ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** Frederick University

- **Towns:** Nicosia and Limassol. (The program is distance learning, and offered online.)

- **School/Faculty:** School of Business and Law

- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Business Administration

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

  Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (3 ακαδημαϊκά Εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (MBA), Εξαποστάσεως)

  In English:

  Business Administration (3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (MBA), Distance Learning)

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: None
  In English: None

A. Introduction

The site visit at the Frederick University in Nicosia and Limassol took place remotely, via a Zoom meeting, on the 7 April 2021. The meeting was coordinated by Mr. Avramis Despotis, Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA).

During the site visit, the Committee met with the following:

The governing body of Frederick University:

- the Rector
- the Vice President of the Council
- the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs
- the Vice Rector of Research, Development and International Relations

The Internal Evaluation Committee:

- the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, Chair of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IQC)
- Chair of the Distance Learning Unit
- a IQC representative

School, Department, Programme and Distance Learning Representatives:

- the Dean of the School of Business and Law, Coordinator of the MBA programme
- the Vice Dean of the School of Business and Law
- the Chairperson of the Department of Business Administration
- the Chair of the Distance Learning Unit
- a member of the Distance Learning Unit

Members of the teaching staff faculty (9 individuals):

- Full-time faculty
- Part-time faculty

Students and graduates:

- Two students
- Five alumni

Administrative staff and support unit representatives:

- the Director of Administration and Finance
- the Director of Studies and Student Welfare Service
- the Director of Administration
- the Director of Operations and Infrastructure
- the Head Librarian

In addition to material provided before, during and after the site visit, five presentations were conducted during the visit, and the committee got the opportunity to interview all the above mentioned participants.

Documents provided prior to the site visit included a 50-pages 'Application for the Evaluation – Accreditation of Programme of Study' and appendixes on compulsory and elective courses; course descriptions; detailed bibliographical notes; infrastructure; sample of certificate; indicative list of publications and funded projects; quality standards and indicators; and study guides.

Provided support materials included description of COVID-19 instructions; coursework assignments; exam samples; final year project samples; links to four recorded and streamed course sessions; virtual graduation videos from 2020; and pptx-slides of the five presentations conduct during the site visit.

In addition, the external evaluation committee was provided a virtual tour of the Frederick University premises.

The committee found that the documentation provided was well-structured and very rich on relevant information. In addition, all participants in the site visits were very well-prepared, very attentive and open for dialogue.

The external evaluation committee would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the evaluation. We appreciate the (virtual) hospitality of Frederick University. The committee would also like to thank the CYQAA coordinator for managing the process both efficiently and effectively - and for support before, during and after the site visit.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Ernst Verwaal	Professor (EEC Chair)	KU Leuven, Belgium
Rob Koper	Professor	Open University, Netherlands
Pernille Eskerod	Professor	Webster Vienna Private University, Austria
Christos Kolympiris	Associate Professor	University of Warwick, UK
Lito Zymaride	MBA Student	University of Cyprus, Cyprus
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*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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

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

The MBA Distance Learning programme is a 90 ECTS programme that can be undertaken on a full-time basis, which corresponds to three academic semesters, i.e. 18 months, of 30 ECTS each, or a part-time basis, which corresponds to six academic semesters, i.e. 36 months, of 15 ECTS each.

The programme aims to provide students with fundamental knowledge of current theory and practice across a range of business disciplines. The programme is focused on developing the students' problem solving skills as well as decision-making skills by equipping them with tools for addressing real-life business problems, achieving career goals and assuming managerial responsibilities, whether they have jobs in the private or public sectors or run their own business. The programme is targeting any industry sector, e.g. economics, banking and finance, transportation, engineering, construction, manufacturing, distribution and logistics, retail and wholesale, consulting, services, or healthcare.

The programme is structured with three structural elements, i.e. required courses, MBA electives, and project courses related to the MBA thesis. The required courses cover the essential business disciplines, whereas the electives offer the students the opportunity to choose courses that fit their own specific needs and interests. The students are asked to choose two electives from a list of available electives. The list is subject to change. The MBA thesis is research based, and a wide variety of topics is available for the students. It is assessed by an examiners committee, and clear assessment criteria are laid out.

Strengths
- A very clear and well-described governance structure, in general and on the departmental, programme and distance learning approach levels.
- Considerable distance learning experience exists due to a number of concurrent programmes operated via distance learning.
- Extensive quality assurance (internally and externally) in place. Many stakeholders are involved.
- Management, faculty and administrative staff appear very committed to the programme.
- The structure, contents and learning goals of the programme are very clearly described.
- The programme is very well-structured and ensures clear academic progress through the semesters.
- A thorough process for the MBA thesis, incl. a course on research methodology and project planning as well as a multi-facetted assessment.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- In the provided list of elective courses an elective on Organisation Behaviour is offered. In many MBA programmes, Organisation Behaviour is placed as a mandatory course within the first semester. Therefore, it may not appear sufficiently advanced as an elective. We therefore suggest that Frederick University change the title (and content) of this elective in order to make it more attractive for students.
- Asking students about their wishes for electives could be beneficial for the development of this part of the programme..

