Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  Larnaca College

- **Town:** Larnaca

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

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

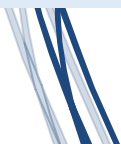- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Προπαρασκευαστικό Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης της Αγγλικής (1 Χρόνος)

  In English: English Foundation Course (1 year)

  Programme Name

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**
  In Greek: Concentrations

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

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

The visit took place on 4th December 2023 via Zoom from 10 AM Cyprus time until 1 PM Cyprus time. In advance, a 36 page application for the accreditation document was shared in addition to links to the virtual tours of the campus which included equipment, workshops, IT facilities and classrooms. The institution also shared a document describing the profile of and detailed documentations on formal policies of the management of programs, educational quality assurance mechanisms, student handbooks and a document with the description of the institution's research profile.

Larnaca College is a private education college founded in 2010 with the mission to empower students to succeed by integrating general education, professional skills and career focused education. It aims to cultivate a student-centered environment and provide access opportunities for a range of students. It offers a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the areas of business, tourism, management, accounting and education.

The meeting started with a short introduction by Charalabos Neophytou, the president of the college about the history of the institution and its profile. He summarized the internal quality assurance mechanisms and the research activities of the college. The president answered some questions of the committee on internal quality assurance regarding assessment procedures but gave relatively vague and general answers on internal monitoring of course content. The institution did not upload documents on internal quality assurance, hiring and promotion processes in advance of the meeting despite the request of the committee. The president of the college frequently gave evasive responses and provided information that was not directly relevant. We also asked about hiring and promotion procedures and contradictory information was provided concerning the procedures applied for internal candidates.

The meeting then continued with Dr. Maria Stylianidou with whom we discussed content and the standards of the programme, the learning outcomes and processes of teaching and learning and the student-centred teaching methodology. Dr. Stylianidou gave detailed and insightful answers to our questions on these points of the agenda. However, it was apparent from the discussion that the proposed curriculum of the programme was adapted from an English teaching course to future teachers in primary school and included several elements that were not relevant for the target group of students. The curriculum was aimed at levels lower than B2 on the CEFR.

The visit followed with a discussion with the teaching staff. Dr Maria Stylianidou and Xenia Orfanides were present. We continued the discussion of the teaching programme, the qualifications of the staff members, structure and content of each course and its implementation, the learning outcomes and assessment methods. Based on the documentation and the discussion it was apparent that Xenia Orfanides has very limited relevant teaching experience. We were not able to meet Erini Nomikou, the third member of the teaching staff because she was not available for the visit.

The discussion with the administrative staff was very informative. They presented the support available to international students and answered all our questions very competently.

In the final exit meeting, we requested further documentation on internal quality assurance, policy for hiring and promoting members of staff and an up-to-date description of the resources of the institution.

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*

- 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

1. Larnaca College has evidently taken some steps to ensure quality assurance with respect to different spheres of its functioning but it seems to lack a comprehensive, coherent, formal and transparent policy in this respect. It should be emphasized at the outset that the management of the institution were asked several times during the visit to provide the necessary documents in this respect but such documents were not made available. In addition, the representatives of the College for the most part failed to offer satisfactory information in response to specific questions asked by the members of the Evaluating Committee. Starting with the positives, the Internal Quality Committee is a permanent body within the organizational structure of the institution. Its members include Chair/Rector, Vice-Rector, School of Education Coordinator, School of Education Quality Assurance Member, School of Education Foundation Program Coordinator, Director of Administration and, importantly, a student representative. This said, the institution failed to provide specific information about how exactly the Internal Quality Committee operates, what its responsibilities are, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that educational policies are effective or what tools are employed for this purpose. There is also no evidence that consistent policies are followed with respect to the development of new programs of study and management of existing ones. However, there are also steps taken in Larnaca College to ensure quality of instructional processes which can be identified in the available documents and it is only fair to acknowledge these. For example, the Quality Manual provided by the institution outlines the procedures for ensuring intellectual integrity which focus on eliminating instances of malpractice (e.g., plagiarism) among teaching staff and students. The manual also specifies the ways in which students can appeal their grades and make complaints using forms

provided. Assessment procedures are subject to review both internally and with the assistance of an external examiner. According to the manual, both students and teachers are involved in the running of courses. The former are included in consultative committees and program boards, they are invited to regular meetings and fill out questionnaires regarding specific courses and teachers (a questionnaire form was provided). The latter are encouraged to take steps to enhance their qualifications and they are regularly evaluated, even though specifics as to how this evaluation takes place are missing. They are also provided with clear guidelines concerning their responsibilities, relations with students, ethical behaviors but also course delivery (Teaching Personnel Handbook). Larnaca College encourages diversity and equality, guarding against discrimination and intolerance of any kind. Policies of quality assurance, however, are not publicly available because, in the words of Larnaca College Director, no such requirements exist. Information about the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education is included on the website and the relevant links are provided.

