

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** Atlantis College
- **Town:** Liopetri
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
Programme Name
In English:
Master of Business Administration
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English or Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: MBA - Management, MBA - Public Administration, MBA – Wellness Management



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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The external evaluation of the proposed Master of Business Administration (MBA) with concentrations in Management, Wellness Management and Public Administration took place in person on 19 December 2024 at the premises of Atlantis College (Liopetri). One member of the external evaluation committee attended fully and intervened virtually due to constraints/uncertainties with flights and conflict situation. The three other members, including the student member attended in person. The agenda for the meetings and documentation were provided in advance.

The committee was introduced to the history, structure, and existing diploma offerings of Atlantis College by the Head of the Institution and the Director of Academic Affairs. Subsequently, detailed aspects of the proposed MBA programme with concentrations were considered during several sessions with the programme coordinator, members of the internal evaluation committee, coordination committee, teaching staff, and administrative staff. The committee also met separately existing College students and alumni (Diploma in Business Administration and Aviation Management) as well as external stakeholders (the Mayor of the Ayia Napa region, Deputy Mayor of Liopetri and President of the Famagusta Provincial Organization).

Overall, the committee was given the opportunity to ask numerous questions across a range of institutional and programme-level aspects. In addition, the committee visited the premises and the presentations/clarifications we received were quite helpful. The committee is therefore grateful to the Head of the Institution for the welcome and opportunity to discuss the proposed programme in an open, candid and constructive atmosphere.

External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Teerooven Soobaroyen	Professor	Aston University, UK
Michael Vlassopoulos	Professor	University of Southampton, UK
Fida Afiouni	Professor and Associate Provost	American University of Beirut. Lebanon
Demetra Koutsila	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

B. 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*

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

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- 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:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *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?*

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.

Atlantis College is a well-established institution focusing on key disciplines and offering accredited programmes, suited to the demands of the local industry, and contributing to the upskilling of existing employees in private and public sector entities as well as students progressing from their local secondary schooling. It currently has approximately 270 students, with about 40 enrolled on bachelor programmes, and it is understood international students represent about 40% of the population. All programmes are run on one site in the town of Liopetri. Atlantis College gained Erasmus Charter in 2017, which has enabled staff and student mobility, and developed international relationships with colleges. Commendably, the College has close connections with employers, such as Swissport for the Aviation Management course and Adams Beach for the hospitality and tourism management course, which could help facilitate practical learning and internships. With the MBA proposal, there is scope to enhance such relationships with companies (e.g. hotels) and public sector (local authorities) and achieve distinctiveness/added-value.

Strengths

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

With regards to Sub-Area 1.1, and since the College has been operating for some time, the documentation and discussions show there is a sound policy for quality assurance at the institution involving areas such as roles and responsibilities of staff (academic and administrative) and students, academic integrity, approval of courses/programmes, role of programme committees, supporting students with special needs, grievance procedures, plagiarism policy and annual monitoring evaluation and report (AMER).

With regards to Sub-Area 1.2, the proposed MBA's general and specific programme aims highlight the key expectations not only in terms of transmission of academic knowledge, but also in terms of application, experiential learning, ethics & corporate social responsibility, developing reflective practitioners. The proposals around concentration-specific modules (Wellness Management, Public Administration) denote an attempt at innovation and responsiveness to local circumstances.

Sub-Area 1.3 and Sub-Area 1.4: This being a new programme, there was no public information or information management to be evaluated.

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.

With regards to Sub-Area 1.1.

While most of current QA procedures would apply to a Masters' level course, it is noted that the research thesis component (MBA 700) will require engagement with empirical research. If such research requires primary data approaches (e.g. interviews), this may pose particularly ethical, safety and confidentiality concerns, which will need a formal policy in place to evaluate student research proposals.

With regards to Sub-Area 1.2.

The MBA designation implies a generalist and career development approach to the study of business and management and as such any such programme needs to incorporate key aspects of ethics, social responsibility, markets and economies, marketing, finance and accounting, people and organisational behaviour, operation and business innovation, strategy, and entrepreneurship. As it stands, only the MBA - Management concentration brings together these key elements, with some crucial aspects (e.g. ethics, operations, HRM, entrepreneurship) not covered in other concentrations. The programme aims are not therefore fully reflected across all concentrations.

