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

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  American College Consortium

- **Town:** Various locations in Cyprus

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

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

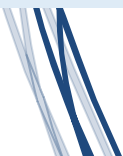- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Προπαρασκευαστικό Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης της Αγγλικής (1 Χρόνος)

  In English: English Foundation Course (1 year)

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

- **Programme's status:** New programme

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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

Short background on all the institutions

American College has 17 evaluated-accredited programs of study of which 2 are master degree programs, 5 are bachelor degree programs, 9 are diploma degree programs, and 1 is a certificate degree program. The programs cover disciplines of business, tourism, computer science, hospitality and marketing.

Atlantis College has 7 evaluated-accredited programs of study including two undergraduate degree schemes one in hospitality and tourism and one in aesthetics. The rest of the programmes are diploma or certificate levels.

Casa College has three accredited programs including one undergraduate degree in hotel administration.

CBS College has two accredited programs of study, a master degree program and a bachelor degree program in business administration.

City Unity College offers two undergraduate and one postgraduate programs.

College of Tourism runs one undergraduate and two postgraduate programs.

CTL Eurocollege administers three undergraduate degrees (computer science, business administration, hotel management) and an MBA programme.

Global College has two Master degree programs and four Bachelor degree programs. The college also offers an MBA in a franchise agreement with the University of Roehampton.

Internapa College runs a master degree program (MBA) and a bachelor degree (BA in Hospitality & Tourism Management.

KES College offers four undergraduate programs.

Ledra College has one bachelor degree program and iIn partnership with the University of Sunderland they offer one postgraduate level program and three undergraduate programs.

Mesoyios College administers two bachelor programs (casino and resort management, business administration)

Philipps College runs one BA program in professional accountancy. It was founded in 1978.

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The meeting started with very short introductions of the panel members. This was then followed by a 3-4 minute presentation of each college that summarized their internal quality assurance policies and mechanisms, recruitment procedures and promotion processes. The colleges presented in alphabetical order and clarification questions were asked when relevant on details of the quality assurance, hiring and promotion procedures.

The visit then continued with a discussion of the content and the standards of the programme of study. In this part of the meeting we focused on the intended learning outcomes and the learning and feedback opportunities available to the students. The committee's questions were mainly answered by Polina Polycarpou from Global College who designed the content of the foundation programme. Ms Polina Polycarpou provided detailed and relevant responses to the queries of the committee. However, it was clear at this point that the programme is based on a specific coursebook and does not follow the Ministry's guidelines fully because it primarily prepares students for the IELTS exam. It also became apparent at this point that if accreditation is granted to the consortium of 13 colleges jointly, some level of co-ordination and co-operation in delivering the foundation programme will be required.

The next session was a brief introduction of the teaching staff from the different colleges. Each teaching staff's qualifications were reviewed and when relevant the length of language teaching experience was clarified. Overall, no major concerns were raised about the number and professional experience and experience of the lecturers planned to be employed for the foundation programme. The colleges provided relevant information about professional development opportunities and monitoring and supporting teaching effectiveness in the first part of the visit when we asked them to present their internal quality assurance mechanisms.

We then met with the administrative staff and based on the information provided, we were satisfied with the availability of the administrative support, registration and application procedures and help offered with immigration-related issues.

The virtual visit was skipped because the committee watched the videos in advance of the meeting.

In the final exit discussion, the committee highlighted that it was impressed by the variety of the qualitative assurance mechanisms applied by the colleges. We also emphasized the need to reconsider certain aspects of the learning outcomes, the curriculum and collaboration and co-operation across colleges for the design and continuous monitoring of the programme.

The visit concluded at 3.45 pm Cyprus time.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof. Judit Kormos	Chair	Lancaster University
Prof. Kata Wein Csizér	Member	Eötvös Loránd University
Prof. Miroslaw Pawlak	Member	Adam Mickiewicz University
Panagiota Retsa	Student member	University of Cyprus

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)*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- ● *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

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- 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?*

Findings

1. All the institutions comprising the Consortium have taken steps to ensure high quality of the programs of study on offer and these policies will presumably apply to the foundation program in English as well (see reservations later in the report). They have also specified the procedures that need to be employed when developing new programs of study as well reviewing the ones already in existence. However, the institutions differ considerably with respect to the ways in which such policies are constructed, implemented as well as the tools used to ensure quality:

   American College has implemented a formal, comprehensive and coherent policy for assuring quality which is publicly available on its website. Different procedures are coordinated by Academic Committee and Quality Assurance Committee with the help of department heads and faculty members. Quality Assurance Committee functions at the level of department and includes: Department Head, two faculty members, three members with experience in quality assurance, an external stakeholder, two student representatives and a member of the administration. The Committee meets four times a year. Procedures for quality assurance cover such areas as the development of new programs, monitoring of the quality of education, review, evaluation and revision of existing programs, as well as discontinuation of such programs. Students are routinely involved in quality assurance. For example, they fill out questionnaires focusing on programs, courses, instructors, facilities, etc.

