Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 29 February 2024

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution: Casa College**

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Hospitality Management, Operations and Services.

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

  In Greek:

  Πιστοποιητικό στη διαχείριση υπηρεσιών φιλοξενίας, σε κρουαζιερόπλοιο, (διάρκειας 1 έτους, 60 ECTS)

  In English:

   Cruise Ship Hospitality Operations (1 year Certificate, 60 ECTS)

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited Casa College - Nicosia on the 27th of February 2024. This evaluation focused on the one-year Certificate programme of study on Cruise Ship Hospitality Operations (CHO) and was based on the college's application sent by the CYQAA to the EEC and the onsite visit.

The suggested programme aligns with the employment needs of Cyprus which is a major tourist destination with numerous Cruise Ship Operators. The programme's feasibility study is mainly based on previous years' experience and data from Casa College and the capacity of the college.

The members of staff at Casa College made several presentations and, as a result, more information was provided to complement the report in areas of extended stakeholder engagement and the strengths and weaknesses of the college.

The EEC also took the opportunity to talk to eight of the programme students. During the presentations, it became apparent that the college is pursuing the development of a seven-floor sustainable building and has a longer strategic aim of establishing itself as an "exclusive hospitality school".

The visit gave the EEC the opportunity to address questions and gain further information and clarification about several areas of the report, namely those related to the design approach of the programme, the quality assurance, the teaching staff, the college research approach, support for students and general infrastructure.

The college provided additional material and information in a timely manner. All meetings took place in a collegial atmosphere, and the College's staff were always open and keen to accept the EEC recommendations.

The EEC members were pleasantly surprised by both the energy and passion of the staff members and the extremely joyful approach of the students describing their learning experiences at the college and Cyprus.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Ioannis S. Pantelidis	Professor	Ulster University
Beverley Wilson-Wünsch	Professor	IU International University of Applied Sciences
Theodoros Stavrinoudis	Professor	University of the Aegean
Emilia S. Shelegeda	Student	Cyprus University of Technology
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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*

- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

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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.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

The programme under evaluation is an already existing one-year certificate programme delivered in the English language.

The learning outcomes are in accordance with the European Qualification Framework.

The mission and values of the College are well defined, and the teaching and administrative staff are aware of them.

The College has established a clear quality assurance policy while the associated procedures allow the continuous improvement of the program.

Particularly decisive is the existence of all the necessary committees, especially the Internal Quality Assurance Committee and the quality assurance system, also clearly defined quality improvement process.

The policy for quality assurance is presented on the College's website in a satisfactory way (https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/quality-assurance/) while the quality assurance handbook (also available on-line) defines all necessary procedures. All the required regulations for the effective operation of the college are in place.

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

The programme under evaluation is to a great extend complying with the characteristics of Cyprus as a tourist destination, and the emerging needs on human resources in the cruise ship industry.

The lecturer and module evaluation form which is anonymously completed by the students at the end of each academic semester enhances the continues monitoring of the programme and the teachers.

The Program Monitoring and Review engages a great number of internal stakeholders. In the monitoring of the program the college cooperate with external stakeholders in a rather informal way.

Because of the subject of the program, they offer limited visits to cruise ships but instead practical training in well-known hotel firms is guaranteed by the partnership with two major hospitality firms (i.e. Atlantica Hotels and Tsokkos Hotels and Resorts).

The feasibility study included in the application (appendix 3) is sufficient.

According to the program's objectives, the main aspects of Cruise Ship Hospitality Operations are satisfied.

However, the number of elective courses is limited and the practical training element of the programme receives no ECTS. The EEC suggests some solutions for this in the areas of improvement and recommendations.

The course's aims and objectives, learning outcomes, content and teaching methodology are clearly and well presented. However, all the courses employ the same assessment methods.

The practical dimension of the program is supported by the extensive cooperation of the college with the industry.

1.3. Public information

The program's public information on the college's website is satisfactory. All the necessary information for the (prospective) students and other interested parties are available online.

The main internal regulations of the college are presented on-line, on the college's main webpage.

While the number of courses per semester is presented on the website, the content and requirements of each course could be presented in a more analytical way.

1.4. Information management

The college clearly has a coherent and ambitious management team, with a positive team spirit and a people-centric strategy.

The management has a clear vision for satisfying the demands of the job market. The college appears to have a sound approach to monitoring and disseminating students' attendance, study progression and retention data.

The college collects and analyses all the necessary information for the effective management of the programmes offered.

Students assess their satisfaction for each course, lecturer, and the support services offered by the college via online questionnaires.

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

The employment of several quality assurance procedures such as lecture's observation forms, annual staff evaluation forms, the evaluation of the programme by graduate students etc.

The existence of internal quality assurance system supported by several committees and well-defined procedures.

All internal stakeholders (student, teachers, administrative staff) must complete on-line questionnaires.

At a college level, standard procedures for the review and improvement of curricula are in place.

The program is running for the last five years with sufficient number of students (with the exemption of the Covid-19 period).

