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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Economics and Management
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Accounting and Finance
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:
Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων
In English:
Master in Business Administration (MBA)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations



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.

Following the invitation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has evaluated the Master in Business Administration (hereafter MBA) at the University of Cyprus (hereafter UoC), coordinated by Mr. Lefkios Neophytou. This is an existing conventional programme from the UoC in Nicosia.

The EEC consisted of four academics: Professor and Chair Dionisis Philippas (ESSCA School of Management), the members Professor Louis Brennan (Trinity Business School), Professor Dimitrios Spyridonidis (University of Warwick), and the student member Mr Kyriacos Andreou (Open University of Cyprus).

The evaluation for the programme took place on the 23rd of October, 2023. Prior to the visit, the EEC was supplied with a comprehensive documentation, which included the overall description of the University structure, facilities, programme approval and evaluation processes and other useful information, the internal evaluation of the program, a list of the courses together with their description and faculty qualifications, among others. The EEC reviewed and examined the all the material provided by the UoC. During the meetings, we were given presentations and ample time was allowed for clarifications and discussion.

The EEC met with the senior management team and academic faculty responsible for delivering the MBA programme, the administrative and other support staff from UoC and a number of students from the programme. In particular, during the visit, the EEC met: the Rector of the UoC, Professor Tasos Christofides, the Chair of the Department of Business and Public Administration Professor George Hadjinicolas, the Chair of the Department of Accounting and Finance Professor Andreas Milidonis, the Directors of MBA programme Professor Irene Karamanou and Associate Professor Marios Theodosiou, the University Officer A' - Head of QA Unit Ms. Demetra Demetri, members of the faculty staff that teach at this programme, current and graduate students, and the administrative personnel of MBA, Ms Danae Varda and Petros Karydis.

During the morning session, the senior management team presented the University and the MBA programme under review. Subsequently, the EEC met with faculty members, students, and, finally, administrative personnel. The discussions encompassed the programme under review, its structure, academic aspects, staff workload, organization, assessments, and resources. During the student session, the EEC engaged with students who shared their experiences during their studies. The last session involved a meeting with members of the administrative team. The visit concluded with a meeting and general discussion with the senior management team to clarify any questions from earlier sessions during the site visit.

Following the presentations in each session, the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions and collect further information. Specifically, the EEC asked questions related to the programme, such as learning objectives (LO), programme structure, delivery methods, assessments of learning (AoL), quality of learning (QoL), infrastructure, and IT support. Additionally, they inquired about the faculty and the institution more broadly.

The EEC members found the discussions to be fruitful and informative. As detailed below, we find that the programme under review is generally compliant with the stated criteria and standards. The EEC has noted some minor comments regarding the program's sustainability, visibility, and the additional skills that can be acquired by students. These areas have potential for improvement, and that is why the EEC offers some suggestions for consideration, with the hope of further enhancing the program.

The committee would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the online evaluation.

Finally, the EEC would like to express its gratitude to Mr. Lefkios Neophytou, the CYQAA coordinator, for efficiently managing the process.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Dionisis Philippas	Professor and Chairman	ESSCA School of Management
Louis Brennan	Professor	Trinity Business School
Dimitrios Spyridonidis	Professor	University of Warwick
Kyriacos Andreou	Student Representative	Open University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) *sub-areas*
 - (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The programme was first established in 2006 as a joint postgraduate programme between the Departments of Business & Public Administration and Accounting and Finance. The programme is offered in English language (accelerated path or completion within two years) and in Greek language. The programme consists of 90 ECTS spread over two years for the full-time programme and one year for the accelerated programme, with 57 ECTS devoted to compulsory courses, 21 ECTS devoted to the Master's Applied Business Project (ABP), and 12 ECTS to elective courses.

Admissions criteria are in alignment with both UoC and international standards, enabling graduates from various educational backgrounds with bachelor's degrees to gain entry. The program's structure is strategically designed to compete on an international scale, and the student body exhibits diversity in terms of nationality, gender, and post-graduation job opportunities.

The Quality Assurance mechanisms employed by the University and the Department are in accordance with international standards. Internal policies and procedures have been established to ensure the quality of the programme under review. The resulting Master's degree is explicitly defined and adheres to international standards for this level.