   Atlantis College has a formal and transparent policy for quality assurance. Quality Assurance Committee is a permanent body within the organizational structure of the institution and answers to the Executive Director. It is composed of teachers, students and staff, and includes the Program Review Committee and the Program Evaluation Committee. The policy of quality assurance aims to make sure that appropriate and transparent governance and management structures are in place, develop a quality culture that benefits students, staff and the community, implement and maintain procedures relating to approval, monitoring and review of programs, seek guidance from

external experts and regulatory bodies, gather quantitative and qualitative data and conduct periodic surveys to get feedback from key stakeholder groups including students and employers, for quality improvement and policy making. The quality of programs of study is ensured through monitoring and review, course reports, AMER (annual monitoring evaluation report), inclusion of second marking protocols, student evaluations and student satisfaction surveys. External stakeholders are also involved at the program level. Limited information about policies for quality assurance can be found on the website and this information should be more concrete.

CASA College has developed formal and coherent policies for quality assurance. Internal Quality Assurance Committee is a permanent body within the structure of the institution and it answers directly to Board of Directors. Together with the Academic Committee, this body is responsible for quality assurance. The IQAC consists of the Director of Academic Studies, one administrative staff representative, three faculty members, two members of the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Department and a student representative. The institution follows an internal quality assurance system (IAQS) which is structured around the following pillars: design, approval, monitoring and reviewing of study programs; assessment of teaching and learning; staff recruitment and development; student admission, progression, recognition and certification; learning resources and student support; information management and publication. Students and teaching staff are fully involved in these processes. Students fill out questionnaires after each course evaluating the lecturers. Graduates are also asked to assess the program. The details of the IQAS can be found in a comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual which, together with the description of relevant policies is publicly available on the website.

CBS College has established a formal and coherent policy for quality assurance. The main body responsible for implementing relevant procedures in this respect is Internal Quality Assurance Committee which includes teaching staff and students and performs an advisory role to the College Council. The Committee is responsible for, among other things, implementing quality assurance policies, promoting and establishing a quality assurance culture, ensuring that the intended learning outcomes are achieved, monitoring students' admission requirements and selection procedures, ensuring teaching personnel are sufficient in numbers and hold the necessary qualifications and skills, monitoring the consistency of students' evaluation based on published criteria, evaluating the contribution of student support services and infrastructure to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, suggesting improvements to the College Council, and addressing weaknesses pointed by external evaluators. A number of indicators are taken into account when performing these tasks, such as the student-teacher ratio, student satisfaction with the course, student evaluation of lecturers, student exam results or the number of student complains. Details of quality assurance policies can be found in the Quality Assurance Manual publicly available online.

City Unity College included in its organizational structure Internal Quality Assurance Committee and this committee answers to the College Council as well as the Quality Assurance Officer who answers to the Academic Director. The IQAC is headed by the Academic Director and consists of three members of the faculty, one member of the faculty with quality control experience, one representative of academic staff and two students. Quality assurance processes at the College are designed to enable assurance of academic quality and standards through: rigorous course approval processes; involvement in assessment and program design and content, annual monitoring and periodic review. Program development committees include lecturers, students and external advisors, and meet twice a year and examine course review forms to suggest changes. Students are involved as well by filling out questionnaires about teachers, courses, etc. Quality assurances policies are made available through the intranet to members of the academic community.

CTL Eurocollege includes in its organizational structure Quality Assurance Committee which answers to Executive Director and works together with the College Council. The QA Committee is responsible for the academic and administrative quality assurance framework of the College. Its members are Academic Dean, Administration & Finance Director, three members of faculty staff, one staff member with expertise in quality assurance, and two members of the Student Association. The Committee is required to meet at least four times a year. On completion of an academic year, the Committee works with the Academic Committee, external advisors and program coordinators to discuss annual program review reports which focus on faculty evaluation and classifications of students' progress results. Other procedures of quality assurance include: faculty and course evaluation, student satisfaction survey, student evaluation of lecturers, mid-term student assessment to improve teaching methodology, complaint box, support for students with poor academic performance, counselling, assessment of staff, faculty staff self-appraisal, administrative staff self-appraisal, staff development and support. The most important information about quality assurance is available on the website.

College of Tourism and Hotel Management has included Quality Assurance Committee in its organizational structure. The Committee answers to Director who is responsible for the entire quality assurance framework. It is composed of the Academic Director, course coordinators, lecturers, administration staff as well as a student. The following areas are in focus: design, approval, monitoring and review of study programs, student learning, teaching and assessment, student admission, progression, recognition, certification, teaching staff, learning resources and student support, information management, and academic dishonesty. Internal quality assurance reviews and their outcomes, especially at the level of the discipline and/or program are conducted to ensure the standards. Students are involved by filling out evaluation forms focusing on teachers, program, resources. Classes are regularly observed and the process of review is monitored by a program coordinator. Quality Assurance Booklet has been compiled. Policies of quality assurance

are not available on the website by the representative of the institution promised to fix this problem immediately during the visit.

