Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 1.10.2025

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution: Casa College**

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Hospitality**

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

  In Greek:

  Φιλοξενία και Τουρισμός (2 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Master (MBA)]

  In English:

   Hospitality and Tourism [3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (MBA)]

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any): plus optional foundation 30 ECTS**

A. Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The proposed MBA in Hospitality and Tourism is structured as a 90 ECTS, three-semester programme with a coherent progression from foundational management content to specialised, sector-specific modules and culminating in the option of a major masters project or package of elective modules.

The programme purpose and objectives are articulated but there is ambiguity as to who the programme is intended to attract, specifically whether it is designed to meet the needs of recent graduates of tourism and hospitality (or other cognate disciplines) or whether the MBA is a post-experience programme designed for those with managerial/leadership experience in the industry. The programme is anchored in the institution's mission to prepare graduates for leadership roles in hospitality and tourism, with intended learning outcomes (ILOs) that are measurable and mapped to the curriculum components

The evaluation report is based on a) the site visit and b) a comprehensive dossier that was provided to the panel in advance of the site visit. The site visit included meetings with the leadership team of Casa College, including the General Manager, the programme leadership team, key teaching staff, administrative support staff, students on existing undergraduate programmes and local and international industry stakeholders. As the programme has not operated to date, information gathered was of a general nature (relating to existing provision in Casa College) or based on intended outcomes for the programme.

The General Manager commenced the visit by explaining the background to the college together with the history and the strategy of the institution. The external committee were given insights into the mission, values and vision of the institution.

The focus in Casa College is on a student-focused approach to learning and pastoral care, individualised attention and the sensitivity to cultural diversity within the international student body. This is delivered through small class groups and intensive classroom delivery. The College prides itself in flexible delivery models, combining conventional, block and weekend delivery, depending on student needs and faculty availability.

Casa College operates in a very competitive environment in the private sector of Cypriot higher education. In the region of 8000 students graduate annually from high school in Cyprus and the majority attend the two public universities, others study abroad (UK, Greece etc.) and only about 500 remain as a potential recruits for the private universities and colleges. The vast majority of students who are recruited into the private institutions are from international markets. In 2023, Casa College made the strategic decision to focus exclusively on hospitality and tourism education, with a core undergraduate degree in Hotel Administration to which will be added a BSc in Sustainable Tourism in 2026. The College also operates a one-year certificate programme in Cruise Ship Hospitality and a range of short courses in tourism and hospitality.

The proposed MBA will be the College's first undertaking in postgraduate education, and it is being launched in association with expertise from the Romanian- American University of Bucharest.

The College places considerable importance on industrial placement and training within all programmes with a strong emphasis on converting placements into long-term employment. There is recognition of the significance of social impact and community outreach, which is deemed to be imperative, and environmental sustainability is also a priority.

Student recruitment activities make use of national branding of Cyprus as a destination for education located in Europe but with English as the language of delivery. International recruitment is through selected fairs and local agents. Recruitment of students from traditionally strong markets of Russia and Ukraine has been hit by the on-going conflict but the College is now focusing on new markets from Armenia, Indonesia and Georgia to expand the geographic scope. The Philippines remains a strong source of high-achieving students.

NOTE:

This report relates to the accreditation of an MBA programme in Hospitality and Tourism over 3 academic semesters with an ECTS rating of 90. Given the stated entry level for this programme, based on academic outcomes (an appropriate undergraduate degree) and English capability (IELTS 5.0 or equivalent) and aspects of intended content, it is clear that this proposal does not meet EQF requirements for an MBA as it currently stands. It may be suitable for accreditation as an MSc degree.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Astrid Dickinger	Head of School of Tourism and Service Management	Modul University Vienna
Tom Baum	Professor of Tourism Employment	University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
Peter Lugosi	Professor of Culture and Organisation	Oxford Brookes University
Maria Nestoros	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:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- *benefits from external expertise*
- *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
  - collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.
  - conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.
  - performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.
  - establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.
  - conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - *selection criteria*
  - *intended learning outcomes*

- o *qualification awarded*
- o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- o *pass rates*
- o *learning opportunities available to the students*
- o *graduate employment information*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that
- o Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- o Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- o External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- o Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- o Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - 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*
  - o *industry trend analysis.*
  - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - o *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - o *employer insights concerning career readiness*

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*

- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

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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

Casa College has in place comprehensive policies and practices that ensure the operationalisation of quality assurance at an institutional and programme level in ways that satisfy national quality assurance requirements. Current QA processes include an established QA Committee, a designated QA officer and comprehensive internal feedback/evaluation protocols on teaching, learning and the wider student experience. The College has satisfied previous accreditation exercises with respect to quality assurance, and similar policies and processes are expected to apply in the case of the proposed MBA programme.