2. Even though specific information in this regard is missing from the documents submitted by Larnaca College, the interview with the program coordinator shows that the proposed 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, in particular the coordinator herself. 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. References were made to the expectations of students in other programs of this kind but this can at best be regarded as only anecdotal evidence for student involvement. While such a situation 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 study 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 which is perhaps one of the reasons why the staff, including the program coordinator, are not fully aware of its specific goals. This was evident in the meeting when they stated several times that the course should cater for the needs of students representing a range of language levels (presumably lower than B1 required for entry into the program). While the objectives of the course are overall in line with the requirements for a foundation program, the expected learning outcomes outlined 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" – 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. 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 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. 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 the B2 level, preparing students for academic coursework). First, the topics covered seem to be taken from the TOC of a very specific coursebook (Unlock 3, published in 2012 - over 10 years old))and many of them have little to do with academic study (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 on the IELTS exam while on completion of the program students can take different exams in order to obtain the required qualifications. Given the gaps in the policy for quality assurance, it is not clear at this point to what extent the program will be subject to monitoring and periodical review, with both internal (i.e. administrators, teachers, students) and external (e.g., external examiners) stakeholders taking part in the process.

3. The information about the program will be made public once it has been accredited, as is the case with other programs run by Larnaca College, where detailed information is provided (e.g., 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 problems with quality assurance policies, it cannot be concluded at this point whether such information will be regularly collected and analyzed by the institution.

Strengths

- coherent and transparent mechanisms for ensuring intellectual interiority (e.g., guarding against plagiarism)
- involvement of students and teaching in the running of the programs
- detailed policies in place to ensure fairness of assessment, enable lodging complaints and facilitate readjustments

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- there is a need to develop a comprehensive, coherent, formal and transparent policy in terms of quality assurance, in particular with respect to the development and regular review of study programs; specific mechanisms and tools need to be provided and described in more detail (e.g., teaching staff assessment, class observations, etc.)
- the main elements of the policy of quality assurance should be publicly available (e.g., on the website)
- involvement of external stakeholders in the design and review of the programs of study needs to be ensured
- 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 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)
- the goals of the program should be made explicit to the Program Coordinator and teaching staff so that they are aware the level of students they will be working with
- 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

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

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

- *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

Based on the elements from the application for external evaluation and our findings from the onsite visit, we have reached a number of conclusions. Concerning the processes of teaching and learning, it seems that the elements of student-centered teaching and learning are in place. Teachers work as facilitators to help and enhance the learning processes. Individualized teaching catering to the needs of students is planned, and tutors are prepared to accommodate students' needs. Skills-based teaching for IELTS is planned, and teaching various skills in an integrated way is proposed, combining reading and writing activities, for example. Translation is planned to be used, as well as writing activities spanning from micro- to macro-level. Teachers are aware of their responsibility to teach in a way that is motivating for the students, and they intend to create high student engagement in class by including role-plays, group-based teaching, focused assessment methods, and the use of technology. They also encourage students to communicate in English. Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process by selecting topics for their project work and working individually or in groups using relevant self-regulatory strategies. Differentiation is made based on the language levels of students as well as their learning differences and special needs. We have also been informed that multimodal teaching approaches are planned to be used in the classroom. Accommodation practices for extra time needed for students are also offered. Autonomy is encouraged through homework activities, and feedback is provided in an individualized manner.

As explained, topics covered in the courses are taken from a specific coursebook (Unlock 3),, although subtopics can be selected based on students' interest and motivation. Our impression is that the course is geared more towards students' social lives than their future academic needs. Still, it is commendable that student creativity is planned to be explored in these courses. It was expressed by the teachers present in the visit that differentiation might cause difficulties in the classroom, and we agree that differentiation in a multicultural classroom might not be easy; therefore, teachers might need help in being able to provide meaningful differentiation in their classrooms.

Technology is integrated into the teaching process in a meaningful way, including not only integrated teaching platforms like Moodle and Teams but also specific activity-based techniques such as Kahoot and digital writing boards. We were informed that blended learning will be used when and if necessary.

