of the program have common courses with the BBA, and which is helpful for them as they interact with teaching techniques in different topics (e.g., business management, etc.). The bottom line is that the selection criteria are consistent with the vision of the College to maintain a strong reputation in the field.

Quality assurance mechanisms are present and fairly well-aligned with international standards. There is a number of quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of the program of study. Importantly, formal quality assurance mechanisms are accompanied by informal processes which also appear to be working quite well.

Strengths

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

The program of study benefits from external expertise. It is designed so that it enables smooth student progression. In summary, the strengths of the program are as follows:

1. The external examiners. Following mostly UK experience the College is employing external examiners to inform and evaluate the development of the program. This is a noteworthy effort and the EEC applauds the College's efforts towards that end.

2. The BBC program provides common courses with the BBA which is a strong plus for the students and a key factor in distinguishing the College from its competition in computing science.

3. P.A College has a long experience in delivering educational programs in computing business and business administration. Previous programs were also accredited by the Ministry's former accreditation process.

4. A number of the faculty teaching staff have adequate practical experience which ensures a good balance between theory and practice.

5. The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. The course syllabuses and course outlines clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.

6. The dissertations are oriented in real-life problems which give the opportunity to students interacting with companies, organisations, etc., combining that way both theory and practice.

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

While in broad terms the program of study is adequate there is space for improvement:

1. The curriculum is very wide and focuses on practical matters as illustrated by the reading material. This is aligned with the nature of the computing science that the program offers. However, the program could be somewhat more balanced towards theory and/or academic work. The EEC encourages the faculty to incorporate more theory into the modules so that the students can link their hands-on knowledge with more higher order thinking.

2. In addition, another welcoming change of the program would be to focus and enhance more the link between the theoretical background which is essential for each corresponding computing science course. At the moment the range of modules is very wide which is not well-aligned with the common courses given from the BBA (such as mathematics, management, etc.) increasing the gap of background and practice. This is important because it might be difficult to keep the balance between "how " and "why", in issues of interest for entrepreneurship, which are accompanying with the understanding of the intuition behind.

3. The international dimension of the program is strengthening over time and one way to accelerate that progress is to be inviting more visiting professors from abroad who could help in the development of the quality of the program and in the strengthening of the research profile of the program and staff through collaborations. Indeed, only a small number of faculty members are PhD holders and bringing in external PhD holders could help in rebalancing the exposure of students to different types of expertise.

4. Since the bachelor program is specialised in computing science, and students are interacting with real-life projects (dissertations, etc.), it would be interesting for them, along with the faculty members , to organise workshops and/or participate in competitions, students' grants, and so on, in order to develop networking, new trends in IT, new technology in software, facilities, etc.

5. The number of faculty in this program is low compared to the corresponding BBA. There should be a balanced workload and how the courses in computing business are distributing among the professors. As a

suggestion for the future, the committee suggests being a clear distinguish the faculty in BBA and BBC and distribute the courses in BBC to more professors.

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	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
2.2 Practical training
2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning

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.*

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 and 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.*

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.

There is a comprehensive teaching methodology and mechanisms. Although P.A. College is of small size, it appears the College has given appropriate consideration to the overall teaching and learning design and delivery of the proposed program. The program is built with student needs in mind. Overall, the educational process comes across as well-structured, effective and well-implemented. Former accreditations have helped towards that end. There are well-documented academic procedures involving the Head of the Business Department, the teaching staff and the students. The management of the program of study does not encounter any problems. The College successfully applies the ECTS.

The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. There is good evidence of structured and well-organized taught material (lecture presentations, good blending of theoretical material and practice, independent study etc). All teaching material are readily available to students.

Strengths

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

A number of committees including external examiners ensure proper delivery of module material and constitute an important means the College maintains consistent quality standards.

The College appears to have strong ties with the business community, and it is a plus as e.g. offering guest lectures to students.

Overall, the program compares positively with relevant programs offered in Cyprus and abroad. The intended learning objectives of the program conform to the aims and objectives of the program and they are effectively communicated to the students. Also, the structure of the program as well as the learning mechanisms are appropriate for the effective delivery of the learning objectives.

The EEC believes that the program is fully managed by the academics in charge and there are no inappropriate non-academic interventions. The programme is of relatively small size and guarantees a friendly and collegiate environment between students and teaching/ administrative staff.