Global College complies with existing regulations as it has included Internal Quality Committee in its organizational structure. The Committee consists of nine members, including department heads, teaching staff and students. Policies for quality assurance cover intensive and systematic evaluation of the quality of the institution, achieved through systematic implementation of annual internal/external evaluation, academic certification and evaluation procedures, submission of curricula and so on. Members of teaching staff are required to self-assess and are regularly observed. Continuous and systematic feedback is collected from students through structured questionnaires as well as through formal and informal meetings. Other procedures include providing training opportunities for the administrative and academic staff, involvement of all stakeholders and external experts in the design and review of the programs of study, providing high quality infrastructures that support and enhance learning experience and research (e.g. databases, laboratories), cooperation with business organizations and participation in educational programs (Erasmus +). Important in quality assurance is cooperation with the University of Roehampton. An external academic advisor with is involved (observing classes and providing feedback). Policies of Quality Assurance are available internally through the Moodle platform.

Internapa College has included Quality Assurance Director in its organization structure (responsible to Rector). Quality assurance policy is implemented through both the College Internal Quality Assurance Committee at a college level and Departmental Internal Quality Assurance Committee at a departmental level. Such committee are composed of the management, faculty member, quality assurance specialists and a student. Their main responsibilities are ensuring the implementation of quality criteria guidelines, fostering a culture of quality assurance, providing direction on structure and content of academic programs, preparing strategic analyses of the department or study programs, analyzing, reviewing and updating objectives, analyzing, reviewing and enhancing faculty and student performance, admissions, administrative and student affair issues, providing guidelines on faculty recruitment needs, specifications of required faculty and faculty developmental needs, ensuring mechanisms for the appraisal of faculty teaching effectiveness, ensuring active involvement of students in learning process, and preparing periodic and annual review of departmental work for approval by the College Quality Assurance Committee. These goals are achieved by, for example, providing detailed assessment policies, specifying criteria for evaluation of teaching staff, and including student evaluations at the end of the semester. Internal evaluators are involved in consulting the study programs. Quality Assurance Manual is publicly available on the website.

KES College ensures quality assurance of its educational activities through the Internal Quality Committee (IQC) that consists of faculty, administration and students. Quality Assurance focuses on the following areas: comprehensive teaching staff evaluation systems (e.g., actual teaching, professional interaction, service, research) with the help of specific indicators, selection, recruitment and continuous professional development (CPD) of teaching staff, in-service training, class obsrvations, etc. There is an Education Officer who is responsible for teacher induction, teacher monitoring and evaluation. Students are given a voice as well through anonymous and confidential questionnaires filled out twice a year. Such feedback concerns learning, teaching, administrative and student services. Results are subsequently shared with program coordinators and program evaluation committees and remedial steps are taken. The involvement of eternal stakeholders is ensured through advisory boards for some programs as well as surveys administered to businesses, graduates, etc. Quality Assurance policies are made available internally through the Moodle platform.

Ledra College included Internal Quality Assurance Committee in its organizational structure. The Committee consists of members of faculty, administration and students. The IQAC works closely with the Academic Committee, department heads and faculty members in order to ensure that quality assurance procedures are followed. One of the responsibilities of the Academic Committee is to undertake checks to monitor the extent to which the College's declared policies and procedures on academic issues are followed. Academic Committee and Quality Assurance Committee are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of quality control mechanisms. Specific procedures for quality assurance are included in the extensive Quality Assurance Handbook which includes detailed regulations concerning students, teaching staff, learning resources and students services. Among other things, procedures are in place to ensure high standards with respect to access, admission and induction of students; systems for program of study design, approval and review; functioning of programs of study, teaching and learning; student assessment, progression and levels of academic attainment; systems for the appointment and appraisal of staff; ands student guidance and learner support. External stakeholders are involved in the design and running of study programs. There are program boards which include faculty and students. They supervise the running of the study programs, analyze and respond to student feedback (anonymous questionnaires), and engage in planning and development. Mechanisms of quality assurance including the handbook are available on the website.

Mesoyios College ensures that mechanisms, processes and procedures for quality assurance are implemented through the Internal Quality Committee which consists of the program coordinator, teaching staff, administration and an external advisor. The Committee coordinates preparation of self-evaluation reports for the purposes of external evaluations as well as a general internal quality report (all feedback collected from students and teachers) generated every three years. The faculty

are subject to evaluation every year which covers such areas as teaching effectiveness, scholarly and professional activity, as well as research outputs. This involves self-assessment, peer observation as well as student feedback. The Course/Faculty evaluation by students is conducted before the end of the semester, after the midterm exam period. Students have the right to appeal their grades and lodge complaints. Quality assurance policies are available internally through MS Teams SharePoint.