In relation to this programme, established processes applied to the design of the curriculum and assessment and will also apply to on-going improvements when the programme is operational. A senior external professor from the Romanian – American University in Bucharest supported the development of the programme.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Established processes and procedures for design, approval, monitoring and review are in place from existing programmes and these should be replicated in the implementation of the MBA.

There is considerable variation in the format, content and presentation of the module description documentation, including the number of core textbooks, what are considered appropriate journals, and the indicative publications. The scope and types of publications cited here i.e. key tourism and hospitality journals and outputs do not reflect cutting edge scholarship in the field(s).

It is intended that the direction of the programme will be guided by inputs from the Advisory Board, made up of representatives of main industry stakeholders to ensure the relevance of module content. However, there does not seem to be a consistent process in place to facilitate this role for the Advisory Board at present within the governance structures of the College.

In relation to programme design, it appears that demand was established by reference, primarily, to the existing undergraduate student community and, as such, the programme was conceived as a progression opportunity for graduates of the BSc in Hotel Administration. Such demand was confirmed in our discussion with current students who were also ambivalent as to whether the potential qualification was an MBA or an alternative Masters degree. Some discussions may also have taken place with external stakeholders relating to demand for this programme but no documentary record of such was provided.

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Internally, the programme was designed with the support of external consultancy support, including from the Romanian-American University in Bucharest and approved through the Casa College committee structure, including the Academic Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee. However, no documentation (i.e. Minutes) to evidence this process were seen.

Going forward, Casa College is well–positioned to replicate existing programme monitoring and review processes and procedures through their existing committee and designated staffing roles.

1.3 Public information

The Casa College website provides clear and accessible information about the College, its programmes and the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). Specific information is also available to students via the Moodle platform and from tutors and administrators. More generally, the College supports public information about its activities via student booklets, an in-house magazine on a yearly basis and the webpage.

Public information is present in draft form (admissions, language of instruction, programme components), with a plan to publish staff and modules post-accreditation, but validated employment and outcomes data are absent at this stage. With respect to information management, the dossier references KPIs and research/analytics webpages, yet no operational tracer study or employer-feedback loop is in place to evidence continuous programme improvement and transparency of outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Casa College has established information management systems in place with respect to their existing programmes and these include information on current students, their progress and careers after graduation. It is expected that similar systems will be put in place with respect to this new programme.

Benchmarking student outcomes against a changing tourism and hospitality ecosystem in Cyprus and beyond requires that effective information systems are in place to monitor such changes. While industry links are in place (as evidenced through our external stakeholder meeting), it is important that this process remains dynamic going forward within the new programme to ensure the relevance of content and work placements.

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

- Established QA systems are in place, including comprehensive internal feedback/evaluation protocols on teaching, learning and the wider student experience. This will transfer readily to the new programme.
- Prospective students and faculty are enthusiastic about the implementation of the new programme.

- Stakeholder support for the programme is strong.
- Data transparency systems are in place for existing programmes.
- The institution demonstrates a strong willingness to improve and modernise its offering.

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.

- There is a need to ensure that the programme is current and relevant for the intended level; for example, the incorporation of emerging fields, particularly Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation, would increase relevance and competitiveness.
- Ensure there is consistency in the format, content and presentation of the module description documentation, including the number of core textbooks, what are considered appropriate journals, and the indicative publications. The scope and types of publications cited here i.e. key tourism and hospitality journals and outputs should reflect cutting-edge scholarship in the field(s).
- Need to enhance QA record keeping – minutes of decision-making relating to curriculum and assessment decisions

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	Partially 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*

- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
- *The time allocation for each assessment task isexplicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
- *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

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

During the accreditation site visit, 8 instructors who are scheduled to teach in the programme were present to provide insights into their courses. One was not named in the application material but present in the review meeting. Some of the teachers appeared to have limited ownership of the proposed modules and this could make aspects of delivery problematic.