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

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

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
2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
    - o *among students*
    - o *between students and teaching staff*
    - o *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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.*

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- *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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
    - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
    - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
    - *Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)*
    - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
    - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
    - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
    - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
    - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *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

Frederick University applies an appropriate e-learning methodology for the programme, and a number of interactive tools are in place to provide a student-centred teaching and learning environment. A proper quality assurance and assessment is in place.

Students are introduced to the online learning community through an introduction week, called Week 0, as well through online guidelines. The university puts efforts into creating processes for the students to get to know each other, and the online learning community offers extensive opportunities, incl. well-developed digital-multimedia educational material. Simulations and role plays are carried out through-out the semesters, and quizzes are put to use each week.

The contents of the various courses as well as the criteria for student assessment are well-described and follows international standards. Study guides are well-developed.

The department and programme seems to have good links with industry and practice.

Strengths
- The university applies a number of processes and tools to provide the students a rich learning environment.
- Valuable electronic sources for students and faculty are available in the library.

Areas of improvement and recommendations.
- The introduction to the distance learning and online community is called 'a 0 credits course'. The ECTS framework requires all mandatory activities to carry an ECTS-value to reflect the average workload on the student. Even it was said in the visit that the 0 credits course was not mandatory, the committee suggests that the activity is given another label, as the label 'course' implies an ECTS activity.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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.*

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- *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:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *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

Frederick University has an adequate number of full-time and part-time faculty members to cover the various teaching staff needs of the programme. The majority of the teaching staff holds a PhD degree, and an academic ranking system is in place. In addition, the specializations and the research carried out is reflected in the contents of the programme.

The university has managed to attract extensive externally research funding and international collaborations are well established.

However, the research output is very unevenly distributed across faculty members, and some have not a sufficient recent publications to show evidence of their efforts as active researchers.

Strengths
- The faculty members appear to be committed and dedicated to the programme.
- The specialization fields of the faculty members are reflected in the content of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- More encouragement, incentives and support for research activities among faculty is recommendable. The transition from college (i.e. teaching-focused institution) to university (i.e. research-based institution) seems not to have fully materialized yet, and research output for more of the faculty members must be stronger. A means could be to find ways to reduce the required teaching load, which is 12 h/week (even though the department has managed to

reduce it to some extent.). Another means would be to make the criteria for research evaluations more transparent.

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

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

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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

The university has clear and transparent criteria, regulations, and policies for student admission, and the admission criteria includes digital literacy on top of the academic requirements.

Applicants must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of English language (e.g. via TOEFL, IELTS, GCSE, IGCSE, Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or equivalent). Alternatively, they have to pass an English placement test set by Frederick University.

If any doubts exist about an applicant's qualifications, an admission interview is conducted.

Processes to monitor student progression and support are in place.

Student certification follows pre-defined and published regulations.

Strengths
- Admission procedures and progress monitoring are explicit and clear.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- An increased focus on recruitment of international students to enhance an international culture.

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

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

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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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

In general

The available teaching and learning resources must fit the teaching and learning model of the university. Shortly described they are as follows. The university:

- Provides the 90 ECTS MBA programme to students in 3 semesters,
- offers the courses using flexible distance teaching facilities,
- uses a well maintained, secured and highly available, integrated digital learning management system (LMS) that is used for all its online education. Moodle is at its base and integrates different synchronous and asynchronous communication facilities and digital resources that are required to deliver high quality distance education,
- offers professional quality audio visual laboratories and a recording study to develop multimedia content (with support),
- offers a virtual lab to provide access to proprietary software,
- offers and uses anti-plagiarism software (Turn-It-In),
- besides the LMS, other communication media like telephone, email and face-to-face contact to communicate with students and teachers,
- puts effort in the selection and training of teachers that are able to teach at a distance,
- there is a serious effort at the university level to define a Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework for online teaching and learning, consisting of three pillars: directed learning, dynamic online interaction and assessment.

- Students and teachers are introduced and trained to use digital media for teaching and learning. For students there is a 0 credits course to introduce them into distance learning.

- Drop-out is around 10% (although some other figures in the documentation point to around 5%).

Standards: Teaching and Learning resources

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*

  Instruction is provided per course, using a variety of learning activities, some individual, some peer-to-peer and some teacher-student(s) interaction. The kind of interaction is not described, this is up to the individual professors to decide. Activities can vary from essays, discussion to self-study of the literature. Important elements are providing feedback, work in groups and stimulate discussions between students so that they are engaged constantly.

- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and*

formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.

Teachers are supported through the Open and Distance Learning Centre and the Audio-Visual Communication Department to develop educational materials for their online courses and helps them to solve pedagogical design issues during course development.

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

The facilities are redundant, so adequate for changes in e.g. student numbers.

- *All resources are fit for purpose.*

This seems to be the case.

- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

Students have flexibility in time and tempo, within certain boundaries and the programme is able to cope with the planning issues derived from this flexibility.

Standards: Physical resources

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*

From the description in annex 4 and the presentations, we learned that the university has adequate and readily available resources that are required for a distance teaching university, considering that students are not working on campus but at various locations, like their home or work. With respect to the library there are two physical locations (Nicosia and Limassol) and online access to the major scientific databases.

Standards: Human support resources

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

The human support resources that are available at the university for this programme are adequate and can be adapted to changing needs of the programme.

Standards: Student support

- *Students well supported, given their different backgrounds.*

Distance teaching universities have to deal with a very heterogenous student population, not only in age, but also pre-knowledge, and experience. At Frederick, students are well supported and informed. A good indicator for adequate student support is the student

retention rate (or its opposite the drop-out rate). The university reports between 5% - 10% drop-out. This is low in comparison to many other distance teaching universities.

Strengths

- Adequate learning environment and learning resources.

- The active development and deployment of the Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework for all DL courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework does not (yet) specify scientifically based guidelines how to design learning activities to attain specific types of learning outcomes. At the moment this happens by sharing best-practices, but it would be good to formalize the type of pedagogical approach for different outcomes, e.g.:

  How to setup the learning environment to support students to:

  - Acquire basic knowledge of the fundamental concepts, principles and theoretical approaches, or
  - Use state-of-the-art analytical methods, modelling techniques and case-studies to analyse and provide solutions to real-life business problems, or
  - Critically debate theories of the firm and evaluate the economic and competitive environment that firms operate in.
  Etc. for each outcome defined in page 7/8 in the application.

- The same is true for student training to learn online: connect the training to the different learning outcome types.

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC would like to thank all involved at Frederick University for the high engagement throughout the evaluation process - and for providing a rich set of supporting documents and videos before, during and after the remote visit. In addition, we appreciate the positive and constructive spirit during the visit as well as the commitment to continuous improving of learning and academic excellence clearly expressed by the various representatives of the Frederick University. The preceding sections of this report point to the many strengths as well as to some areas for improvement of the programme.

Strengths include:

- A very clear and well-described governance structure, in general and on the departmental, programme and distance learning approach levels.
- Considerable distance learning experience exists due to a number of concurrent programmes operated via distance learning.
- Extensive quality assurance (internally and externally) in place. Many stakeholders are involved.
- Management, faculty and administrative staff appear very committed to the programme.
- The structure, contents and learning goals of the programme are very clearly described.
- Active development and deployment of a Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework for all DL courses.
- A thorough process for the MBA thesis, incl. a course on research methodology and project planning as well as a multi-facetted assessment.
- Valuable electronic sources for students and faculty are available in the library.

Areas for improvement include:

- More encouragement, incentives and support for research activities among faculty. The transition from college (i.e. teaching-focused institution) to university (i.e. research-based institution) seems not to have fully materialized yet, and research output for more of the faculty members could be stronger. A means could be to find ways to reduce the required teaching load, which is 12 h/week (even though the department has managed to reduce it to some extent.). Another means would be to make the criteria for research evaluations more transparent.
- The Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework does not (yet) specify scientifically based guidelines how to design learning activities to attain specific types of learning outcomes. At the moment this happens by sharing best-practices, but it would be good to formalize the type of pedagogical approach for different outcomes.
- In the provided list of elective courses an elective on Organisation Behaviour is offered. In many MBA programmes, Organisation Behaviour is placed as a mandatory course within the first semester. Therefore, it may not appear sufficiently advanced as an elective. We therefore suggest that Frederick University change the title (and content) of this elective in order to make it more attractive for students.
- The introduction to the distance learning and online community is called 'a 0 credits course'. The ECTS framework requires all mandatory activities to carry an ECTS-value to reflect the average workload on the student. Even it was said in the visit that the 0 credits course was not
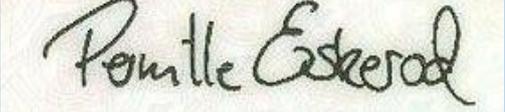
mandatory, the committee suggests that the activity is given another label, as the label 'course' implies an ECTS activity.

- An increased focus on recruitment of international students to enhance an international culture.

The committee believes that the proposed programme will bring high benefits for students as well as their coming employers and other stakeholders.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Ernst Verwaal	
Rob Koper	
Pernille Eskerod	
Christos Kolympiris	
Lito Zymaride	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 14 April 2021