The EEC examined all information related to admission criteria, learning outcomes, course delivery methods, assessment procedures, and the key aspects of the learning environment. The programme's teaching quality is assessed in compliance with UoC policies, which include provisions for the ongoing improvement of teaching standards among experienced instructors. The programme's goals, requirements, and structure are meticulously documented and readily accessible to both prospective and current students. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear and adequate and are communicated to the students. The assessment standards align with EUC's assessment policy, ensuring the coverage of the corresponding learning outcomes. The total course grade comprises 50% from the final exam and 50% from various other assessment activities.

This MBA programme is uniquely positioned in Cyprus, offering students specialized skills and knowledge essential for leadership, managerial roles, and entrepreneurship in the contemporary job market. It caters

to a wide spectrum of companies, encompassing large, small, and medium-sized enterprises, as well as both private and public sector positions, with an international focus and a demand for diverse skills. The comprehensive curriculum seamlessly integrates theoretical foundations with practical applications, equipping students with the knowledge and entrepreneurial skills necessary to effectively generate and implement innovative ideas in a constantly evolving market. Furthermore, it stands out for its distinct advantages in comparison to other similar programmes, both locally and internationally. A list of these advantages is detailed in the 'Strengths' section below.

The ratio of permanent/adjunct staff teaching in the programme is as follows: Permanent 72% (21 professors), Adjunct 7% (2 professors), Visiting professors 21% (6 professors). All external academic staff hold PhDs, and both the faculty staff and external instructors who deliver lectures maintain regular interactions with students.

The Chair, programme coordinator, and the faculty team have assured the EEC that instructors and departmental professors regularly update the course materials and, when necessary, revise them accordingly. They have also noted and provided evidence of ongoing academic training in teaching and research in their respective fields.

Overall, the programme under review is well-designed with objectives and learning outcomes in line with the Department's strategy and international practice. The purpose, requirements, and learning objectives are aligned with the mission of the programme. The structure and content include appropriate core courses. The Master's ABP (acts as dissertation and it is compulsory) is considered a strong point in the structure and delivery of the programme.

Strengths

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

The programme boasts several key advantages that set it apart from other similar programs, both locally and internationally. These advantages include:

- The quality of the teaching personnel and their active involvement in high-level research with robust research portfolios.
- The excellent university facilities for teaching, learning, and student support.
- The program's potential to attract a diverse range of local/ regional students.
- The presence of academic and corporate advisory boards comprising distinguished academics and professionals in their respective fields.
- The rigorous student selection criteria and admission system that ensures high-quality students.
- The diversity of students' backgrounds, coming from various disciplines.
- Alignment with international best practices in graduate education.
- The absence of overlaps with any existing conventional Master's programs, which the EEC deems a strategic advantage.
- Strong corporate connections and prestigious scholarships offered by renowned companies and organizations.
- The programme's breadth and rigor, as have been presented by the programme coordinator and the Chair. This encompasses the pedagogy pillar, including various activities such as case studies and role-playing competitions, the assessment pillar (comprising final exams and at least two additional assessments), the intended learning outcomes, the programme structure, and the notable advantage of the compulsory Applied Business Project for all students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The EEC has the following recommendations to strengthen the programme further and to utilize its full potential:

1. The next step should be considered. The Department should consider a strategic planning to enhance the openness, the visibility and the positioning of the programme in a broad range of high-ranked international MBAs and attract international students.
2. Special attention should be given to the marketing and sustainability of the programme to an international audience of prospective students. This should include utilizing social media, holding

open days (also available online), organizing information meetings with potential students and employers, implementing marketing and communication activities, and more.

3. The recent achieved accreditation through AACSB should also be prominently featured in these marketing strategies.
4. Another potential way is to promote the MBA is to seek international funding from the private sector, secure scholarships for students, and approach large foreign institutions (e.g., central banks, think tanks, etc.)
5. Consider enriching the content of the courses to better align with a range of different abilities, including personality traits and attributes that can be considered an essential part of being able to succeed in leading an organisation and its people. For example, consider topics, such as leadership development, leading self, leading with impact, developing resilient and agile leaders and teams and delegation to name a few.
6. Consider also related case studies and examples used in courses that should be more up-to-date and reflective of real-world scenarios, reflecting the personal development.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

