

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 13 January 2023

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

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

In Greek:

Λιανική και Εμπορική Διαχείριση (2 Έτη, 120 ECTS,
Δίπλωμα)

In English:

Retail and Merchandising Management (2 years, 120
ECTS, Diploma)

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



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 Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Invited by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had the opportunity to evaluate the Retail and Merchandising Management programme offered by the City Unity College in Nicosia. This is a 2-Year (120 ECTS) conventional programme (delivered face-to-face). Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded a Diploma in Retail and Merchandising Management.

The EEC consisted of four members: Professor Yannis Georgellis, Professor Maria Garcia-Benau, Professor Alexandros Sahinidis and Mr Zinon Leonidou (student representative).

The EEC visited the college on 9 January 2023. Prior to the visit, the EEC was supplied with a comprehensive internal evaluation report and other relevant documentation. In the morning, the EEC met with the Rector of the College who gave a short presentation of the institution, followed by a meeting with the internal evaluation committee. Professor Charalambous presented an overview of the programme. Mrs Morphaki presented the structure of the programme, with highlights of key modules. The rest of the morning, The EEC had discussions with members of the Quality Assurance committee and teaching staff of the college.

In the afternoon, the EEC met with students and graduates who shared their experiences during the course and how the course helped them advance their careers. Later in the afternoon, the EEC met members of the administrative team.

The visit concluded with a meeting with the senior management team and the programme co-ordinator for clarification questions from earlier sessions during the onsite visit. The EEC members found the discussions to be fruitful and informative.

The EEC would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the evaluation process. The committee would also like to express its gratitude to Mr Lefkios Neophytou, the CYQAA coordinator, for his guidance and support during the evaluation.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Yannis Georgellis	Professor of Management	University of Kent, UK
Maria Garcia-Benau	Professor of Accounting	University of Valencia, Spain
Alex Sahinidis	Professor of Management	University of West Attica, Greece
Zinon Leonidou	Student Representative	Open University, 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*
- *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*

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*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *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*
- *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 Diploma in Retail and Merchandising Management has been running successfully for several years, since was last accredited in May 2017. Following the onsite visit of 9 January 2023 and reviewing all documentation, the EEC concluded that the existing programme is well designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes, which are listed clearly and concisely. The EEC believes that the intended learning outcomes and objectives of this Diploma qualification are outlined and well communicated to prospective students. The EEC was also satisfied with revisions of the curriculum to include additional modules in response to market demand and the changing retail industry environment. Specifically, adding modules on digital skills and retail marketing principles demonstrates the commitment of the college and the internal quality assurance committee to innovate in order to maintain the Diploma's competitive market position. The EEC reviewed information regarding entry criteria, the delivery of modules, assessment procedures, and dropout rates.

This Diploma aims to provide students with a broad knowledge of retail business organisations, to help students appreciate modern management theory and practice as applied to the retail industry. The EEC felt that these aims were achieved to a great extent.

The revised version of the Diploma curriculum consists of ten core courses as major requirements, four courses as business requirements, two English requirements course, three computer requirements courses, and one Merchandising maths requirement. The EEC felt that this structure is appropriate for realising the intended learning outcomes.

The EEC confirmed that the internal policies and procedures are effective in ensuring the quality of the Diploma qualification. Evidence of quality assurance meetings, as part of an ongoing review and development, were provided by the College.

Strengths

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

Following discussions with faculty, administrative staff, and students during the onsite visit, as well as reviewing the submitted evidence, the EEC identified a number of strengths:

1. The programme is supported by motivated, enthusiastic and qualified faculty and administrative staff.
2. Internal quality assurance processes work effectively to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of the Diploma.
3. The college team have been responsive to market changes in the retail industry by introducing new, appropriate courses.
4. The Diploma curriculum structure is well-designed to enhance the employability and career prospects of students.

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.

In order to strengthen the Diploma in Retail and Merchandising management program, the EEC recommends:

Further embed sustainability and ethics in the curriculum to reflect recent trends in the retail industry of a greater awareness among consumers of social and environments issues (e.g., child labour, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, preservation of endangered species, environmental concerns and so on). As long as ethics, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are covered, the programme learning outcomes could be amended accordingly.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

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.*

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.

City Unity College has precisely stated objectives for the students' learning process. However, given some comments made in the content part of the programme, these objectives should also address the sustainability of business and its social and environmental contribution.