Philips College included Internal Evaluation Committee within its structure. It consists of members of the faculty, administration and students and prepares the General Internal Quality Evaluation Report. The primary quality assurance mechanism is the development of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which is generated annually with the cooperation and involvement of all stakeholders: students, instructors, administrators, management, the Office of Student Affairs, and other departments. The report is based on analyses of data form different sources: students' demographics, student progress, students' admission to accredited HEIs, effectiveness of teaching, student assessment scores, students' evaluations of teaching staff, curriculum and syllabi, infrastructure, results of IELTS examination, faculty information, and faculty CVs. The program coordinator is responsible for developing the SAR and then the Coordinating and Quality Assurance Team finalizes it and proposes actions for improvement. The final SAR is submitted to College Management and program coordinators for further action. Interviews with teachers are conducted regarding teaching methodology and classes are observed by professionals with rich teaching experience. Policies of quality assurance are available internally.

All the institutions within the Consortium have developed policies to ensure academic integrity and freedom, protect against academic fraud, guard against unfairness and discrimination, and ensure ethical conduct of students and staff.

2. As the interview with the representatives of the Consortium showed, the projected program was constructed in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth as well as the expertise and teaching experience (also external in nature) of the teaching staff. Based on the analysis of the submitted documentation and meetings with representatives of the institution, neither students nor external stakeholders were involved in the design of the program. According to one representative of the Consortium, institutions of higher education, including the colleges themselves, are relevant stakeholders in this case. While this lack of consultations is understandable given the nature of the foundation program in English, greater involvement of both groups should be ensured once the program is running. The goal of the program is to allow entry into undergraduate programs in institutions of higher education in Cyprus by preparing students to take requisite exams required by those institutions. It should be noted, however, that the B2 level is never explicitly mentioned in the submitted documentation. While the objectives of the course are overall

in line with the requirements for the foundation program, the expected learning outcomes specified in the application are sometimes quite confusing. One of the outcomes reads: "Show awareness of a range of academic vocabulary and grammar in writing and speaking" (in the application)– however, sheer awareness is clearly insufficient as students will need to use such language features in different contexts as well, also such that call for spontaneous communication. The ministry guidelines on learning outcomes include the following in this regard "Develop academic vocabulary and language necessary for Higher Education studies". Another is the following: "Use strategies, and begin to use criticality, to read and write academic texts" – it is unclear what strategies are meant here exactly (e.g., learning strategies, testing strategies, etc.). On the whole, there is a need to rephrase those and other learning outcomes in order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding among teaching staff and prospective students. The consortium should also make sure that the learning outcomes outlined in the application are the same as in the course description documentation (currently they do not match, and the learning outcomes of the course do not fully align with the ministry guidelines).

The program lasts one academic year and includes one module in each semester: English Language I and English Language II (16 55-minute periods a week for 13 weeks per semester, with a total of 208 periods per semester). An integrated approach rather than one including separate modules for different skills/areas of the target language was adopted. Although there is nothing wrong with this decision, steps will need to be taken to ensure coherence and avoid overlap in view of the fact that English Language I and II are planned to be taught by different teachers in 13 colleges (see below for related comments). There are issues, however, regarding the contents of the program and legitimate concerns can thus be raised regarding its potential to meet the envisaged goals (i.e., reaching B2 level, preparing students for academic study). First, the topics covered are taken from the TOC of a specific coursebook (Unlock 3) and many of them have little to do with academic study and seem to be mainly suitable to teenagers (e.g., animals, travel). Second, there is too little focus on grammar features that are indispensable in writing up academic reports or making presentations on academic topics (e.g., the passive is mentioned for the first time at the end of the second semester). Third, there is almost no evidence for attempts to develop student autonomy, foster adept use of language learning strategies and necessary study skills, or ensure the development of general competences going beyond foreign language skills (e.g., digital literacies, teamwork). Fourth, there is excessive focus of the IELTS exam while on completion of the program students can take different exams in order to obtain the required qualifications (such exams might be cheaper, more practical, better geared to cater to special educational needs). In other words, the foundation program should focus on assisting students in attaining the required level of English proficiency and preparing them for entry into academic study programs rather than teaching to one exam.

In light of the fact that 13 different institutions make up the Consortium with different teachers delivering instruction in different places, concerns can be raised about the comparability of what actually happens in terms of teaching practices. On the one hand, as one of the designers of the program said, the coursebook will be the same, which means the same contents, tasks, assessment procedures, etc. On the other hand, she stated that teachers would be responsible for producing their own assessment tools and would have some freedom as to what they do, which might raise doubts about attainment of the same learning outcomes. There is also a question as to how instruction should be tailored to the needs of students in specific contexts because these students are bound to vary in different ways beyond their initial proficiency. All of this shows that there is a clear need for regular coordination and review of the foundation program run by the Consortium but no relevant mechanisms have been proposed in this regard (e.g., regular staff meetings from different institutions, a general course coordinator). It would seem that the Consortium is applying for accreditation of a program that might be run in quite different ways in different institutions.

3. The information about the program will be made public once it has been accredited, as is the case with other programs run by the institutions making up the Consortium, which provide detail information about the programs they run (e.g., aims, learning outcomes, stages). It is not available at this point.