As regards student assessment and related processes, varied forms of assessment are planned for the English Language Foundation Program, including summative and formative assessment. Forms of assessment

include essays and assignments, monthly tests (geared towards the needs of the student), projects, and presentations, as well as a final exam. The content of tests and quizzes will be finalized by teachers with an emphasis on a holistic approach. It needs to be pointed out that the Quality Manual contains information on assessment appeal, assessment, and grading policy. It is claimed that the assessment should be valid, educative, explicit, fair, and comprehensive. Reassuringly, a mitigating policy for the assessment is in place.

Strengths

The project coordinator is highly educated and highly motivated. She demonstrated professional care in managing this program, addressing both student and teacher needs. She is a great asset to the program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The college could consider differentiation based on students' interests.
- It might be useful to consider teacher development on how to enhance autonomous learning processes for all teachers.
- The course could move away from strictly following IELTS requirements and concentrate on a more varied and integrated way of developing students' skills.
- Some of the topics proposed to be covered by the syllabus provided do not seem to be age-appropriate and lack relevance to academic skills.
- Autonomy could be encouraged in a more systematic way, from topic selection to project work.

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

The programme leader Dr. Maria Stylianidou is very highly qualified. She holds a PhD in Education from King's College London (with a focus on Comparative Literature) and a Master in Education for the University of Bristol. She has 6 years experience in teaching in higher education. She answered all our questions very competently in the visit.

Mrs. Eri Nomikou, holds a BA in Applied Languages and Translation and an MSc in Natural Language Processing University of Manchester. She does not have formal teaching qualifications, but has worked as an English language teacher in a secondary school for 13 years. Mrs. Xenia Orphanides holds a BA Hons in Writing & Publishing, Masters in Fine Art and TEFL Certificate. She has 6 years of experience teaching English. We could only talk to Ms Orphanides during the visit. In the discussion it was apparent that she has very limited experience teaching in EAP courses and she would require further professional development and mentoring.

In principle, according to the internal quality assurance documents, there is a robust mechanism in place through which teaching quality can be enhanced ranging from student feedback questionnaires, peer-observation and meetings between lecturers and subject leaders.

The hiring procedures are described in sufficient detail in the Teaching Personnel Handbook. In the visit, however, the president of the college reported that internal candidates (i.e. colleagues who had been employed on temporary contracts) are exempted from giving a lecture as part of the interview process. The faculty handbook does not include this information and this exemption undermines the fairness of hiring procedures. Promotion criteria are explained, albeit quite briefly, in the Teaching Personnel Handbook.

Strengths

- Teachers' work is appraised each year and in principle teachers are encouraged to obtain teaching qualifications and study in a teaching programme. However, the programme is for early childhood education and not entirely relevant for language teaching
- New lecturers take part in an induction course.
  - A system of peer observation is in place.
  - The college supports teacher autonomy and self-reflection and views the improvement of teaching practices as a professional issue.
- The programme leader Dr. Maria Stylianidou is highly qualified and is a knowledgeable lecturer. She was only recently promoted as an assistant professor despite having a PhD. She has also engaged in a research project supported by the college.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Two of the teaching staff to be hired for the programme do not have relevant teaching-related qualifications and Ms Xenia Orphanides, who was present in the visit, was not familiar with some key aspects of student-centered teaching such as ways of ensuring learning autonomy and differentiation. The teaching staff to be employed would need to take part in continuous professional development activities and would need to be closely mentored by Dr. Stylianidou. Mentoring should be included in the working hours of Dr. Stylianidou.
- The institution should be more specific about the expected level of performance for promotion. It is not fair that staff members with MA and PhD are on the same payscale. Expressions such as 'climb the ladder' in describing promotion should not be used in descriptions of promotion criteria. The institution should take an active role in supporting its members to be 'promoted' to a higher level role rather than expect its staff to 'move ahead, climbing over obstacles'.
- The de facto promotion procedures described orally during the visit by the president of the college should not be different from the ones described in the college's policies and should apply to each applicant in an equitable manner.

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	Not applicable

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

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.

Students take an accredited external language proficiency exam to be able to progress to university studies in Cyprus.

Students' progress is assessed throughout the semester through various methods and techniques such as mid-term examination, tests, quizzes, projects and assignments.

Strengths

The administrative staff is very competent and has the resources to make timely decisions on admission and to monitor students' progress. As the college is relatively small and the planned number of admitted students is not high, issues about students' progress are likely to be recognized and acted upon quickly. The college employs councilors to support students should they need them.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The institution was planning to award a diploma upon the completion of the course, but this should just be a certificate of attendance.

