ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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Date: Date

Feedback Report from EEC Experts

- **Higher Education Institution: Philips University**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty: Economics & Management**

- **Department: Business Administration**

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

In Greek:
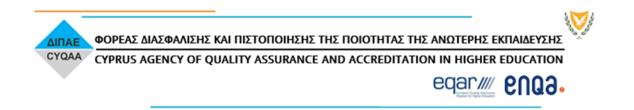Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση (18 μήνες / 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό, MSc, Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:
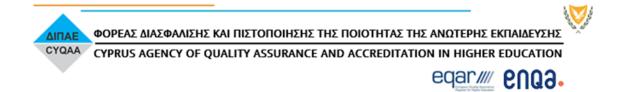Master of Business Administration (18 months / 90 ECTS, MBA, Distance Learning)

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

- **Programme's status: New**

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Simos Chari	Associate Professor of Marketing Management &Strategy	Alliance Manchester Business School
Christina Boutsouki	Professor of Marketing	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Louis Brennam	Professor in Business Studies	Trinity College Dublin
Santi Caballé	Professor of Computer Science &Telecommunications	Open University of Catalonia
Ioanna Onisiforou	Student representative	Open University of Cyprus

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) and the Higher Education Institution's response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.

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

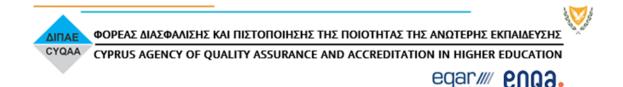*EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response*

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

The EEC acknowledges the efforts of Philips University for complying with the internal processes of the CAQAA in addressing all the recommendations of the committee.

Regarding the lack of an overarching mapping report (Curriculum Map) that demonstrates how each course unit contributes to the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the program, Philips University recognised that this was a missing component in the program. In response, the University formed a cross-functional team comprised of the: Teaching Staff, Distance Learning Unit, Pedagogical Planning Committee, and the Technical Support Committee in order to collectively design the required report/map. The same team also performed a mapping assessment to each course unit's learning outcomes and formulated a coherent assessment strategy / map that aligns with the objectives of distance learning. The mapping in Appendix 1 is elaborate and comprehensive.

In addition, following the constructive recommendations of the ECC for restructuring the programme and adding new elective units, the University complied and has introduced two more elective courses in each semester. Specifically, for Semester 1 the units of Environmental Pollution (ENV-110, 5 ECTS) and Environment and Waste Energy (ENV-112. 5 ECTS) were introduced. For Semester 2 the University introduces the units of: Principles of Green Accounting and Sustainable Finance (ENV-124. 5 ECTS) and Environmental Risk Management (ENV-126. 5 ECTS). The unit guides are presented in Appendix 1. The EEC notes that the names of the instructors of these units haven't been disclosed in the response report and they are to be announced at a later stage. It is not clear to the EEC whether these can be covered by the existing teaching staff or whether Philips University will need to advertise and hire adjuncts collaborators. These new electives units are essential for the programme; if they are to be taught by external collaborators the EEC is concerned about the time constrains of advertising, recruiting, and preparing 4 new electives for the academic year 23-24. In addition, if these 4 new units are to be taught by adjuncts this may create further issues concerning the number of students to full-time staff analogy (see section 3).

Finally, during the evaluation of the programme the ECC identified a lack of clear rationale regarding the allocation of ECTS credits across the units of the programme. The committee recommended the University to reconsider their credit allocation strategy and modify accordingly. In response, the University has modified all the course units of the programme. Now they all bear a common factor of 5 ECTS except the MBA thesis which carries 15 ECTS. The EEC is happy with this change.

<mark>Level of Compliance: COMPLIANT.</mark>

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

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Philips University's Distance Learning Unit has proactively initiated the process of gathering relevant information concerning organizations, such as EFQUEL and QS Star, along with procedural details pertaining to the external and voluntary accreditation of their distance learning quality assurance system. As it is still early to provide concrete evidence of their actions, the unit has demonstrated a proactive approach in acquiring the necessary knowledge in this area.

Philips University acknowledges and embraces the recommendation for the implementation of more sophisticated feedback mechanisms, such as intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents. While the university affirms the acceptance and implementation of the recommendation, they emphasize the effective technological mechanisms already provided by Moodle that offer students immediate feedback and progress information. The EEC clarifies that the suggestion is intended for future improvements and does not require immediate action, acknowledging the existing effectiveness of Moodle's mechanisms in meeting the current needs.
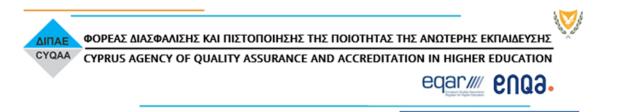
To foster interaction and collaboration among students Philips university suggests the following steps to be taken by the Distance Education Unit and its committees:

1. The development of a comprehensive plan to facilitate future collaborations.
2. The use of asynchronous collaboration tools such as discussion boards and project management tools that are already in place.
3. The establishment of communication channels and guidelines to facilitate effective peer interactions.
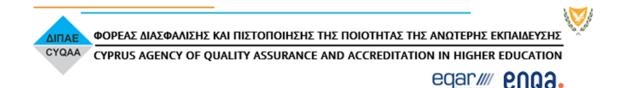4. Support and guidance to students regarding online collaboration

Apart from the asynchronous communication no evidence was provided with respect to the synchronous communication channels.

To ensure the integrity of online exams, the University implements rigorous security measures such as specialized proctoring software and a safe exam browser, as recommended by the EEC. Additionally, the university has introduced continuous assessments and rubrics, enabling students to track their progress, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance their learning experience.