4. Information for the effective management of the program is not yet collected because the program is not running. In light of the elaborate mechanisms for quality assurance in all of the institutions within the Consortium, it can be concluded that such information will be regularly collected and analyzed in the case of the foundation program as well.

Strengths

- on the whole, the policies of quality assurance in the institutions comprising the Consortium are comprehensive, elaborate and impressive, given the small size of some of the colleges
- inclusion in some institutions of comprehensive handbooks and manuals concerning not only policy assurance but also issues related to students, teaching staff, codes of conduct, diversity, etc.
- high levels of transparency within some institutions, evident in making policy assurance quality document fully available on their websites
- involvement of students and teaching in the running of the programs (e.g., program boards)
- consistent involvement of external stakeholders in the review of the programs (e.g., external advisors, advisory bodies, surveys)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- greater transparency with respect to procedures for quality assurance in some institutions is needed – while it is understandable that whole manuals are not publicly shared, some general principles should be included on the website and members of relevant committees should be listed

- no formal involvement of students and external stakeholders in the design of the foundation program; steps should be taken to ensure such involvement when the program is running and undergoes periodic review

- learning outcomes for the program need to be reconsidered and redesigned so that they stress actual use of English in different situations (controlled and spontaneous) and adept use of language learning strategies but also that they are transparent for teaching staff and students. The learning outcomes provided in the course description document need to be aligned with the outcomes described in the application and in the ministry guidelines.

- the program needs to be redesigned to ensure attainment of the B2 level and allow sufficient preparation for entry into undergraduate study programs (e.g., inclusion of academic topics, focus on grammar structures and vocabulary that are needed for academic work)

- language learning strategies, learner autonomy, teamwork and digital competences should be clearly highlighted in the two modules (e.g., English Language I and II)

- emphasis should be shifted from preparation for one specific exam to the attainment of the B2 level so that the students are able to successfully perform on different exams that are recommended by the authorities

- there is a need to develop mechanisms allowing coordination and review of how the programs are run in the institutions comprising the Consortium; it would be advisable to appoint one general coordinator of the foundation program for the entire Consortium; regular meetings of the teaching staff from different institutions should be organized; a set of procedures should be developed for ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved in different institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

- *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?*

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- ***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

The representative of the consortium, Polina Polycarpou, provided invaluable information about the process of teaching and learning, as well as principles of student-centered teaching and learning. Concerning student-centered teaching and learning, we were informed that the textbooks selected for the courses offer a wide variety of learning opportunities to students for both semesters. The coursebook was chosen after a process characterized by careful consideration among the partners. These textbooks focus on the four skills in an integrated way, as well as critical thinking skills, which are seen as central to students attending university education. The coursebooks also contribute to flexible teaching opportunities, developing student autonomy, and providing individual learning opportunities because the series provides access to a Cambridge application that students can use individually at any time, thus creating learning experiences for themselves based on their needs and interests. However, the coursebook was published in 2012, over 10 years ago and includes topics that are not fully relevant for the target group of students.

Student engagement and autonomy are encouraged by active discussions and debates, as well as informal learning experiences. It is apparent in the module description that the teaching of skills will be done in an integrated way. In the proposed weekly plan, each unit starts with a short video, followed by a discussion or debate on different current issues and varied reading or writing exercises. As the writing skill is of critical importance to college students, the committee discussed the types of writing tasks that will be completed by students. It was reassuring to see that different complex writing tasks are planned that take into consideration the needs of college students. Differentiation will be considered from both the point of view of the language levels of students and their needs and interests. Teachers will be able to complement the coursebook with extra materials and use various resources offered by the books. Importantly, the course content is geared towards the possible wants of international students, and they will be able to adjust topic suggestions to their needs and interests. It was also communicated that it is important to consolidate students' individual differences and engage all students in various ways during the learning processes. Additionally, it is expected that students will have different strengths and weaknesses; therefore, extra materials will be offered according to skill strengths and language levels.

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Despite the suggested coursebooks and materials, tutors are given freedom and flexibility to design their own courses in a way that ensures the intended learning outcomes are reached effectively.

As student assessment is crucial, the committee sought information on quality control issues pertaining to student assessment from each college separately. Most college representatives reported that quality assurance procedures related to student assessment are included in the form of internal quality assurance (American College, Casa College, CBS College, City Unity College, CTL College, Internapa College, KES College, Ledra College, Meroyios College, and Phillips College). Atlantis College underscored the importance of second marking protocols, while the College of Tourism and Hotel Management and Global College described in the interview the steps taken to assure the good quality of the student assessment protocol.

Concerning the content of assessment, both formative and summative assessment opportunities are offered with a heavy emphasis on IELTS-related materials and requirements, as reflected in the two sample tests we received. Continuous in-class assessment content will be prepared by the tutors, giving them a good opportunity to consider students in their respective groups.