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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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

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- *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.)?*

Findings

After the careful examination of the documentation provided by Larnaca College, the online meeting with the College and the additional updated information requested by the ECC, we have concluded the following:

Regarding the Teaching and Learning Resources Larnaca College is well-equipped with physical and digital resources that facilitate the teaching and learning process. Larnaca College uses educational platforms such as Moodle and Teams and the use of software application and digital writing boards are used in the classroom in order to enhance the teaching and learning experience. The teachers are monitored by an internal verifier who ensures that the syllabi are followed and delivered.

The College offers its students a full-time basis library which includes 5000 hard copies and is equipped with 8 computers that provide the students with access to four academic databases. The College has 13 lecture rooms, 1 auditorium and a lab equipped with 16 laptops. The facilities of the College that are available to the students are all equipped with wi-fi connection, appropriate hardware, and updated software.

The books that will be used in the foundation program will be decided among the Head of the Coordination Committee (Dr. Maria Stylianidou) and the other two English teachers that will be occupied in the program. During the online meeting the ECC had the chance to interview only Dr Maria Stylianou and Xenia Orphanides since Erini Nomikou was absent. Hence, the ECC did not have clear picture of the physical resources that will be used in the classroom on account of the fact that they have not been selected yet and also due to the fact that the information elicited by the two English teachers did not show convincing evidence of their awareness regarding the goals of the foundation program.

As far as the Student and Human Support is concerned the college tries to follow a student-centered philosophy of assistive and supporting character. There is an Orientation Day when the College welcomes the students and provides them with any helpful information they may need. Furthermore, there are scheduled meetings of the Student Union throughout the academic year, but students can also contact the Administration from 8:00-16:00 or arrange a meeting until 20:00. There are many ways for students to express their complaint or seek counseling through a network of assistance.

The mobility of students with disabilities is ensured with facilitated access in the premises. Moreover, students with disabilities are allowed to *Reasonable Adjustments* that do not affect the validity of the procedure during some of the assessments. Such adjustments include extra time, taking the assessment at an alternative location, low vision aids, large font format, audio format, and language-modified assessment material, assistance by readers or scribes and electronic devices assistant.

Furthermore, every semester, the College, in close cooperation with counselors of public or private schools, provides scholarships based on academic performance and socioeconomic criteria. The scholarships are only announced on social media.

Strengths

- A well-organized and informed administrative staff..

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is a concern regarding the concordance among the level of the course, the expected level of the students and the level of the books. This concern is mainly raised by the fact that the teachers do not seem to be fully aware of the required level of the students who will enter the foundation program nor the goals of the program. This leads to the fact that there is not a final course plan with all the adequate information yet.
- It was not clear what the frequency and the rate of the library's upgrade is and whether students are prompted to use the premises of the library.
- It was not clear whether there is an available appropriate separate study room with wi-fi connection and computers to serve students' studying and research needs.
- The scholarship policy and the policy regarding students with disabilities should be publicly available on the website of the College.

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

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

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6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
> 6.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**
> 6.2 **Proposal and dissertation**
> 6.3 **Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*
  - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - *support for writing research papers*
  - *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6	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

It was apparent in the visit that Larnaca College is a small institution with a capable administration staff and the programme leader Dr. Maria Stylianidou is highly competent. However, internal quality assurance documentation is not fully detailed, some teaching staff members would require further professional development and policies of hiring and promotion might not always be consistently implemented. The transparency and clarity of information provided publicly as well as in the application for accreditation should also be improved. The college needs to develop a comprehensive, coherent, formal and transparent policy in terms of quality assurance, in particular with respect to the development and regular review of study programs; specific mechanisms and tools need to be provided and described in more detail.

The teaching staff should be absolutely clear about the entry and exit level of proficiency required in the programme and should tailor the teaching materials to the target level and student population based on a needs analysis. The principle that a coursebook is the curriculum should not be applied as it does not allow sufficient flexibility and learner autonomy. The programme should align with the guidelines provided by the ministry that students can take any of the accredited language proficiency tests and should focus on the achievement of stated learning outcomes rather than one specific test. Emphasis should also be placed on digital skills and learner autonomy in the foundation programme. The description and availability of information about learning resources should also be more transparent and available publicly for students who apply for the programme and also for future external evaluations.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Judit Kormos	
Kata Csizér Wein	
Mirosław Pawlak	
Panagiota Retsa	

Date: 9th December 2023