The college aims to safeguard academic integrity by adapting plagiarism policy and using an anti-plagiarism software.

The under-evaluation program is supported by a sufficient number of academic and administrative staff with a good teacher to student ratio.

The existence of a similar program with the one under evaluation and the associated opportunity for cross-disciplinary learning.

The college's previous experience in hospitality education and training.

The close cooperation with two well-known hotel chains and two cruise ship companies.

The College campus is centrally located.

The programme under evaluation is only offered by the college, it is unique in Cyprus.

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

The assessment methods are the same for all courses. The EEC suggests that different courses different assessment methods relevant to each course learning outcomes (still within the ministry imposed assessment limitations).

Using a more reliable program against plagiarism (i.e., Turnitin) is highly recommended by the EEC.

The establishment of an external Advisory Committee could be beneficial for the college and the students, to capitalize the well-established relationships with the hospitality industry partners in Cyprus.

The EEC suggests the following changes:

CSH113 can be adapted to "Health and Safety and life working on a cruise ship" and include more content about working life on a cruise ship.

PHIL111 Business Ethics to be refocused and renamed as Cruise ship sustainability and CSR.

ENG112 English Language for Tourism, to be renamed as Professional Communication and English for Tourism to better reflect the content of the module

The optional CSH121 Improving Skills at Sea, to be renamed Internship/Practical training an carry ECTS credits allowing students to do an internship at any hospitality or tourism operation.

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.2** Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
> **2.3** Practical training
> **2.4** Student assessment

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.

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

Casa College operates in line with European standards and all procedures discussed meet the practices of standard university operations in Cyprus and internationally. The programme is student-oriented and aims at developing and enhancing specific skills for the Cruise Industry.

All teaching materials are available to the students.

An overwhelming amount of satisfaction was expressed by the group of students about their educational experience as well as the support received from the teaching and administration staff. The same was expressed by the staff and faculty about the joy they experienced teaching these students.

The teaching and learning methods are highly student centered. The teaching and learning methods are flexible, and consider different modes of delivery, using a variety of pedagogical methods, facilitating the achievement of planned learning outcomes. Role plays, karaoke, and entertainment skits, are used in the classroom and it seems the students enjoy these very much.

2.2 Practical training

There are ample opportunities for students to receive practical training in hotels and restaurants in Cyprus. However, the EEC is concerned that these experiences are not the same as working on a ship. In addition, the experiences gained on the ship are limited to seasonality. This causes a gap in the students' practical exposure.   During the four months of the year when the shipping industry is inoperable on the island, practical internships are impossible.

2.3 Student assessment

The assessment criteria are well established and quite clear, and the students seem to be aware of what is expected of them. Small groups are monitored and assessed through oral examinations and presentations, as well as examinations.

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

Friendly and amicable student teacher atmosphere.
Strong bonds between the institution and the industry.
Practice is aligned with the theoretical knowledge.

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.

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The EEC gets the feeling that the hotel and restaurant industry's standards was the frame of reference for developing the course of study. Perhaps it is an idea to look at some best practices in the cruise shipping industry to ensure that the standards followed there are met as closely as possible.

New technology in teaching and learning to make the teaching and learning process more effective. Considering the average age of the students, more active use of technology, such as A.I. would help to improve learning.

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-centered 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

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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.

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Staff recruitment and development is clearly articulated in the application documentation. The college has transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff. Their procedures were communicated to the EEC during the presentations and are clearly established on the college website. The college ensures the competence of its teaching staff through its recruitment policies and procedures.

The qualifications of the faculty seem to be adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.

A clear upward mobility and promotion of the faculty is established although management noted the difficulty in competing with public universities and retaining academic staff that they have trained and developed.

There is an employee of the month initiative. The EEC suggests the creation of annual awards that may be decided by students to celebrate best practise.

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3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The number of teaching staff appears adequate for the number of projected students. Three out of six dedicated teaching staff for the programme hold qualifications that are directly relevant to this programme.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

There is some evidence of scholarly activity and research, but it is not clear how much of that is utilised within the curriculum. However, as this is a one-year certificate programme that focuses on operations this is not as important.

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

The EEC notes the passion and collegiality of the teaching team.

 Staff and administrative staff and with the student body.

All staff seem competent and well trained in their various areas of expertise.

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.

Faculty should be given opportunities to take advantage of programs such as ERASMUS+ in order to expand their teaching portfolio as well as bring back new ideas for the advancement of the college.

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	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.

4.1. Student admission

The EEC considered the college's application and the relevant annexes, the available information on the website meetings with admissions staff members and finally a meeting with eight students enrolled in the course.

From the data collected it became clear that all the necessary information regarding the students' admission is clear and available (on a college level) in a sufficient and satisfactory way.

The same also applies in the case of college's website which is well designed with satisfactory information (https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/international-admissions/).

The college offers students the opportunity to transfer credits earned at other colleges.

The EEC considers the tuition fees reasonable and affordable (as commented by the students).

Certain procedures for students with special needs are in place.

The students were very satisfied with their overall experience at the college.

