Doc. 300.3.1/1

Date: 4 July 2020

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:** Philips University
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** Arts and Sciences
- **Department:** Language Studies and Communication
- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Programme
In Greek: Δημόσιες Σχέσεις και Επικοινωνία
In English: Public Relations and Communication (BA)
Language(s) of instruction: English

[Title 2]

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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A.   Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The site-visit took place on July 2nd, 2020, in a sequence of online meetings with a variety of responsible staff members, faculty as well as the rectorate of the University. Due to circumstances no personal on-site visit was possible. Furthermore, as the programme is about to start later in the year 2020, no contacts with students were possible.

Overall, staff has responded satisfactorily to all questions of the members of the evaluation committee.

With regard to data protection as well as open access publication policies, the committee had an exchange of views with staff members. It appears that Philips University is aware and sensitive to issues of data protection. However, protection of students' data created and processed by digital platforms can and should be increased. For example, the use of MS teams contains the risk of students' data being processed outside the control of Philips University. The more data the University has under its control, the better.

With regard to open access publications, deeper internal consultations are recommended. Making available open access to scholars and students is not sufficient. Rather, open access policy by the University should also include new platforms which are open access, but also freely available to scholars and authors. In this context, a thorough reading and implementation of the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (https://sfdora.org/) is recommended.

B.   External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Josef Trappel	Professor	University of Salzburg
Anastasia Veneti	Associate Professor	University of Bournemouth
Prodromos Yannas	Professor	University of West Attica
Valentinos Pariza	Student	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 each 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. University officers and faculty members do operate a quality assurance system that will also apply to the newly formed Department of Public Relations and Communication. They assured us that they guard against academic fraud through seminars and supervision of projects to students as well as through the use of the turn-it-in software package for plagiarism. It was clear from our discussions that the Department will take advantage of the good and productive relations that the University maintains with external stakeholders, in particular with members of the business community. The University is interested in the welfare of students, faculty and staff and has well defined policies regarding fair and non-discriminatory treatment of individuals and protection of personal data.

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.*

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.

University officers and faculty members do operate a quality assurance system that will also apply to the newly formed Department of Language Studies and Communication. They assured us that they guard against academic fraud through seminars and supervision of projects to students as well as through the use of the turnitin software package for plagiarism. The University is interested in the welfare of students, faculty and staff and has well defined policies regarding fair and non-discriminatory treatment of individuals and protection of personal data.

The programme in Public Relations and Communication does have explicit intended learning outcomes both for the program as a whole and individually for each course. The Programme has been designed having in mind the need for public relations personnel in Cyprus and abroad.

It is clear to us that the Program developers have kept in touch with developments in the field of study and have incorporated the elevation of PR to the digital level with the inclusion of relevant courses focusing both on PR and the media channels.

In the academic design of the programme, we identified three areas that need to be re-thought before launching the programme:

The first area deals with the Methodology course offerings. As things stand, students are required to take only one compulsory course in methodology, the course entitled "Social Research Methods" that is being offered too late in student progression, at the 5th semester. This is an introductory course that familiarizes students with the purpose and value and the ethics of research and goes on to address qualitative research methods. This course is not sufficient to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct research and interpret the findings of research projects. It is imperative that students are exposed to quantitative research methods early on in their programme of study. The designers of the programme have understood the value of this course by offering a "Statistics" course in the 1st Semester. However, this very important course is not compulsory and is being offered as an elective.

The second area that needs revisiting deals with some courses that are designated as "elective" but, due to their centrality in PR curricula, should be given serious consideration to be upgraded to "compulsory".

The third area of concern refers to the uniform way of assigning the same ECTS credits (5) to all courses of the programme. By allotting equal and similar treatment to all courses of the programme, due attention is not accorded to the significance of each course, the level (year) of its delivery, its peculiarities, and student workload.

It was clear from our interviews and the documentation provided that the University disseminates basic information through its printed material and its website. Given that the programme under review is new, it is expected that the Department will be providing and updating information as it becomes finalized.

It was clear from our discussions that the Department will take advantage of the good and productive relations that the University maintains with external stakeholders, in particular with members of the business community

Very difficult to comment on Information Management given that at this time there are no students in the program. From our discussions with University officials and faculty members it became

apparent that they have in place a data base for collecting and analyzing information regarding the student body.

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

Strengths for [Title 1]

It was clear from our discussions that the Department will take advantage of the good and productive relations that the University maintains with external stakeholders, in particular with members of the business community.