- Some of the findings in this area are the following:
- The process of teaching and learning in the programme follows the practices of UoC, an internationally recognized research university. It considers different modes of delivery including lectures, case studies, exercises, and so on.
- The study guide for the programme is incorporated into the one for the Department.
- Instructors are active researchers who may incorporate state-of-the-art research into course teaching.
- Students are encouraged to develop a working knowledge of theory and applications in technology, innovation, and management, and to apply them to relevant class projects, culminating in the Master's thesis. Student needs and feedback are regularly monitored and incorporated into teaching.
- The programme allows for block format attendance to accommodate student career choices and personal needs. Working students have the opportunity to apply new knowledge and methods to their practical work as they progress through the courses.
- Assessment is fully in line with international university standards, best practices, and Cypriot requirements, and it reflects the learning goals of the program. It includes various testing and examination methods and supports the development of the learner. Based on the nature and content of the course, the assessment is based on different methods, including class participation, group or individual assignments, class activities, analysis of case studies and final examination. The criteria for the methods of assessments are included in the courses' description and published in advance.
- Procedures are in place to address any complaints that students may have about the teaching and learning process.

Strengths

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

The EEC identified several strong points of the programme:

1. The programme benefits from the experience and engagement of the UoC faculty, who contributes to good practice in teaching and learning.
2. An appropriate learning infrastructure and instructional methodology have been established.
3. The use of block teaching in the courses is considered a good practice for learning.
4. The programme receives significant administrative support and academic commitment.
5. Practical training is a supported component of the program.
6. The student assessment aligns with international university standards and programme learning goals.

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.

No main recommendations in this area. However, the EEC suggests the programme coordinators to consider including lab teaching in some of the courses (e.g. in Data Analytics and Quantitative Methods), in the future.

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	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

The main findings are after below:

- The Department and the UoC have a clear framework for faculty workload, the recruitment of new faculty, and tracking faculty development.
- The number of teaching staff involved in the programme and the workload for each faculty member is sufficient.
- In addition to core faculty members, the Department appoints external faculty members, most of whom hold a PhD and are highly regarded in their respective fields.
- All faculty members involved are highly active in research.
- The programme effectively integrates recent research findings and insights with state-of-the-art teaching methods.

Strengths

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

There are several significant strengths with regard to the faculty staff involved in the program.

- The teaching staff is highly experienced, with many years of teaching experience and a commitment to applying innovative, research-oriented teaching methods and materials. It's commendable and encouraging to see the synergy between teaching and research.
- The faculty has an extensive research network and benefits from continuous training through workshops and invited speakers.
- Synergies between faculty members in research and training within the Department are well-established.
- The Department promotes the programme by appointing academics from the global market as well as practitioners from the respective fields.
- Recruitment of new faculty is on the way.

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 does not have any suggestions here. Any future agenda of improvement in this area can be achieved through funding support from the state to the Department and the UoC.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

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

The EEC met with seven students, all of whom were from the MBA programme: five graduates and two current students. During the meeting, the EEC inquired about their experiences, the reasons behind their choice of the UoC's MBA programme, and their likes and dislikes regarding the programme.

In general, the EEC observed that the students expressed overwhelmingly positive sentiments about their studies, the programme they had undertaken, and the support they had received. Moreover, they actively engaged in the session, providing suggestions and sharing their experiences, which indicates a positive and conducive learning environment within the programme.

The EEC highlights the following key findings:

1. The admission requirements for students were found to be clear and in alignment with the criteria established by the Department, which also adhere to international university standards.

2. Assessment criteria and processes were observed to be in line with international practices. The students provided examples of how courses and final exams were conducted, and they generally expressed satisfaction with these practices.
3. The Department effectively communicates all course requirements to both prospective and current students.
4. The EEC noticed that the Department and the MBA programme have established policies and mechanisms to ensure students' development.
5. There is a well-defined and monitored process in place for tracking students' progression.
6. The students highlighted their personal development through the programme could be better.

Strengths

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

The main strengths of the MBA programme are listed below:

- The teaching block format is effective for the majority of students.
- Students come from diverse backgrounds other than economics and management.
- The Department offers a range of resources, including materials, academic support, databases, IT support, and library services, among others.
- The programme follows international university best practices.
- The programme promotes teamwork among students and encourages them to stay up-to-date with research and international job market trends.
- The programme's strong reputation facilitates good job placements and promotions for its graduates in their respective work environments.
- The experienced administrative staff provides good support to the students.
- The students emphasized that acquiring soft skills and personal development is possible through the programme, an asset that should be further enhanced.