The MBA program has a clear structure with defined concentrations. However, the rationale for these concentrations lacks clarity, and there is no comprehensive mapping of learning objectives at the programme level. Additionally, there is no systematic way to measure how course objectives contribute to the overall programme learning outcomes. There is also a concern about the meaning of 'wellness management'. The documentation and discussion with stakeholders seem to indicate that this concentration addresses specific issues/needs within the hospitality and tourism sector although the related outcomes/description of courses and further clarifications obtained during the visit indicate this concentration is about managing employee/workplace wellbeing. The latter has a wider remit and is potentially a very good idea once clarity of purpose, messaging and alignment of programme aims, programme outcomes, course objectives and learning outcomes have been addressed.

To ensure that students learn what they are supposed to learn at the end of the programme, it is important to have a clear curriculum map and assessment plan. The curriculum map (as a table) lists all the programme learning outcomes and the courses in which these learning outcomes will be addressed and assessed. This is an important exercise to make sure that each programme learning outcome is assessed at least once, and equally to avoid over assessing a specific learning outcome. It is also important because it ensures that the programme's aims, learning outcomes, and specific course objectives are aligned. The curriculum map helps ensure that the learning assessment tools allow you to measure the level of student's learning for each course objective, and then collectively for the program's learning objectives. This is important to ensure learning is taking place in line with the programme objectives; it will enable you to know whether students learned what they were supposed to learn in each course and thereby meet the overall programme-level outcomes. Relatedly, an assessment plan is also important. It lists how each learning outcome will be assessed. Usually, it is recommended to have at least 2 direct measures and 1 indirect measure of each learning outcome. Although discussions during the visit reveal an interest to vary assessments, the documentation is not sufficiently clear (e.g. generally stating exams, tests, assignments). At present, such information is not available, and it becomes hard to visualize how the program's aims and learning outcomes will be met. Finally, while there is some indication of external inputs in the design and review process of College programmes, there seems to be no formal process for doing so (e.g. membership of programme evaluation and review committees).

The programme currently lacks a clear differentiation strategy. Relying on geographical location (i.e. only institution in the area) will be insufficient to attract and retain students in a competitive market and in sufficient numbers (for each concentration in particular). The overall target numbers (approximately 20) may lead to low numbers in each concentration-specific course and not conducive to peer learning and student experience.

Recommendations

Area 1.1. (a) College QA procedures should be updated to include a policy of on the ethical approval of student research projects.

Area 1.2. (a) Strategic positioning and market differentiation: The College should develop a unique selling point (USP), identifying and promoting distinct features of the programme, potentially by relying on existing industry and other local/ regional partnerships and innovative teaching methods. Engaging further with these partners will enable the offering of internships, projects, and networking opportunities for students. A market analysis needs to be conducted to align programme with current industry demands and trends, bearing in mind as well the intention to recruit international students.

Area 1.2. (b) Progressing gradually with concentrations: At an initial stage, an MBA programme with no formal concentration can be prioritised, while allowing for a few wellness and public administration courses to be run as elective courses in the second semester to gauge actual interest without committing significant resources and costs. If concentrations are implemented, it should be made clear that the topic of the research thesis will be in the relevant concentration.

Area 1.2. (c) Review the content and coverage of the compulsory courses to ensure these cover the key elements of an MBA programme (e.g. ethics, operations, HR, entrepreneurship). For example, the compulsory courses need not be strictly organized in disciplinary silos and can group cognate areas of study.

Area 1.2. (d) Once the above is clarified, proceed with the quality assurance stage of the programme design, by developing a curriculum map, consisting of a table showing how the programme's aims are translated into learning outcomes, and how these learning outcomes are distributed across the various courses, and how each of these learning outcomes will be assessed within each course, and when (i.e. assessment plan). We also recommend that you use Bloom's taxonomy and sample verbs across the taxonomy to determine the level of difficulty of each learning outcome (see table inserted below) and to balance between low-level and high-level learning domains considering this is a Masters' level programme. For example, the verb 'understand' in course learning outcomes (often used in the documentation) is too vague to be adequately tested against an assessment regime.