Department has policies in place guarding against academic fraud and discrimination with respect to its staff and students

Course variety with special emphasis given to allied fields (marketing, communication, advertising)

Programme is up-to -date incorporating courses that deal with the digital dimension and the way it has been transforming the study and the practice of Public Relations.

Programme will take advantage of information documentation and provision provided centrally by the University

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.

We strongly urge the Department to rectify the deficiency in required Methodology offerings and provide a course sequence of methodology courses in the first two years of study offering to all students a solid background on research methodology topics, issues and skills including digital methods, such as, for example, network analysis. In the sequence comprising of "Social Research Methods", "Statistics" and "Marketing Research", faculty members may consider changing the status of the "Marketing Research" course from an elective to compulsory.

The courses that we are proposing as "compulsory" are "Business and Society", 'Business Ethics", "Marketing Research", "Advertising and Society" and "Political Communication".

As a counter-measure to the previous recommendation, some courses designated as "compulsory" maybe relegated to the "elective" category, as for example, "Introduction to Social Psychology", "Media Law", "Leadership and Public Relations".

Furthermore, the Department should reconsider the weighting of ECTS for each and every course based on the importance attached to the course and its place in the entire curriculum.

Keep a separate data base at the Department level and disseminate information to the public through the Department's website.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

   2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
   2.2 Practical training
   2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and 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.*

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- *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.*

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.

It is clear that the Department's programmme takes into consideration clear learning outcomes of its courses, without specifying the pedagogical methods to accomplish them (e.g. diversity of assessment methods).

Efforts have been made to bridge theoretical and practical learning, via practical projects and internships offered via collaboration with external partners during courses on semester 4 and 6. The programme seems to have a strategy to evaluate students taking those courses via a supervisor, monitoring them during their internship as well as with reports completed by students.

As previously stated, there is not a clear rationale for the selection of elective and compulsory courses as many courses that refer to the programme discipline's core, are elective and other courses that are compulsory, do not reflect the core course requirements a Public Relations and Communication Bachelor should have.

In the interviews, respondents indicated that they apply formative assessment but there is no clear evidence of that.

Assessment procedures are not clearly defined, and the range of assessment is narrow. Most of the courses' descriptions include assessment information that does not reflect the stated and intended learning outcomes of each course. This is not representative of student-centred learning.

Moreover, each course seems to have one examiner and there is no evidence of second marking or any other kind of marking moderation. However, they do have a policy for students' appeals with respect to their assessment. The assessment's regulation includes compensation measures, something that is also used in UK.

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

Strengths for the Bachelor program are that the learning outcomes are defined well for each course and procedures are defined for student appeals.

There is also a good amount of flexibility for students in choosing their path of learning through a variety of elective courses, in order to develop their specialized skills for pursuing different branches in their career.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for the Bachelor program is that more than one examiner per course assessment is suggested as best-practice.

A broader range of assessment methods should exist so that to address the needs of each course and its learning outcomes.

Diversity of learning methods for students should be provided via lectures, seminars, team work, role-playing, blended learning, etc.

Furthering what has already been said in section 1, the number of compulsory courses and the number of elective courses to be taught/offered needs to be reconsidered, by creating a clear learning path towards the basic principles and skills that the program targets to help students learn.

Each course's teaching staff should adjust the weighting of their course's assessments, so that to reflect the actual needs and goals of each course.

Practical courses relating to internships should be combined as a single course with appropriately adjusted ECTS credits offered. The two separate courses being offered in semesters 4 and 6, should be merged into one course offered at 6th semester.

We recommend the use of more appropriate terminology for the assessment methods which would align with international standards and resonate with an international audience. E.g. continuous assessment and examination which was referred as general examination for midterm and final exams is not sufficient to explain the assessment of students on each course.

The standard way for most of the courses' assessment of 70% on examination and 30 % on continuous assessment during the course does not reflect the requirements and peculiarities of many courses. The weightings of the assessments should be adjusted appropriately by each course's teaching staff.

ECTS credits should reflect the actual student workload of each course. It does not seem appropriate that all core courses are of 5 ECTS credits. The credits should be adjusted appropriately.

The level of study for many courses is not clear since courses are offered in different semesters. A clear pedagogic rationale is needed in order to showcase how learning development and transferable skills are achieved from one year of study to the next.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant	
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	compliant	
2.2	Practical training	partially compliant	
2.3	Student assessment	partially compliant	

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2. Teaching staff number and status**
> **3.3. Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

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

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

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

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards
- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

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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.