It is also mentioned that Philips University utilizes interactive learning platforms that incorporate multimedia elements, gamification features and interactive exercises. However, there is no evidence of such practices yet.

Philips University follows the recommendations of the EEC by maintaining the use of weekly study guides, maximizing the capabilities of Moodle 4.1 to promote interaction, engagement, and collaboration among students. The university also remains committed to providing personalized and constructive feedback and effectively implementing gamification strategies for student assessment.

Level of Compliance: COMPLIANT.

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

The university provided the breakdown of academic staff. There are 8 full time members of staff and 5 visiting/adjunct. At present, with respect to the existing number of students the analogy is satisfactory, but Philips university should consider the employment of more full-time staff for the future.
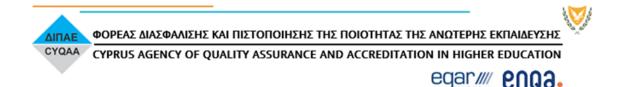
The university provides evidence of the faculty training program and "staff development plan" that adhere to the recommendations of the EEC.

According to the University's reply, research occupies 20-30 percent of the total workload for staff members. They also provided details of the process followed by staff members to reduce workload and engage in research activities. The EEC recommends that the university continues to implement such good practices. It is also recommended that the research time allocation should be part of the contract for those members of staff wishing to actively engage in research.

As stated by the University the average age of staff members is 55 and instructions were given to the selection and appointment committee to give priority to junior lecturers.

The University acknowledges and accepts the recommendation of the EEC regarding providing opportunities for early career academics. To this end, they have issued instructions to the Selection and Appointment Committee, directing them to prioritize junior lecturers with the aim to offer them the chance to progress and grow alongside the more experienced academic staff. While no evidence is provided at this point, the university expresses its commitment to implementing this recommendation.

The University acknowledges the EEC's suggestion to incorporate the SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030 into the training programs for teaching staff. They claim that these elements have already been implemented and it is evidenced by looking at the teaching material. However, the EEC did not observe this implementation directly and expected the university to provide clear evidence of how these elements are integrated into the teaching materials. The EEC would like to clarify that the suggestion is not an obligation but a recommendation to be considered, while further clarity and evidence of how these elements are integrated into the teaching materials should be provided by the university in future evaluations.

Level of Compliance: COMPLIANT.

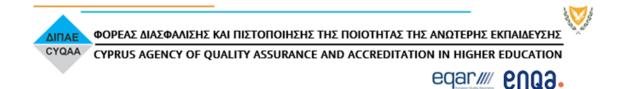## 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Philips University has responded comprehensively to the comments and suggestions of the EEC in relation to student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

It has started to utilise the range of leaning analytic tools provided by the university's e-class (Moodle 4.1) and has developed a policy on learning analytics. It intends to maintain its very good student - educator ratio.

The University's response has elaborated the role of the Distance Education Unit and the two special committees viz. The Committee for Pedagogical Planning of Distance Education Programs and the Technical Support Committee in relation to continuing to fine tune its regulations and processes to reflect the distance learning nature of the programme. Importantly it has created an "Emerging Technologies Ethical Plan" which consists of a series of Actions to address the challenges arising from the emergence of Large Language Models and AI generative systems. The EEC commends the University for its proactive approach to those challenges. Philips University also aims to embrace AI and Machina Learning in learning analytics to support its students' academic journey.

Level of Compliance: COMPLIANT.

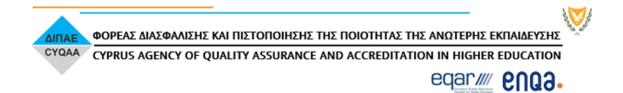## 5. Learning resources and student support
(*ESG 1.6*)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

The EEC welcomes the considered response of Philips University to its comments and suggestions on learning resources and student support.

The University strives to stay abreast of the latest e-learning technologies utilising the resources of its Distance Learning Unit and its associated Planning and Technical Support Committees. It has indicated the expected student workload for each subject per week.

In relation to the third suggestion from the EEC pertaining to usability and accessibility, there seems to have been an incorrect posting by the University with their response to the suggestion in Section 2 of the EEC that it seeks accreditation from reputable organisations such as EFQUEL and EADTU featuring.
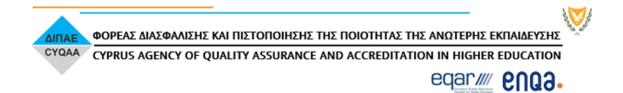
Level of Compliance: COMPLIANT.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

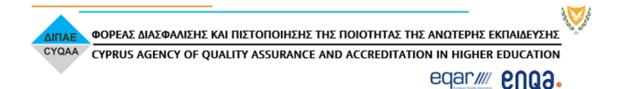| Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

NA

7. Eligibility (Joint programmes)
(ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

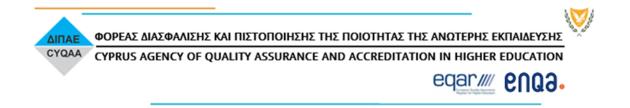| Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

NA

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC must provide final conclusions and remarks, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

<u>*EEC's final conclusions and remarks*</u>

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Overall, the main points related to the programme's structure and content and staff practical training have been addressed. The University has taken the EEC's comments and recommendations on board and have made changes to the programme and its practices. The External Evaluation Committee believes that the programme is compliant with the expectation of a Master of Business Administration (Distance Learning).

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Simos Chari	
Christina Boutsouki	
Louis Brennam	
Santi Caballé	
Ioanna Onisiforou	

Date: 30/06/23