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.

Some suggestions derived from the student session are after below:

Due to the public nature of the programme, there are certain limitations in terms of incorporating the best job market practices directly into the class. Real-world case experiences using recent practices, case studies, as well as current developments and international experiences and more attention to soft skills development would be welcomed.

The students mentioned that, at times, a hybrid programme format could be beneficial for those who are working and find it challenging to attend in person. Additionally, in some instances, assessments that are conducted in a strict block format can pose challenges.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The EEC had visited the University of Cyprus (UoC) premises and its library in Nicosia. During our visit, we engaged in discussions with administrative personnel.

Our assessment is that UoC offers a comprehensive array of resources and an extensive range of services tailored to benefit both students and teaching staff.

These services include access to a rich collection of library materials, including online resources, a robust IT infrastructure, access to databases, administrative support, career services, and more.

Commendation should be extended to the library facilities, which boast an extensive and diverse selection of sources from reputable publishers. These include traditional books, e-books, journal databases, and more, further enriching the academic environment.

Furthermore, in terms of human capital support, the Department of Accounting and Finance in the UoC boasts a highly competent administrative team. This team plays a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of the programme currently under evaluation.

Among other notable factors, it's worth highlighting the wealth of experience and commitment of the administrative staff, which significantly enhances the educational experience of the students participating in the programme under evaluation.

Strengths

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

The EEC would like to emphasise the following strong points:

- The EEC have formed a clear impression that the administrative team of the programme is committed to providing a high-quality programme-oriented services and enabling students to pursue rewarding careers in both the public and private sectors.
- With regards to personnel, the EEC also acknowledges the experience, well-educated, dedication and enthusiasm. They cater to any need raised that is relevant for completing the programme.

- The administrative team and the faculty staff work closely together.
- Grants, student scholarships, and career services are in line with UoC policies. Moreover, the Department has achieved some very notable synergies with the private sector, providing additional scholarships and opportunities for the students.
- The library has exceeded expectations within the university environment and serves as a central hub of knowledge for students, faculty, and the broader community.

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 believes that the administrative team for the MBA programme at the UoC is performing admirably. However, we do have a recommendation to make.

We strongly believe that the programme, as well as the faculty, would benefit from the recruitment of new permanent personnel.

The current administrative team is burdened with a significant workload, and the reliance on short-term contracts for personnel hampers the ability to maintain a long-term strategic plan for the programme and the Department as a whole.

Therefore, our recommendation to the senior management is to invest in acquiring more permanent human capital for the department.

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

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

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

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

committee towards the student are determined and include:

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer



6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer
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D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC found that this programme excels in various aspects, including quality, research output, job market appeal, corporate partnerships, and more. These strengths have the potential to attract both Cypriot and international students interested in careers in the private sector, finance companies, engineering firms, maritime affairs, regulatory bodies, and other related fields.

Nevertheless, despite its successful track record over the years, the programme's focus should evolve to become even more appealing to a broader audience. Achieving this requires effective communication, both locally and internationally, through targeted strategic planning and marketing efforts for the years to come.

While the EEC has identified numerous strengths in the sub-areas mentioned above, we have also provided specific recommendations for improvement to help meet these objectives. Instead of summarizing or selecting a subset of these recommendations, we encourage the reader to refer to the bullet lists in the relevant sections of this report. We believe that all recommendations should be thoughtfully reviewed and taken into account.

In conclusion, for the purposes of this evaluation, the programme should be considered **in compliance** with the recommendations listed in the relevant sections above.

Key recommendations

1. Strategic planning for the future
2. Additional effort (and if possible, funding) for marketing activities, promotion of the master programme and human capital with regards to programme.
3. Invest more resources in personal development and soft leadership skills of students.
4. Promote the programme to competitive markets focusing on specific target groups.

The EEC would like to extend its gratitude to all those involved at the University of Cyprus and the contributing departments for their active engagement throughout the evaluation process and for providing a comprehensive set of supporting documents both before and during the site visit.

We greatly appreciate the constructive, lively, and reflective spirit exhibited during the visit, as well as the commitment to continuous improvement, as expressed by the various representatives of University of Cyprus.

We also thank Mr. Lefkios Neophytou for the smooth organization of the evaluation process.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Dionisis Philippas	
Louis Brennan	
Dimitrios Spyridonidis	
Kyriacos Andreou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 26/10/2023