The learning process is, in general terms, well defined, but as we state in the suggestions section, we consider that an additional effort should be made in the application and adoption of teaching methodologies more in line with the characteristics that define students at the present time.

The assessment of student work is well described and in accordance with international standards

Strengths

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

The College has established procedures that allow to carry out an satisfactory learning process, without ignoring the recommendations that we are going to give below. Among them we highlight the following strengths:

- The student is at the centre of the learning process. The meeting with students and graduates has shown us their satisfaction with the programme and its strong connection with the labour market.
- The College has established important relationships with industry, which allows students to acquire important practical training that will undoubtedly allow them to join the labour market.
- The relationships that the College has established with companies and society allow students to develop skills that go far beyond theoretical approaches. In other words, they learn the main soft skills they need: forms of communication, critical thinking, ethical approaches, teamwork, emotional intelligence, etc. All of them are developed in the classroom, but this approach linked to business reality strengthens them.
- The assessment of students is in line with European standards

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.

In order to ensure learning outcomes are achieved, the EEC makes suggestions to improve three main aspects of the Diploma curriculum: i) educational methodologies, ii) participation in the social network and iii) activities of graduates and their links with the College.

- Educational methodologies. The College can make an effort to incorporate innovative learning methodologies. At present, students belong to a very visual generation, which means that in addition to the use of what has been done for years with technology (case studies, lab applications, presentations, etc.), it is necessary to innovate with new ways of learning. In this sense, we propose to introduce educational methodologies that would be very interesting

for the studies we are evaluating. Many of them are based on gamification. Among all of them, we propose the following that could be interesting: the flipped classroom, the puzzle method and the escape room. Obviously, this does not prevent us from continuing to use methodologies based on case studies or project resolution.

- Social networks. Students should be more motivated to actively participate in the College's social networks. We propose to implement measures to encourage such participation. This means that they should be given access to innovative proposals that allow them to show their achievements and interact with other students, professors and administrative staff.

- Graduate activities. It is proposed that activities be carried out to ensure a link between the College and graduate students. There are various ways in which this proposal could be implemented, but we believe that since learning is a lifelong process, a connection must be maintained between the College and all students who have passed through the classrooms. This connection is fundamental as it ensures that the College's graduates can ensure their lifelong learning in an efficient and appropriate manner.

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	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**

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 employed at the college meets the rather high standards set by its administration. Instructors and Lecturers are bachelor's and master's degree holders respectively and Assistant, associate and full professors are Doctorate holders. A number of teaching staff also engages in research with publishing and participating in conferences, while other staff members are mainly focused on teaching. Notably, the diploma programme by nature does not demand high research activity by the instructors. The college encourages the development of teaching staff, organising seminars and promoting the initiatives by the personnel to improve themselves academically. Those engaging in research are entitled to a reduced teaching workload. The College uses self-assessment of instructors twice a year and another assessment by a committee to evaluate staff performance. The instructors are using state of the art technology in their teaching facilitated by modern tools made available to them by the college. The students are also technology savvy as a result of this drive to promote the adoption of new technologies. To some extent the college's progress in this area was driven by necessity to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic in the preceding two years.

The college has a policy of inviting practitioners and business leaders to offer their insight to both students and faculty, a few times every year, while the instructors are taking the students to visit retail businesses and get a feel of the real-life issues of the field.

The teaching staff consists of two professors, two Associate professors and one assistant professor, two visiting professors and four lecturers. All teaching staff is fully qualified to teach in this programme, some of them equipped with their academic background and others bringing their industry experience.

The teaching and office hours are reasonable, and the staff appears to be content with their work schedules and the college requirements.

The college instructors collaborate with their colleagues within and outside the institution in publishing their research.

Strengths

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

One of the strong points of City Unity College Nicosia, is their connection to the market, securing job prospects for their students. The students can benefit from the college in two ways. One, is the door-to-door policy of visiting retail outlets and trying to get an agreement for the placement of the students. Another benefit relates to the composition of the student body much of which is already working in retailing and can offer leads to fellow students when there is an opening in their employment place.

The expertise level of teaching staff is high, especially for the specific program, given that six out of ten members are Ph.D. holders and the remaining carry considerable experience and all required skills to teach.

The student body of the college comprises one third of foreign students, making it a truly international educational institution.

The uniqueness of this Diploma is also a big advantage for the College, given the large number of job openings in retailing.