The module descriptors detail a student-centred pedagogy with case teaching, projects, presentations, and simulations, aligned to module ILOs and culminating assessments. Yet the number of assessment instances may better cater to an undergraduate than a graduate degree program. Furthermore, as indicated the assessments at times do not assess what was set forth in the learning outcomes (e.g. CB and Marketing does not address a marketing plan, however, compiling one is the assessment method of choice).

Semester logistics and workload transparency (periods per week, ECTS attribution) are explicit. However, in the discussion there was not clarity whether course formats would be blocked, or continuous. While it was stated that the delivery model was intentionally flexible, this approach has implications for student workload management, delivery/pedagogy and assessment. There remained some open questions as to how the allocated hours are intended to be distributed between classroom instruction, group work, independent and other forms of learning.

There is substantive overlap of content such as the courses Hospitality Management, Tourism Management and Risk management. This comes at the expense of not having sufficient time to

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deepen knowledge. Many lectures are at a rather shallow level comparable to a bachelor level course. Further examples are the courses involving project management as well as the courses covering digital marketing and information systems. Most courses ask for a project plan or business plan; this should be re-visited considering the learning outcomes.

2.2 Practical training

The programme does include "practical training" (June–September, mandatory for award), but no ECTS attribution and no detailed learning outcomes/hours/supervision model are provided in the dossier. The internship is framed as necessary for award with a certificate of completion, yet documentation on placement quality assurance, mentoring, assessment, and risk management is not appended. During the site visit it was evidenced that the students receive visits of mentors during their internship. It is a matter of formalising these tightly knit quality assurance measures and including them in the accreditation material.

2.3 Student assessment

Assessment policies describe multiple modes (exams, projects, case analyses, reflection) with indicative weighting schemes and published criteria; complaints/appeals routes are defined at institutional level. All modules appear to adopt a common menu of assessment activities and a similar weighting of components. Given the diversity of content and, potentially, delivery mode (continuous, block) to be assessed across all modules, this is inappropriate, and each module requires a bespoke assessment approach, subject to College regulations and related constraints.

In the event of a student appealing a grade, the first step is to discuss with the lecturer; if no consensus is reached then the matter is escalated to the academic director for adjudication/ decision. Within existing programmes, it is very unusual for there to be disputes over grades

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

- Constructive alignment: Teaching, assessment, and ILOs are explicitly mentioned in the module descriptors; assessment rubrics and variety promote fairness and validity. The alignment of assessment in light of the learning outcomes need to be re-visited.
- Workload clarity: Semester structure is transparent (13+2 weeks) with ECTS mapping at module level.
- Student agency: Emphasis on projects, presentations, and critical dialogue is consistent with master-level pedagogy.

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.

- Internship design: Formalise the practical training with: (i) learning outcomes, (ii) minimum hours / workload equivalence, (iii) supervision/mentoring responsibilities, (iv) assessment method (pass/fail with evidence), (v) QA of host sites (MoUs) and risk/insurance procedures.
- Moderation/second marking: Document internal moderation and second-marker sampling for summative work; provide an annual assessment board report template.
- Formative feedback: Set service standards (e.g., 15 working days) for feedback return across modules (many descriptors suggest timely feedback; codify and monitor).
- Introduce a systematic process to ensure the alignment of course contents to minimize overlaps between courses.
- Design assessment for each module in accordance with learning outcomes and requirements of the subject area.

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

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

The institution has well-established protocols for staff recruitment, evaluation of qualifications and integration into the teaching team. This is based on the current configuration of permanent staff based in Cyprus. The qualifications criteria for appointments at different levels were presented. Colleagues referred to an informal internal culture of professional development, which was coupled with formal mechanisms such as structured peer observation to foster professional development, provide feedback and share good practice in learning and teaching. Participation in the Erasmus+ program was identified a pathway to accessing wider professional development opportunities.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The proposed programme team comprises a 50-50 mix of full-time, 'local' staff (5) and part-time staff (5), based abroad, who will deliver their content in intensive teaching blocks. Based on this configuration of part and full-time colleagues, the college has a substantial number of doctoral-level trained staff or staff undertaking doctoral studies. A significant number of the senior roles i.e. at associate professor or professor levels are among the part-time faculty rather than the full-time,

local staff. The expertise covered a range of relevant specialisms, including general and strategic management, finance and economics, tourism, hospitality operations, law and research methods.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

The level and intensity of research reflect the profile of a teaching-led institution. The teaching, assessment and administrative requirements of the program delivery and the college's existing processes require substantial staff input. Colleagues highlighted examples areas of current research interest, and pointed to sources of organisational data, which could be used in future research. Staff noted that support was in place to attend research-related events (i.e. workshops and conferences), which colleagues could apply for. The CV section (Annex 3) is extensive; however, recent peer-reviewed outputs specifically in hospitality and/or tourism are uneven across the team. The team identified potential areas of future research and collaborative arrangements with partners and students to facilitate the intensification of research. These could be realised or facilitated partially through the Casa College Research Centre, the remit of which could be articulated more clearly.