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

The staff teaching in the program (including departmental staff, staff from other departments and the visiting staff) is highly qualified, with a great majority having had many years of teaching and/or professional (outside of academia) experience. Although we acknowledge the importance of external staff bringing in their expertise, we also observed a heavy reliance on them for the delivery specifically of some elective courses. Finally, we have not been informed about any specific development programs offered to the teaching staff by the University.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study i.e.9 FT, 2 VP, 2 Special teaching staff, and many more from other departments and visiting professors. Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff. However, the relatively heavy reliance in non-departmental and external staff is an issue that needs to be considered in the long run.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

There are various synergies between the teaching staff and a number of professional, research and academic institutions in Cyprus and abroad. With regards to staff's publications, we noticed that the research expertise (and research agenda) of the majority of the staff teaching on the programme focuses on marketing and management and that leaves a deficit in the PR discipline. Moreover, it is not clear how staff's research feeds their teaching agenda in the Department and how research conducted as part of staff's work in other institutions is linked to their Philips University collaboration/affiliation.

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Existing teaching staff at the rank of professors is highly qualified, but few posses specialised expertise in PR.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status
There is adequate staff in place to run the program, and there is a good balance between female and male staff.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research
We were impressed by the synergies between in house and external stakeholders.

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.

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

We recommend a recruitment strategy plan for the Department that will cut across all academic ranks. That will further enhance the program's sustainability and the Department's growth.

We also suggest that the University offers opportunities to the existing Departmental staff to obtain further qualifications, PhD, or develop a research agenda, such as educational leave, extra research time etc. Such opportunities could act as incentives to attract qualified job applicants.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

As mentioned above we recommend a recruitment strategy plan to secure the smooth running of the programme and the development of the department in the long run.

Recruitment should cut across all academic ranks.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

We recommend that the recruitment strategy plan should include academics with a clear focus on Public Relations.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2. Student progression**
> **4.3. Student recognition**
> **4.4. Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

Findings

16

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.

In general, student admission, progression, recognition and certification seems to work smoothly and all mechanisms and procedures are in place. However, the committee identified some weaknesses with regard to student communication. It seems not to be entirely clear if solid student information from day 1 is in place. As the committee did not have the opportunity to talk to students, this assessment is only based on papers provided.

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

Coherent and well planned procedures for admission, progression, recognition and certification. It shows that the University (College) has many years of experience. Throughout the programme, ECTS credits are used for each course, which not only shows the commitment to European standards, but also allows for smooth recognition of attended courses outside Philips University.

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.

It might be beneficial to provide future students with an informative handbook about all these procedures, both printed and online. Such a "learners' handbook" is briefly mentioned in the application, but details on its content (or a link to the website) are not provided.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *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.*

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

The virtual site-visit reveals that technical and other resources are well in place and functioning. Access for students to the libraries of the Universities of Cyprus and of Athens is greatly appreciated and facilitates studies at Philips University. Furthermore, the system of student tutoring and support is well established and the committee has no doubts that all these services will be made available also to future students of the programme under scrutiny.

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

The well-established student-relations in various formats.

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.

As it is not yet totally clear how well informed students starting in their first semester are, the committee recommends releasing a students' handbook on the facilities and options with regard to student resources, both in print and online. Such a handbook should be made available to students on day 1 of their studies.

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

This evaluation has been undertaken under special circumstances due to the pandemic COVID-19. It has been conducted by remote access instead of the conventional on-site visit. Due to the limitations of the remote access approach we did not have the appropriate time to interact as much as we would have liked with the University's officials and faculty members.

Since we are still experiencing restrictive measures, various scenarios in delivering courses were discussed. We were pleased to find that the University officials are already thinking about this issue and are developing contingency plans.

Our general impression is that Philips University is primarily a teaching-oriented institution. The University espouses a student-centric learning philosophy and aims to prepare graduates that will be ready and equipped to enter the job markets. This philosophy is reflected in their approach to the student body as well as in some aspects of the curriculum. Consequently, the research component does not figure prominently in the profile of the University.

Throughout the report we are offering recommendations for curricula improvements as well as for the further development of the Department. Our final comments are the following:

- We consider that the timing of this evaluation does not allow for sufficient interaction and conversation between the University and the evaluation committee.
- We strongly suggest the University is taking into account the recommendations of the Committee before the first intake of students takes place.
- The Committee welcomes the new PR and Communication programme, but recommends more in depth theoretical and methodological treatment of requirements of the digital age than it is visible in the current curriculum.

Acknowledging the merit and the strength of the programme under evaluation, we wish to note that substantive preparatory work remains to be done before the programme can start.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Josef Trappel	
Anastasia Veneti	
Prodromos Yannas	
Valentinos Pariza	

 Date: July, 4th 2020