The students interviewed by the Committee highlighted they are quite satisfied with the quality of the program and its international character as demonstrated via the offered internships in the market, and the student exchange programs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

1. The textbooks used in the course syllabi could be updated more regularly and perhaps more importantly the syllabi could include more textbook/academic articles in them to strengthen the academic component of the courses as the practical component is already at high levels.

2. While the option to have common courses in BBC and BBA programs is a strong plus, it is essential to have a balance between the prerequisites needed for the courses in computing science and the common material taught in BBA courses.

3. Since the computing science courses are more sophisticated than the commonly known courses in business and they might need some prerequisites in fundamental courses (e.g. calculus, etc.) along with the corresponding technology support, it is not clear if this is achieved in the areas of study. The committee suggests publishing these guidelines and support the students in these areas, if needed.

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

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

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

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

3.1 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.*

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- *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.

During our meeting with the teaching staff, we interviewed all full-time professors and most of the part time professors. For the most part full-time staff has adequate qualifications especially when considering the fact that the program is an undergraduate one.

Some of them hold Ph.D. degrees from foreign institutions and are active in research (i.e. they seem to be doing some research, attending conferences and the like, and have a good understanding of the value of doing research for an educational institution).

During the interview the majority of the faculty did not participate actively in the discussion even though the EEC was actively seeking their input. This is an unfortunate outcome in many ways and it was challenging to infer the reasons of their limited participation in the discussion. The limited participation did not allow us to get more insights on the working conditions of the faculty. More practically, this limited participation is a forgone opportunity for faculty to express their thoughts and suggestions which could eventually feed into the present report as a means to improve working conditions for faculty. Overall, that part was the most disappointing element of the evaluation. We were negatively surprised by the unwillingness of most faculty members to participate in the conversation. We sincerely hope this is not a sign of tensions between faculty or hesitations to speak up. The alternative explanation, the one we hope to be the case, is that there is no space for improvement and as such the faculty had no suggestions to offer towards that end.

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

1. The College appears to have reasonable teaching loads (e.g. a faculty member obtained her PhD while being employed at the College) which decrease as the faculty member moves upward the ranks. However, in the case of BBC core faculty, there is an imbalance since high number of courses are taught from few professors (2 or 3). This is a suggestion for the College to take into consideration.

2. The College encourages research activities in a number of ways including full support for conference attendance and such activities can augment staff's professional development. However, it was not clear whether such support is provided on a need to basis or whether there is a research budget per faculty member at the start of each academic year.

3. Research activity appears to be seen favourably for promotion and this creates additional incentives for staff development.

4. There appears to be a good balance between young and experienced faculty members. The experienced faculty have been with the College for a long time, which implies a good working environment that is beneficial to the program.

5. It seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. There is also a good process of evaluation of the faculty by both students and the Head of the Department.

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

1. The College could invest more in resources that could help the faculty to conduct quality research. The acquisition of databases such as Bloomberg or WRDS could enhance and intensify the research activities of the faculty. While such activities may turn out to be prohibitively expensive a perhaps complementary means to augment the research activities of the faculty while generating revenues would be to launch Master's program. Such programs could indeed spark research activities and help the College realize its long term ambition to turn into a university.

2. The College should pursue to regularly conduct research seminars in which faculty members could present research papers to others in order to discuss them, a practice that is likely to improve the quality of the research. These initiatives could be undertaken not only within the College but also together with other Cypriot Universities and Colleges (sharing of seminar email lists, organization of joint research seminars etc.).

3. The current flexibility in the promotion criteria is somewhat understandable given the different contributions of each faculty member to the program. However, some standardized criteria should be introduced as well. For instance, these could include a specified number of research publications in high calibre journals following international journal lists such as the ABS list in the UK. The standardization of some criteria would allow consistency across the board while providing faculty with clear goals that need to be achieved.

4. At present, only a small of faculty members are Ph.D. holders. This is not a concern *per se*. But, in the medium to long run, to stay competitive and maintain a healthy reputation the College should be aiming to hire more Ph.D. holders. This also aligns with the College's long-term ambition to turn into a university.

5. The core courses are taught by a very small number of faculty members. There might be a teaching overload for the core courses since most of them are provided by 2 or 3 faculty members.