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

- The combination of FT and PT staff encompasses a breadth of expertise to cover the core topic areas for the Masters, based on the proposed content.
- Most of the proposed delivery team are trained at doctoral level.
- The length of employment among permanent full-time staff reflects a positive working environment.
- The proposed model has clear time allocations for module delivery.
- There is evidence of research activity across the programme team.

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.

- Clarify the procedures in place to ensure that the large pool of part-time staff are sufficiently inducted into the college's teaching, learning and administrative culture to ensure that the student-centred learning approach is maintained throughout the proposed programme. This includes clarifying how support will be provided in and around block taught content by colleagues on fractional contracts.
- Ensure there is sufficient contingency planning in case the input of part-time staff changes, which may challenge the viability for block delivery of the programme.
- Systematise the professional development activities for colleagues to ensure that best practice is promoted and staff have structured developmental trajectories.

- Clarify the research objectives for staff and the resources available to support the development of research.
- Clarify the remit and resources of the Research Centre in facilitating research among staff, for example in utilising practitioner networks in developing applied research, engaging in pedagogic research, and using the pool of international colleagues to develop collaborative research.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification *(ESG 1.4)*

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
4.2 Student progression
4.3 Student recognition
4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, 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, process and criteria

Admission criteria are transparent (i.e. Bachelor's degree and English language standards per national policy with relatively low-test score thresholds). Interviews are used to confirm suitability for candidates with a GPA <80%.

Transfer credit rules are stated, with an upper limit of ≤ 50% of programme credits, and interviews are also required for transfer students. All interviews are recorded for later reference.

Recognition policies are referenced (transfers, mobility, prior achievements), but formal cooperation with ENIC/NARIC is not evidenced in the dossier; likewise, Record of Prior Learning (RPL) (non-formal/informal learning) procedures are only generally described.

4.2 Student progression

To support student progression there are processes in place already upon student arrival. During orientation, students are informed about the module outline and expectations. They learn about subject marking criteria that are followed through by the instructors in the classroom.

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Continuous assessment is periodically checked by the registrar. There is a software in place to monitor engagement, including marks, missed units, missed assignments. Students are called to the office to have a conversation. As per the information provided during the site visit, typically a solution is found to accommodate and support struggling students. Sometimes a probation letter is necessary that informs students about their progress and the improvements necessary for progression.

The Use of AI in education is a general challenge. Thus, training is planned for the lecturers and processes as well as regulations are in place regarding the use of AI for assignments. Plagiarism has been an issue already addressed. The tool plagiarism checker X supports teaching staff in detecting plagiarism. Students are informed during orientation about the consequences of plagiarism.

Consequence of academic offense: level is essential (e.g. if an invigilator for exams to detect cheating, the paper is disqualified. A serious offense such as plagiarism is dealt with by the disciplinary committee).

Student affairs and QM deal with requests from students with special needs. There are processes in place to accommodate examination types and times in collaboration with the academic director. There needs to be documentation about the health condition and, after forms are completed, lecturers are informed in a sensitive manner about indivudal study plans.

4.3 Student recognition

For new students, recognition of prior learning is undertaken during admissions (transfer credit form) the programme coordinator and academic director assess and inform the team about the recognition. The final credit transfer has to be approved by the Ministry of Education.

4.4 Student certification

The process set forth by the Ministry for student certification is closely followed. Students receive certification including diplomas, supplements and related documents in line with the European Higher Education Standards.

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

- Clear and published admissions criteria including English proficiency, as per national guidelines.
- Structured transfer policy with credit caps aligned to good practice.
- Processes in place to support student progress.
- Diploma Supplement practice is consistent with European norms.

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.