The use of modern technology is also a point of distinction for the C U College, given the investment by the school's administration and the dedication in applying it in several areas within the various activities both in teaching and administrative tasks.

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.

One area there is space for improvement in, is the limited use of the Erasmus opportunities. The college can benefit from Erasmus collaborations both in teacher and in student mobility, offering a chance for both groups to experience and be exposed to other university / college systems and practices and exchanging ideas with their colleagues and students respectively.



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	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 admissions information is clearly presented both in the site of the college and in the information given to the committee. The process is clearly articulated and transparent. Prospective students need to have completed a secondary degree and to demonstrate their proficiency in English at the level C in the Cambridge examination or at the level 5 in the IELTS. Those not attaining that score, are required to take remedial courses to be prepared to attend the regular programme. The regulations guiding student progression and all necessary information are all presented and are found to be adequate.

Regulations are in place, clearly defined and publicly available, concerning the certification of the students. The certification clearly states the level of studies and upon completion of the requirement of 120 ECTS the Diploma in Retail and Merchandising Management is awarded to the students. Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place. The certificate awarded is accompanied by published information in terms of its content, learned outcomes and the context of the studies undertaken.

Strengths

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

The Diploma is being offered within a relatively large organisation comprised of over 1800 students as told by the college management, which provides the advantage of synergies across disciplines and sharing good practices

among instructors in different programmes. This allows the administration to afford maintaining a larger than usual number of full-time employees creating long-term relationships with the instructors.

The considerable size of the labour market in retailing and the lack of competing study programmes offers an advantage to the CUCN.

The highly qualified pool of instructors also allows the college to stand out among its competitors.

The quality control mechanism set by the administration provides assurances that the Diploma in Retail and Merchandising Management will be successful and sustainable.

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 college could try to increase its international activities by sending and receiving students and instructors abroad. The information and experiences as well as the different practices used by other institutions of higher learning can provide the college opportunities to stay abreast of its competition and to keep improving itself.

The curriculum could be improved by including contemporary issues from the global discourse among businesses such as the sustainability which is absent at the time.

Teaching methods can also be enriched with new techniques and innovative approaches to achieve greater pedagogical outcomes.

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	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.*

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 EEC performed a site visit to the HEI where it was given the opportunity to meet with faculty, administrative staff, and students in the Diploma programme. The faculty and administrative support staff expressed their satisfaction regarding the working environment as well as the resources provided (materials & technological equipment). They mentioned that they are involved in decision making regarding procedures and problems they may occur, and checks and evaluations are carried out frequently to manage any challenges. Students, both those who have graduate and those who have not yet completed their studies where enthusiastic, regarding their experience during their studies and the opportunities given after completing their studies and acquiring their diploma. The EEC feels that college is using an adequate number of well trained and educated teaching staff which is dedicated to the fulfillment of their mission and the satisfaction of students' expectations.

Strengths

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

The College provides upgraded facilities and qualified academic staff.

The Management and Administration team are providing all the necessary resources and support both to staff and students.

The College has active committees making sure that standard procedures and policies are followed.

The College evaluates academic staff and courses, collects significant data based on students' feedback through questionnaires.

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 there are no specific areas of obvious weakness in terms of resources, there is a need for a continuous and sustainable investment in human and capital resources to maintain a market competitive advantage. This is particularly important, given the intense competition among colleges and universities in Cyprus for such resources.

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



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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?
- 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

The design and structure of the Diploma in Retail and Merchandising Management programme at City Unity College is running successfully. The EEC welcomes the revision of the programme and recommends its re-accreditation. The Diploma is supported by expert and motivated faculty, knowledgeable and efficient administrative staff, and appropriate level of capital, library, and IT resources. To ensure its quality and long-term success, the EEC makes the following recommendations:

1. Consider covering ethics and sustainability more widely in the programme and amend programme learning outcomes accordingly.
2. Consider adopting innovative educational methodologies to enhance the student learning experience.
3. Encourage student participation in the College Social networks and promote graduate and alumni activities.
4. Strengthen Erasmus collaborations for both faculty and students.
5. Commit to a continuous and sustainable investment in human and capital resources.

The committee would like to thank the managers, faculty, staff and students of the College for their support and their professionalism during the onsite visit.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof Yannis Georgellis	
Prof Maria Garcia-Benau	
Prof Alex Sahinidis	
Mr Zinon Leonidou	

Date: 13 January 2023