Finally, we were informed that each college considers mitigating circumstances when it comes to assessing students. Some relevant examples include:

City Unity College: As far as mitigating circumstances are concerned, the student provides the necessary proof to the Student Affairs department. The SA department acts as a link between the student and the relevant faculty, and the proof of mitigating circumstances is communicated to the Course leader and the HOD. Upon approval, the assessment is rescheduled for the student.

Casa College: Candidates facing challenges such as illness, disabilities, personal emergencies, or other valid reasons that could impact their performance in assessments should inform the appropriate authorities about their situation. Based on the proof provided, students will be allowed (or not) to resit any kind of assessment.

INC College: Depending on the circumstance, there are two different policies/mechanisms to deal with illness or disability. In the case of a disability, a formal policy, which has already been uploaded, will be activated. In the case of an emergency (illness/accident, and so on), a second mechanism will be activated. The Student Affairs officer will provide information to the Director of Academic Affairs, Program Coordinator, and the College Counsellor for immediate action. The aforementioned will activate the particular policy accordingly. Students' assessment will be in effect under favorable conditions.

Strengths

The modules use skills-based teaching in an integrated way.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The topics suggested in the course description could be adjusted to better reflect the interests of incoming students.
- Close collaboration among tutors regarding student assessment could enhance the quality of the assessment processes during the semester.
- Avoiding heavy reliance on IELTS requirements might be achieved by considering academic materials not covered by the exam.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	N/A
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

American College: Ms Thalia Malekou holds a BA in English Language and Literature from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and an MA in Education (Special Educational Needs) from Brunel University (UK). She is very well qualified for the role and is actively involved in continued professional development. She has 15 years of teaching experience.

Internal Quality Assurance Committee includes student representatives which ensures that students' views are listened to and taken into consideration. The IQAC is also responsible for induction of new staff which is very supportive for teachers' development.

Appointment procedures and promotion procedures are fair, transparent and explicitly stated.

Atlantis College: Ms Panagiota Christou holds a BA in English Language and Literature and an MA in Critical Theory and Cultural Studies (University of Nottingham, UK). She does not have formal teaching qualifications but has worked as an English teacher for 13 years working in higher education.

Appointment procedures and promotion procedures are fair, transparent and explicitly stated. There is a specific recruitment committee. The college offers opportunities for continuous professional development internally and externally.

Casa College: 1. Mrs. Dorota Jedryka has a BA in English Language Philology and a MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Poland. Mrs. Katerina Farmakidou holds a BA in English Language and a MA of Arts in English from the Open University, UK. They have both been teaching English for over 10 years.

Appointment procedures and promotion procedures are fair, transparent and explicitly stated. The college advertises job opportunities in a wide range of networks. Promotion committee evaluates cases for promotion.

CBS College: 1. Mrs Effie Ioannou has a BA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and an MA in Education and Leadership from UK universities. She has 15 years of teaching experience Ms. Savvia Georgiou holds a BA degree in English and an MA in Translation from UK universities. She has three years teaching experience.

The IQAC monitors student admission procedures and the number of staff proportionate to student numbers. The hiring procedures are clearly described and use short- and long-listing criteria. All documentation about recruitment and promotion is publicly available on the college's website.

City Unity College: Mrs Anthoula Koupepia has a BA in English and American Studies (France) and an MA in Cross-Cultural Communication and Applied Linguistics, Newcastle University in the UK. She has 6 years of English teaching experience. Mrs. Nicoletta Ieridou holds a BA in English with Education (University of Sunderland), and MA TESOL (Cyprus). She has extensive experience in teaching including higher education contexts. Ms. Nantia Kektsidou holds a BA in English Language and Literature (Cyprus) and a master degree in TEFL (Cyprus). She has 8 years of teaching experience including IELTS preparation.

Hiring promotions were described clearly in the presentation.

Promotion criteria were also transparently presented and is described in the faculty handbook.

The college places emphasis on continuous professional development; internally and externally. The majority of lecturers have completed a course on teaching online. Excellent that the college provides support for PhD and further studies.

Regular faculty appraisal ensures feedback to teachers on teaching quality.

College of Tourism: Erasmia Dede holds a BA in Literature and Culture (Greece) and an MA in Teaching Greek as a Second Language (Nicosia). Although her degree is not on teaching English, the methodological

training on the Greek as a second language degree is transferable and she has extensive teaching experience including higher education contexts, including 4 years teaching English.

Appointment procedures and promotion procedures are fair, transparent and explicitly stated.

CTL Eurocollege: Ms Illy Dimitrova holds a BA in Applied Linguistics (English and Russian) and MA in English for Tourism and Business both from Bulgaria. She only has three years experience of teaching. Ms Irida Mitidou has a BA in English Language in Literature, and MA in TESOL and is a Cambridge Assessment specialist. She also has 15 years of experience..

IQAC oversees continuous professional development. Teachers are required to take a course every three years.

Job opportunities are publicized widely. College has detailed guidelines for professional development and supports lecturers' activity in research and continuous professional development. Promotion criteria are openly available.