- Append evidence of cooperation and recognition workflows (for both student admissions and staff credentials).
- Recognition of Prior Learning procedures: Publish detailed RPL policy and exemplars (e.g., mapping professional experience to ILOs with assessment).
- Progression analytics: Once the program is operational, report progression, completion, and withdrawal rates annually and act via QA.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**
> **5.2 Physical resources**
> **5.3 Human support resources**
> **5.4 Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

5.1 Teaching and learning resources

The dossier and site visit indicate adequate and accessible teaching and learning resources. Digital learning is supported via Moodle and appreciated by students and faculty. As content delivery via Moodle is independent of enrolment numbers, the anticipated additional cohort will not impose any constraints.

The number of major hospitality-specific journals/databases should be augmented. There is a limited section of books in the library for the MBA, yet the e-book section seems to cater to students' needs.

5.2 Physical resources

Physical resources include modern classrooms, IT labs, and a library; the College occupies central Nicosia premises and lists infrastructure in Annex 4 (library systems, IT, labs).

The library uses KOHA and collaborates with other libraries; the new building and IT backbone (interactive boards, Wi-Fi) are highlighted in the SWOT narrative.

Upon site visit the physical resources were presented and seem to adequately support the study program planed. Students indicated that they were very satisfied with the physical resources provided. They only expressed a wish for a cafeteria to be added. Students are also aware of the services offered and make good use of them.

Resource scaling for projected intakes is not demonstrated.

5.3 Human support resources

There are a number of Administrative/student services detailed in the application material (Student Affairs & Welfare Office, academic advising, mentoring, mobility (Erasmus+), disability/access services, academic tutoring, and career office).

The additional program may warrant a revenue stream to even extend the services e.g. for counselling and mobility that do not seem to be fully staffed. When asked about the human facilities, student's confirmed that they are very satisfied with the support. This seems to be fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.

5.4 Student support

Student support seems to be adequate. Students report on their experience studying at CASA College are very positive. This is shown be the below examples provided:

a) Internship program. Students report on varied exposure to job demands and insights and adequate support/mentoring from the College.

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b) Academic mentorship for students available to students. Students are impressed with industry experience of teaching staff. Students enjoy hotel visits and industry excursions.
c) International students are supported in their transition to Cyprus.
d) Students feel very connected to individual staff member sat Casa College.
e) Student mobility: Erasmus is appealing but it is difficult regarding the visa process as the student body is very international.

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

- Adequate premises and IT with adequate infrastructure and central location.
- Moodle as central platform for learning and feedback.
- Comprehensive student services framework, including disability/access and career liaison.
- Library system with KOHA and collaboration potential; baseline e-resources in place.
- Expansion plans demonstrate institutional growth.

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.

- Staffing: Appoint permanent counsellor(s) and a mobility officer
- Library Subject holdings: Expand hospitality/tourism journals and industry databases (e.g., STR/Euromonitor) to deepen sector coverage, as expected for an MBA type programme.
- Capacity planning: Provide a resource-to-enrolment model (rooms, lab seats, library occupancy, staff-to-student ratios) for two intake scenarios.

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 dissertation6.3**
> **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?*
- *Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

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.

Casa College provides a positive academic environment supported by motivated students and dedicated faculty with strong institutional commitment to quality assurance.

At the same time, there are opportunities for enhancement.

a) The current curriculum design does not fully reflect the positioning as an MBA programme i.e. regarding sufficient work experience for entry requirements (e.g. minimum 2 years) and the inclusion of introductory rather than advanced level content.
b) There is substantive overlap between course contents.
c) The course objectives, learning outcomes and contents are misaligned.
d) Sometimes the assessments ask for tasks not previously covered in the course content or ones that do not align with assessing what was stated in the learning outcomes.
e) Upon review of the course contents there should be a focus on introducing modern and innovative themes (e.g. Sustainability, Artificial Intelligence, digital transformation, strategic change management).

Overall, the programme is compliant with most standards but would significantly benefit from targeted improvements in curriculum modernisation, workload balance, and deepening the knowledge provided in several areas.

With these adjustments, the MBA could distinguish itself as a strong and relevant offering in the Cypriot higher education landscape. But, as the programme currently stands, especially pertaining to admissions criteria, we are of the view that it does not meet requirements for an MBA and that designation as an MSc may be appropriate.

External stakeholder integration: Establish and minute an External Advisory Board (industry/employer/alumni), and show how its ongoing inputs are used in programme revision within the QA cycle.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Astrid Dickinger	
Tom Baum	
Peter Lugosi	
Maria Nestoros	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 1.10.2025