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

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*

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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 evaluation committee discussed with four students inquiring why they decided to join P.A. College and the specific bachelor program, describe their experiences and present to us what they liked and what they thought could be improved.

The students were open in expressing great satisfaction with the College. The main reason to join P.A. College is that the program offers a very focused course outline of their interest. They also emphasise to the fact that they are closed with their teachers. Location considerations and the reputation of the College also appeared to play a role. The students highlighted that the College is accommodating when it needs to be, that they are satisfied with the modules and with the infrastructure of the College. They also noted that the College is active in helping them find jobs and overall, they did not raise any serious red flags.

Strengths

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

1. P.A. College is very student-oriented. For instance, when needed the College aids students in finding accommodation.
2. The students are well taken care of by the College. For example, there is individual feedback by the teaching staff (an advantage of a small program).
3. There is an evaluation on behalf of the students and the issues raised are considered seriously by faculty and administration.

4. A non-negligible percentage of student go on to pursue graduate studies mainly in the UK and this a noteworthy achievement. In fact, one of the faculty members (Dr. Markou) started his studies at P.A College and moved on to pursue a PhD in the UK before returning to P.A College to assume his teaching duties.
5. The College offers partial scholarships on a competitive basis. It helps the College to attract students, maintain its reputation and fulfil its role as an academic institution.
6. The College offers open days and participate to computing science competitions and exhibitions.

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.

As mentioned above, the student experience at the College is satisfactory. Still, an improvement which should be feasible to implement would be the socialising. Due to the small number of students (which is a plus) some of the students somewhat lack the social parts of the student experience. To that end, the College could form activities to strengthen that part such as competitions and/or connect through institutional processes past graduates with current students.

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

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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.*

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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.*

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 video we were provided before the evaluation on the College's building together with the interviews we conducted lead us to conclude that P.A College offers adequate resources to both students and faculty including access to library material, IT infrastructure and administrative support. Indeed, the building appears to be state of the art and this is a strong plus for the College. Along the same lines, the library appears well equipped and our overall impression is that all resources are in place and fully functional. In terms of human capital support, the

College is performing well on that front as faculty appear to be provided what they need to fulfil their teaching duties and, in part and when applicable, their research endeavours.

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

1. The leadership team appears committed to support faculty and students with resources when required
2. The students are quite happy with the services they receive in terms of the lounge, the library and the like.
3. The College offers a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure that such a degree in computing science requires.

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

1. Access to more databases would be a welcome addition. This could be on subscription fee basis or through bilateral agreements with other Colleges and Universities in Cyprus.
2. In the long run the College could also consider offering accommodation and additional IT tools (e.g., sophisticated software) to students.

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	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for distance learning programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas

    6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology
    6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF
    6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities
    6.4 Study guides

6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology

Standards

- *The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF

Standards

- *Twelve weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The distance learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities

Standards

- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students and teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning.*

6.4 Study guides

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*

- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with distance learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *Are the academics qualified to teach in the distance learning programme?*

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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Distance learning philosophy and methodology	Not applicable
6.2	Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF	Not applicable
6.3	Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities	Not applicable
6.4	Study guides	Not applicable

7. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **7.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **7.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **7.3 Supervision and committees**

7.1 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*

7.2 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.*

7.3 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*

> - o *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?*
> - *Can you please provide us with some 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		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
7.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
7.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
7.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

8. Additional for joint programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas

8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement
8.2 The joint programme

8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
  - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
  - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

8.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
8.1	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Not applicable
8.2	The joint programme	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.

P.A College appears to carry a strong reputation in part because of its selectivity in student admissions and small size and this can be considered as a strong plus. The College has a clear long term vision to transition into a university and the committee applauds that vision. Education is student centred and the program is well structured, follows international standards and overall offers students with an array of services. The bachelor studies in computing science for business can place the College ahead of its competition and the committee also applauds the College for the investments in infrastructure.

On the other hand, research can be intensified. We encourage the faculty to engage more heavily in research activities and for the College to put in place stronger incentives for the faculty to do so. While there seems to be a clear ambition for research to grow, concrete measures towards that end could be strengthened. Such measures could include reduced teaching loads when needed and strengthening collaborations with external academics.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Dimitrios Kousenidis	
Christos Kolympiris	
Dionisis Philippas	
Christos Hasapis	

Date: 29-07-2020