The college has an analytic text - brochure with all the necessary information for its (prospective) international students.

4.2. Student progression

The college has established clear procedures and has available regulations on students' development and progression.

The teaching methods suggested for the program are rather general (the same in every course) but follow internationally accepted standards. The learning outcomes in each course are sufficient.

The assessment criteria employed per course are clearly defined but they are too many.

The college has sufficiently established procedures concerning student mobility for study or placement abroad via Erasmus+. That information is analytically presented in the college's website (https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/erasmus-3/). Students were fully aware of them.

The students are supported through certain learning tools (Moodle, Microsoft Teams etc).

Every student is supported by an academic mentor.

The academic staff is aware and trained on how to teach students with learning difficulties.

The students' drop-out rate is very low.

The students have the opportunity to transfer credits. In the documentation provided the credit transfer procedure is presented.

4.3. Student recognition

The college has a system of accreditation for prior learning in place.

4.4 Student certification

The students' certification is not clearly presented in the application, but adequate information is available on-line.

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

All the necessary information concerning admission criteria and requirements is in place.

The Student Affairs & Welfare Service and the procedures aim to support students with special needs.

The college supports students through academic mentoring.

The college offers extensive information online. All the procedures and actions aiming to support students in their everyday life are presented on the college's website.

There is a Student Council established.

Offering the students who might face personal or social challenges professional counsellor support is very important. It's part of a clear student-centric policy.

The offering of free career services (i.e. career days) to students.

The students are satisfied with the welfare services offered.

The teacher to student ratio as well as the administrative staff to student ratio is very good, thus enabling a positive educational experience.

The students' participation in teaching staff assessment is high (75 – 80%), demonstrating their active interest and involvement in the internal evaluation processes.

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

The EEC suggests that more efforts must be placed on students' practical training onboard cruise ships.

Simplify and streamline the assessment criteria for each course.

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.).*

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- *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.

5.1.Teaching and Learning resources

The college is very well organised in terms of learning and teaching resources and operates a digital learning environment that appears to be effective in providing students with sufficient materials.

The college appears to be consistently strengthening cooperation with cruise ship companies and hotel organisations, something that would enhance students' learning opportunities.

The college has ensured access to EBSCO database which is available to both staff and students.

5.2   Physical resources

The current physical learning environment is adequate. Classrooms are good in size with a variety in capacity and flexibility. It is noted that the longer-term strategy for the college is a complete redesign of the building that the EEC visited, increasing to a proposed seven-floor building.

The college has enough computers for the use of the students equipped with all the needed software.

The library appears well equipped with the use of online platforms such as EBSCO. Relevant books on the Cruise Industry were on the bookshelves in the library.
The staff supporting the library are very well organized and students from other courses get an opportunity to also work in the library. There is one small, designated study room on the side of the library. More designated quiet rooms for studying would be a benefit to the students.

5.3.   Human support resources

There are formal and informal meetings between the academics and students which support the teaching and learning environment. The EEC notes that there is a very collegiate environment among staff and students. The Academic Director and all staff of the college were very knowledgeable both in terms of processes and in terms of course design and student support. The fact that many of the staff have been with the college for numerous decades suggests a strong level of satisfaction with the management of the college.

5.4. Student support

All students met by the EEC were extremely happy with the level of support and the course delivered by the college. A very large number of them decided to continue their studies with the college in alternative courses upon completion of the CHO.

The support mechanisms provided to students are well established. The EEC notes that the college has demonstrated success in identifying students with dyslexia, dyspraxia or dysgraphia, referring them to specialised practitioners for comprehensive evaluation.

In recognition of the diverse learning needs of students, the college offers alternative assessment methods such as oral examinations. At least one member of staff has taken on formal training to recognize learning difficulties in students but the college is pursuing training for more members of staff. There is a clinical psychologist available in house to support students.

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

The college benefits from a long history in education and a very experienced and strong managerial, administrative, and academic team.

A very collegiate atmosphere enables students to approach any academic or administrative member of staff if they have an issue or problem.

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 notes that the college management is already considering investing in more flexible types of classroom furniture that allow for easy change of the class setup. The EEC strongly recommends that such investment is employed sooner rather than later as some classrooms employ a traditional linear setup that is not conducive to innovative teaching and learning methods of smaller cohorts.

More designated quiet rooms for studying in the library would be a benefit to the 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 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*

- o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
- o *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.

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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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 college has a positive management team and a great team spirit amongst the faculty. A very positive word of mouth amongst the student body and through social media is a clear strength of the college. Students appear to be very happy with the college support mechanisms.

The EEC is assured of the wider quality assurance processes but recommends that:

a) The programme design team needs to consider the suggestions made in section one (*Areas of improvement and recommendations*) of this report.

b) Consider the upgrade of the library's quiet areas and an earlier investment into modern classroom furniture that allows easier setup of innovative teaching spaces.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Ioannis S. Pantelidis	
Beverley Wilson-Wünsch	
Theodoros Stavrinoudis	
Emilia S. Shelegeda	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 29 February 2024