Area 1.2. (e) Constitute a formal MBA Advisory Committee regrouping employers, businesses, public officials and former College students to inform the continuous development, review and support of the programme.

Cognitive Domain (Thinking, Knowledge)

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Definition: Remembers previously learned material Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define - Identify - Label - List - Name - Recall - State - Memorize - Repeat - Underline 	Definition: Grasps the meaning of material (lowest level of understanding) Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe - Discuss - Explain - Paraphrase - Give example - Translate - Restate - Tell 	Definition: Uses learning in new and concrete situations (higher level of understanding) Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply - Carry out - Demonstrate - Illustrate - Solve - Use - Compute - Dramatize - Practice - Sketch - Operate 	Definition: Understands both the content and structure of the material Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze - Categorize - Compare - Contrast - Differentiate - Distinguish - Outline - Categorize - Critique - Debate - Classify - Infer 	Definition: Formulates new structures from existing knowledge and skills Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combine - Construct - Design - Develop - Formulate - Generate - Plan - Propose - Assemble - Compose - Create - Produce - Set-up - Integrate - Generalize 	Definition: Judges the value of material for a given purpose Sample Verbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess - Argue - Conclude - Defend - Convince - Evaluate - Interpret - Justify - Support - Appraise - Estimate - Grade - Measure - Rate - Revise - Value - Recommend - Summarize

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	Not applicable
1.4 Information management	Not applicable

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.*
3. *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly 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.

With regards to Areas 2.1 to 2.3, the documentation highlights that the College is committed to delivering the MBA programme in a way that provides an enriching and engaging learning experience to students. Insights obtained from discussions with students of the existing undergraduate programmes and teaching staff suggest that a key feature of the institution is the strong sense of a tight-knit community, which is valued by both students and staff. Small class sizes create a personalized learning atmosphere, enabling students to receive individualized attention, and fostering a strong sense of community around the College. In addition, College policies around examinations, grading, and student appeals are outlined in the documentation and demonstrate adequate attention to these matters, albeit that some areas of improvement around student workloads and feedback were highlighted in a recent Annual Monitoring Evaluation Report (AMER) for the Diploma in Business Administration. The current MBA programme documentation also tends to emphasise the traditional lecture as the main mechanism of learning, which limits opportunities for varied forms of student engagement.

Strengths

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

- The college provides a supportive learning environment and students in existing programmes feel encouraged to engage in class discussions. Small class sizes contribute positively to this.

- Students in existing programmes seemed to be very satisfied with their access to course lecturers, highlighting the approachability and availability of faculty (whether full time or part-time), including via electronic means (e.g. MS Teams).
- The existing diversity of the student body enhances the learning experience. The varied age groups, the mix of domestic and international students, and the blend of full-time and part-time learners create an enriching academic environment, offering a wide range of perspectives, and a broader understanding of global and professional contexts. Such experience would very much help with the running of the proposed MBA programme.

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.

With regards to Area 2.1., the documentation does not sufficiently set out details about the type of student-centred methods to be provided and how these can enrich the learning experience. With an MBA programme, there will also be a wide variety (and numbers) of students with different learning styles and needs. Some students will be able to draw from their existing work experience to engage with the material while others may struggle to do so if they have had little to no employment experience or opportunity to understand the practical aspects. Equally, some students may require flexibility to catch up with lectures/learning activities due to work and caring responsibilities. Research-led material is not sufficiently emphasised in the course descriptions. The use of MS teams since the pandemic has offered a practical platform for sharing resources/materials but it not currently used to record lectures. There are no other virtual learning platforms.

With regards to Area 2.2., and despite the existing practice-led ethos of the College (e.g. Aviation Management, Aesthetics), there has been limited embedding of practical aspects in the MBA programme, instead emphasising academic elements. At the same time, commendably, there was a positive response to the evaluation committee's queries about embedding more practical content in the programme.

With regards to Area 2.3, there seems to be a good understanding of assessment strategies within the teaching team, although the AMER report and discussion with students highlighted some gaps with regards to assessment feedback and communication of expectations (i.e. breakdown of different type of assessments).