Global College: Polina Polycarpou has a BA degre in English and Literature (Open University, UK) and an MA in TESOL from University of Central Lancashire, UK. Ms Nectaria Neofytiou has a BA and MA in English Language (Essex University, UK). The programme leader, Ms Polycarpou has been employed at Global College since 2011 but Ms Nectaria Neofytiou seems to have only two years of teaching experience.

IQAC monitors continuous professional development. There is an external expert who conducts classroom observations and teachers' engage in self-assessment and carry out peer-assessment.

Hiring and promotion criteria are transparent and fair.

Internapa College: Mrs Isavella Chrysodonta is an English language lecturer at InterNapa College over the last eight years. She has a BA in TEFL and Language Studies and MA in Education from the University of Wales in Swansea (Wales). She has an 12 years' experience as an English language teacher and IGCSE instructor at various private institutes in Cyprus. Mrs Aggela Marinou has a BA in English Language and Literature from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, a diploma in translation and journalism. She taught TESOL at undergraduate level, in foundation courses as well as in various private institutes in Cyprus.

Hiring and promotion criteria are transparent..

KES College: Ms Semeli Louca has a BA in English in Philosophy (Athens) and an MA in Education, Leadership and Management (Cyprus). She has a CELTA certificate. She only has two years of teaching experience.

Hiring and promotion criteria are transparent and fair.

Ledra College: Dr. Stephanie Tilliridou has a BA in English Language and English Language Teaching from the University of Sussex (UK) and an MA in Education and Professional Studies from King's College London

(UK) and a PhD from Cardiff University in Language and Communication. Mrs. Olivia Tilliridou has a BA in English Language and Literature (Greece) and an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (UK). They did not attend the meeting.

Hiring and promotion criteria are transparent, fair and detailed.

Mesoyios College: Ms Maria Nikolau holds an MA in TESOL (Cyprus) and BA from the USA, and has 23 years teaching experience. Ms Maria Artemiou has an MA in Translation (UK) and a BA in English (Cyprus). She has five years teaching experience but no formal teaching qualifications. Both lecturers have over 10 years teaching experience, including lectureship at UK universities.

The college has very detailed policies in place for staff development, promotion and hiring.

Philipps College: The College originally submitted the following documentation: Mrs Despina Constantinou has a BA in English Language and an MA in TEFL and Applied Linguistics (UK). Professor Kyriacopoulou Tita has a PhD in Computational Linguistics and is primarily affiliated with Gustave Eiffel University, France. She has a large number of publications but most research and teaching seems to be in theoretical linguistics. In the meeting two colleagues presented themselves: Erica and Melina Kouloumullis, who both have BA and MA in Linguistics from UCL, UK. They have over 10 years teaching experience in various contexts.

Strengths

American College: Ms Thalia Malekou has expertise in special needs which will be very useful in identifying struggling students and supporting them. The IQAC is also responsible for induction of new staff which is very supportive for teachers' development. It is excellent that there is a right to appeal against promotion decisions.

CASA college: The criteria-based rating system in the hiring procedures ensures the fairness of the decisions made in the recruitment process. The college has very detailed induction documentation for new members of staff.

City Unity College: The majority of lecturers have completed a course on teaching online and have received a certificate from HRDA.. Excellent that the college provides support for PhD and further studies.

College of Tourism: The IAQC also evaluates the appointment criteria and the ways in which teaching effectiveness is appraised. There is a probation period which is then evaluated based on teaching quality and research performance.

CTL Eurocollege: Irida Mitidou has obtained a certificate as Cambridge Assessment specialist which is very beneficial for supporting students in exam preparation.

Global College: There is an external expert who conducts classroom observations and teachers' self-assess and carry out peer-assessment. This promotes teachers' continuous development and teaching effectiveness.

Internapa College: Both lecturers are highly experienced and Mrs Isavella Chrysodonta is very actively engaged in professional development activities. She has presented at conferences and is a certified examiner. Internapa College has clear mechanisms in place to support innovative teaching methods. The college has an induction handbook and uses self- and peer evaluation. The college has an education officer who assists with the induction of the teaching staff. The officer also participates in the recruitment process. The college offers in-service training.

Ledra College: The two lecturers are very well qualified; one of them holds a PhD and they have over 10 years experiencing, including working at a UK university.

*Phillips College:*The college has very detailed descriptions for promotion and the level of appointment that could serve as an example to other institutions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

CTL Eurocollege: the colleagues at CTL college do not have extensive teaching experience. They would need further CPD and mentoring from colleagues at other colleges.

Global College's promotion criteria are relatively vague and quite general.

KES College: the lecturer does not have extensive teaching experience. She would need further CPD and mentoring from colleagues at other colleges, particularly because she is the sole lecturer for the programme.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3	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*

> o *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

Student admission criteria are defined externally.