Recommendations

Area 2.1. (a) Introduce a more diverse set of student-centered teaching methods to enrich the MBA student experience. As a rule, all MBA courses should have case studies to foster critical thinking and at least one guest speaker (from practice) to provide industry insights. Furthermore, there should be group projects and role-playing activities to enhance collaboration and consider business simulations as well for experiential learning. In the future, the possibility of 'live' group consultancy projects could be considered.

Area 2.1 (a) At the same time, student's engagement with research skills should be strengthened by design course assignments that require students to critically engage with academic literature, such as literature reviews, research critiques, or research-based presentations. This will gradually build students' ability to read and reflect on academic articles to better prepare them for the thesis requirement at the end of the programme.

Area 2.1. (c) To better support students with varying learning abilities and needs, the College could consider adopting a policy of recording certain educational activities, such as lectures and seminars. Making these recordings available to students, would serve as a valuable tool for reinforcing learning and aiding revision. This would also provide students with additional flexibility, especially for those who may miss lectures due to care responsibilities or work commitments.

Area 2.2. (a) To enhance the practical skills and industry readiness of students, consider incorporating more practical elements into the training of students in a more structured way. For example, a one semester industry placement (internship) could be offered as an elective course in Semester 2 of the programme. This option would allow students, with no current work experience, to gain hands-on experience and apply theoretical knowledge in real-world professional settings. The internship could be assessed through a reflective portfolio, project completion during the internship and an assessment by the placement organisation.

Area 2.3 (a) Consider adopting an online educational platform to facilitate the consistent administration of the assessment process. Such a platform would enable more efficient management of assignments, grading, and feedback, ensuring accessibility for both students and faculty.

Area 2.3. (b) The programme could benefit from a more consistent policy regarding feedback and marking turnaround times. That is, ensure that all lecturers are expected to provide written feedback on assignments, enabling students to understand their performance and areas for improvement more effectively. Establish and communicate a maximum waiting period for the marking and return of assignments and exams. This transparency will help manage student expectations and maintain consistency across courses.

Area 2.3. (c) Revise course syllabi to include detailed information on a description of the teaching pedagogies employed in each course and a detailed breakdown of grading structures and assessment criteria to ensure clarity and transparency for students.

Area 2.3. (d) Streamline timing of assessments so that students do not find themselves having to handle many assessment deadlines during the same period/week.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially 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.

Area 3.1: Teaching staff recruitment and development

Atlantis College has established a fair, transparent, and clear process for the recruitment of teaching staff. However, despite having a good process in place, the institution has struggled to attract full-time faculty members. This overreliance on part-time and visiting staff affects the consistency and sustainability of teaching quality and student support. There is also limited evidence of professional development opportunities for teaching staff, particularly in enhancing teaching skills and adopting innovative pedagogical methods.

Area 3.2. Teaching Staff Number and Status

The number of full-time faculty members is not optimal to support the MBA program in an effective and sustainable way. There are currently 4 full-time faculty members and 5 part-time faculty members. This reliance on part-time and visiting staff impacts the quality and consistency of instruction, as part-time faculty typically have limited availability for student support and program development. Additionally, there are no senior faculty members above the rank of Assistant Professor. This lack of senior academic leadership affects the program's ability to provide mentorship, lead research initiatives, and ensure high-level academic oversight.

Area 3.3. Synergies of Teaching and Research

Currently, all courses in the MBA program rely heavily on textbooks as the primary source of learning material. Although all faculty members have a doctoral degree and some evidence of research, the documentation is not clear

as to how will students be exposed to academic articles or other research-based readings. This reliance on textbook learning limits the development of critical thinking skills and does not adequately equip students with the research skills necessary for academic inquiry. As a result, students may face significant challenges when required to write a thesis at the end of the programme, as they have not been trained to read, analyse, and critically reflect on academic research. To be clear, the research methodology course cannot be the only course to prepare students on the academic journey in writing a thesis. There also appears to be limited evidence of faculty integrating their own research into classroom teaching, which misses an opportunity to connect students with current research and enrich the learning experience.

Strengths

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

With regards to Areas 3.1 to 3.3, it is clear there is a transparent recruitment, selection and evaluation process. Visiting staff bring relevant real-world experience that can benefit student learning. Staff we met seem committed to supporting students and cognisant of the planned diversity of student needs. The identified textbooks provide a structured and foundational understanding of key business concepts.

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.

Area 3.1 (a) Rethink recruitment strategy: We recommend that the college reviews where job advertisements are posted to ensure they reach a broader and more diverse pool of qualified candidates. the college might also consider reworking the content of job advertisements to highlight the institution's strengths, unique aspects of the program, and the potential for professional growth. We also encourage the college to explore new recruitment channels such as academic networks, industry associations, and international job boards to attract full-time faculty members. The college might also want to consider offering competitive employment conditions to attract and retain full-time faculty members.

Area 3.1 (b) Professional development: Implement regular training and workshops focused on teaching skills, innovative pedagogies, and the use of new technologies. Encourage faculty to participate in conferences, seminars, and other professional development opportunities.

Area 3.2. (a) Recruit more full-time faculty to balance the reliance on part-time staff and provide consistent delivery of the program. Aim for a staffing ratio where full-time faculty have the necessary competence and capacity to ensure programme stability and quality.

Area 3.2. (b) Recruit senior faculty: Actively seek to hire senior faculty members (Associate Professors or Professors) to enhance academic leadership, mentorship, and research capacity within the programme. Senior faculty bring external credibility to the programme from a student and market perspective.

Area 3.3. (a) Diversify learning materials and promote research sources: Complement the reliance on textbooks by incorporating a variety of learning sources, such as academic articles, case studies, and professional publications. Where relevant, faculty members should be encouraged to assign their own research output as part of the

classroom readings. This will help bridge the gap between teaching and research, providing students with exposure to current scholarship and enhancing their research skills, and writing of their thesis.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially 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.

With regards to Areas 4.1. to 4.4, the main admission requirements for the program include holding an accredited Bachelors' degree in any discipline. Work experience is considered an advantage. In addition, applicants must meet the English language proficiency requirement, with a minimum IELTS score of 5.5. These requirements align with common academic practices for MBA programmes in comparable Colleges in Cyprus and elsewhere. The College is committed to applying these admission criteria consistently and will make them publicly available on their website when the programme is officially launched. Currently, online applications are not facilitated, which could be an area for future improvement. The student progression, recognition and certification processes and outcomes seem appropriate, but it is unclear how the system will manage with a larger and more diverse cohort of international, local, full time and part-time students. A minor issue is that the programme documentation (p. 10 of the application) refers to language requirements (both English and Greek, rather than English or Greek depending on the language of instruction)

Strengths

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

Admission processes seem sensible and fair. There is a tailored customer-driven approach to the admission process, thereby conveying a good experience to the applicant.

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.

Area 4.1 (a) The College could consider implementing an online application system to streamline the admissions process, offering convenience for applicants and improving administrative efficiency.

Area 4.1 (b) Since the College aims to increase the number of international students (and presumably from contexts where English may not be their first language), greater attention should be given to their actual proficiency in engaging with Masters' level learning expectations and where required, provide language support during the programme. For example, there is extensive UK evidence of international students with IELTS <6.0 scores struggling with Masters'/MBA level material.

Area 4.2 (a) The College should also explore the implementation of a more structured system to monitor student progression throughout the programme. One possibility is to map out an 'MBA learning journey' for each student to recognise their specific circumstances and needs (e.g. when do they take each course, internship, project etc.)

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3. Human support resources

5.4. Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *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.

With regards to Areas 5.1 to 5.4:

Teaching and Learning resources

The teaching and learning resources at Atlantis College are limited. The college does not have a dedicated Learning Management System (LMS), relying solely on Microsoft Teams for communication and course material distribution. This approach limits the ability to offer a comprehensive, organized, and user-friendly platform for students to access learning resources. Additionally, there is no system for students to access their grades or track their overall academic progress. This can hinder students' ability to monitor their performance, plan their academic journey, and identify areas for improvement.

Physical Resources

The library resources are limited with visibly many outdated resources (textbooks). The IT infrastructure is underdeveloped, with no dedicated systems for digital learning, research support, or student academic progress tracking.

Human Support Resources

Atlantis College provides a supportive environment for students through its committed and dedicated administrative staff. Despite operating with limited resources, the staff strive to meet student needs, offering personalized attention facilitated by the college's small student population. The administrative team is accessible and approachable, ensuring students receive guidance on academic matters, registration, and general inquiries.