They include Higher Secondary School leaving Certificate or of an equivalent degree. Proof of English language proficiency such as:

- An average score of at least of 4.0 in the IELTS examination.
- A score of at least 43 in the Pearson PTE Academic examination.
- A score of at least 42 in the TOEFL Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT).
- A grade of at least E in the IGCSE / GCSE English as a Second language examination.
- Any other English language proficiency examination set by relevant Decisions of the Council of Ministers for entry to this program.

Strengths

Students' progress is monitored closely using essays and assignments, monthly tests, projects and presentations and a final exam.

CASA college quality assurance procedures closely monitor student admission, progression and certification.

CBS College's IQAC monitors student admission procedures.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

None

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
4	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Not applicable
4.4	Student certification	Not applicable

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

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.

All Colleges of the consortium fully comply with the Teaching and Learning resources as well as the Physical resources offered in their premises.

One of the textbooks required for the foundation program are oriented towards IELTS examination (Guy Brook – Hart and Vanessa Jakeman: Complete IELTS bands 4-5 Student's Book and Workbook, Cambridge University Press, 2012). The other coursebook is a more general English language coursebook. Colleges have the flexibility to deviate from the books suggested by the coordinator of the program (Polina Polykarpou).

As far as the other physical resources and the use of technology are concerned, all colleges use upgraded software and are fully compliant in terms of the digital resources used in the classroom. Some colleges prefer to use their own platforms designed for communication and collaboration purposes but generally most of the colleges use Moodle, Teams, Canvas and Google classroom which are very popular platforms for communication and feedback. All colleges use a variety of digital tools in order to enhance their teaching and learning experience. Those tools include PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, TedTalks, Kahoot and Quizlet games and Cambridge applications. The above-mentioned technology is integrated in the classes as an indispensable part of the lesson promoting, this way, differentiation, and facilitation of the teaching and learning process.

Apart from well-equipped classrooms, all colleges offer their students resources and spaces to further assist their studying and research through their physical libraries equipped with thousands of books and their technologically equipped labs. They also offer a variety of electronic material through the various databases (EBSO, PROQUEST, PERLENGO) accessed via their E-libraries. Thus, a variety of e-books, journals, magazines, and more are available to students, fully supporting, this way, the achievement of objectives for the foundation program.

Students through the email accounts they are provided on the Orientation Day organized by the colleges or at the beginning of their studies are able to make use of all the digital and physical resources available.

During their studies, the students enjoy student-centered environments that provide them with counseling and support regarding their academic or personal issues through technical support, a full-time-basis system of counseling and support services, and complaint-management policies.

In regard to students facing disabilities or learning difficulties, the colleges respect the regulations concerning students with disabilities giving them easy access to their premises and offering them special support whenever necessary.

The colleges offer forms of financial assistance through scholarships to students who excel academically or to those eligible regarding certain socioeconomic criteria.

Relevant administrative support is available and staff office hours make services accessible.

Strengths
- Good practices of promoting further involvement of students with the English language through extra-curricular or co-curricular activities were noticed in many of the colleges' profiles.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- InterNapa and Global College: There was no clear evidence of the colleges' policy regarding students with disabilities.
- Ledra College: There was no evidence of the college's policy regarding scholarships.

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

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

Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas
  5.5 **Selection criteria and requirements**
  5.6 **Proposal and dissertation**
  5.7 **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	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

D. Conclusions and final remarks

There are inherent challenges when a consortium consisting of 13 partners applies for accreditation. Many of these have been very well addressed by the colleges participating in the consortium. The committee was impressed by the range and type of quality assurance mechanisms applied by the colleges. We also found it commendable that all institutions have identified and some already employ very well qualified and highly experienced lecturers. The programme leader also showed high levels of awareness of student-centred teaching mechanisms.

However, a considerable weakness of the application lies in the design of the curriculum of the foundation programme. As outlined in Section 1 of the evaluation, the learning outcomes for the program need to be revised to ensure that students meet the B2 level learning outcomes specified by the Ministry and to prepare students sufficiently for entry into undergraduate study programs. The learning outcomes provided in the course description document need to be aligned with the outcomes described in the application and with the ministry guidelines. Failing to take these steps will create problems with completion rates and level of support required in the undergraduate programs the students will attend after the completion of the course, and will have repercussions for the institutions as a whole.

The ministry guidelines do not specify one single exam as a choice for demonstrating language proficiency but provide a list. This also needs to be taken into account because the IELTS exam is by now relatively outdated (it is currently being revised), there are cheaper and shorter tests on the market that can be taken in students' own homes and that provide immediate results for components that do not require a human rating.

There is also the issue of collaboration and co-operation of the colleges concerning the adaptation, monitoring and assessment of learning outcomes across various implementations of the foundation programme. As the programme is accredited as one combined unit, it will be essential that some official

mechanisms in this regard are implemented and the contracts of the lecturers include the time for such collaborative activities. It would be helpful to appoint one general coordinator of the foundation program, regular meetings of the teaching staff from different institutions should be organized; a set of procedures should be developed for ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved in different institutions.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Judit Kormos	
Kata Csizér Wein	
Mirosław Pawlak	
Panagiota Retsa	

Date: 9th December 2023