The size of the student body allows for individualized support, and students benefit from direct interactions with tutors, mentors, and administrative staff. The staff's dedication to student success is evident, and their efforts contribute significantly to the overall student experience.

Student Support

Atlantis College shows a commitment to supporting the needs of its diverse student population. The institution offers some flexibility for part-time students, which helps them balance their studies with professional and personal commitments. There are efforts to look after international students (including on accommodation and visa processes) those with special requirements, though these services could be more structured and comprehensive to ensure consistent inclusivity and accessibility.

The college also recognizes the importance of student mobility and has taken commendable steps toward encouraging academic exchanges and partnerships with other higher education institutions (e.g. Erasmus). While these efforts are promising, there is potential to further develop and formalize these initiatives to provide more robust opportunities for international exposure and academic growth.

Strengths

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

Functional premises: The college provides classroom spaces that meet the minimum requirements for delivering lectures and has recently built a new lecture room. There are ample computer terminals.

Small class sizes: The limited number of students allows for a more personalized use of available physical resources.

Dedicated administrative Staff: The administrative team is committed to supporting students, providing timely assistance with academic and administrative tasks.

Personalized attention: Small class sizes and a manageable student population enable staff to offer individualized support and attention to each student.

Accessibility: Students have easy access to administrative staff, tutors, and mentors, creating a supportive and responsive environment.

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.

Area 5.1. (a) Implement a comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, or Canvas) to centralize course materials, assignments, assessments, and communication. Ensure the LMS includes features for students to access their grades and track their academic progress in real time.

Area 5.2. (a) Upgrade and diversify learning resources: Provide access to more recent textbooks. At the same time, incorporate a variety of electronic materials, including e-texts with online quizzes/resources, academic articles, case studies, simulations, and professional publications. Introduce readings that develop critical thinking and research skills, better preparing students for their thesis and professional careers.

Area 5.3 (a). Automate administrative processes: Transition from manual processes to automated systems for admissions, registration, grade reporting, and academic records management. Ensure students have seamless access to their academic records and course-related information.

Area 5. 4 (a). Plan for growth: Develop a scalable plan to adapt human support and IT support resources in response to potential increases in student enrolment and evolving programme needs.

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

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



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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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

6.0 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*

6.1 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.*

6.2 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- 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

C. 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.

It is noteworthy that the MBA will be the first Masters' level programme to be offered by the College, which so far has been running five accredited Diploma level programmes (Aesthetics, Professional Make Up, Hairdressing, Aviation Management, Hospitality and Tourism Management) and two Bachelors level programmes (Aesthetics and Hospitality and Tourism Management). A third Bachelor level programme (in Business Administration) has been submitted to the CYQAA for accreditation (pending).

The external evaluation committee understands there is an overall strategy towards significantly increasing the intake of students (international and local/national) as well as offering opportunities for existing Diploma and Bachelor students to progress to further study, now that the college buildings have been extended. Moreover, catering to local community needs appears to be a key and commendable College ethos given the absence of other higher education institutions in the vicinity, and hence seeking to offer more choice to local/national students while providing appropriate human resources to the main economic sectors in the region (notably in tourism and hospitality). Finally, the committee notes that an MBA is an instantly recognisable qualification, which not only conveys expectations about academic content but also focuses on how such content is applied in practice, alongside the need to demonstrate managerial/leadership skills and supporting industry linkages.

Taking the above in account, the committee is supportive of the College's proposal to run an MBA programme, subject to it engaging substantively with the various sub-areas in need of improvement (including programme design and structure and reflecting on offering concentrations) for the College to achieve, or work towards, full compliance with the relevant standards.

The report therefore provides recommendations in the spirit of ensuring a sufficiently clear, distinct, robust and sustainable MBA offering that can both speak to local and international audiences (students) businesses and other stakeholders) - while ensuring that the College strengthens its organisational structures and processes to address the implications of its growth and engagement with a more diverse cohort of students.



D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Teerooven Soobaroyen	
Michael Vlassopoulos	
Fida Afiouni	
Demetra Koutsila	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 23/12/2024