

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
AUB Mediterraneo
- **Town:** Pafos
- **Faculty:** Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB)
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Business Intelligence and
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
In English:
- **Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA)**
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Business Analytics

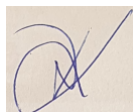
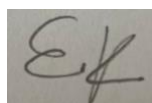


The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee met with all relevant parties throughout the day, starting with the Rector - Head of the Institution and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs. Excellent presentations were made throughout summarizing key elements of the application and expanding on some core areas. Documentation was at a high level of quality. We also toured the current temporary facilities (which are very high spec), where the department is currently situated until the new build will be up and running. Throughout our meetings many pointed and clarifying questions were asked and largely addressed and there was wide participation from representatives of the AUBM. What was clear is that this campus in Cyprus is meant to be a mini version of the AUB—Lebanon, which is a very high ranked and quality assured institution. We discussed how the AUBM will be adapted to Cyprus circumstances. The discussions were very helpful to the external committee.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Morris Altman	(Chair) (Dean) Professor	University of Dundee, Scotland
Dimitrios Kousenidis	(Member) Professor	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Patrick Mikalef,	(Member) Professor	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
Evangelos Kyriakides	(Student Member) Mr.	Cyprus University of Technology

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) *sub-areas*
 - (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

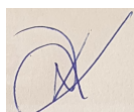
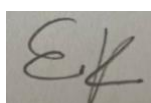
Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*



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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
- 1.3 Public information
- 1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *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*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

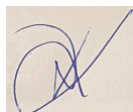
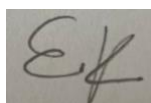
Standards

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

1.4 Information management

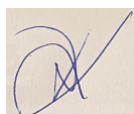
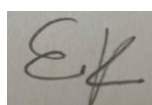
Standards

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

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 Master of Business Analytics is a 3 semester, full-time program and requires a minimum of 90 ECTS. Overall, the program is well structured with a good portfolio of courses. Furthermore, the objectives and goals are in accordance with the strategy of the college and the intended learning outcomes stem from and are consistent with the content of the program. The theme of the program and its structure are also in alignment with other international universities and standards. The purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes are communicated in a clear and concise way and are well-documented in the application. The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and there is a good distinction between the gained knowledge, skills and competencies. There is also good communication with prospective students on the different facets of the program. Overall, the program caters to students that are eager to learn more about how analytics are used in organizations for improving decision-making and optimizing operations. Students will learn about how to utilize data according to state-of-the-art practices for solving business-related problems.

The structure and content of the program include an appropriate number of core courses, with a good number of electives. Presently the Master of Business Analytics program does not offer specializations but allows students to choose between a capstone project and a research thesis project. The Master of Business Analytics requirements consists of 6 core courses, of 7.5 credits each (45 credits in total). From the list of elective courses, students select 3 or 4 depending on if they take the capstone project or the research thesis project. There is a summer elective course structure which constitutes the third semester of the program where students can choose 1-2 courses of 6 ECTS. These courses are from the same list of electives, and it is not clear how they will be scaled down from 7.5 credits to 6 credits. All available courses and their content are communicated to students through the program's website and the course selection platform.

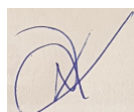
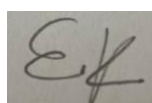
The admission criteria are explained in detail to attract international students. The anticipated mix between international students is quite satisfactory but there could be more explicit instructions for Cypriot students and their admission criteria. There is also limited explanation on what types of bachelor degrees are appropriate and how they will be assessed in order to be eligible for the Master of Business Analytics. The expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study is realistic and appropriate given that it is a new programme. The required ECTS for entry to the study programme are not defined, nor is the prior knowledge.

Quality assurance mechanisms are present and well-aligned with international standards. There is a number of quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of the program of study. Moreover, the Head of the programme (Prof. K. Fleszar) is a very dedicated and devoted individual, with a good expertise for the fulfilment of his role (based on the site visit). The program of study reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe.

Strengths

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

The program of study is designed so that it enables smooth student progression and a complete coverage of some of the main topics on business analytics. In summary, the strengths of the program are as follows:



1. The AUB has prior experience in delivering educational programs in business analytics.
2. Most of the faculty has adequate practical experience which ensures a good balance between theory and practice.
3. Most of the full-time professors are Ph.D holders and well experienced teachers with practical knowledge.
4. The information related to the program of study is available and clear.
5. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students.
6. The course syllabuses and course outlines clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches, and the method of assessing student performance.
7. The structure of the program follows the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
8. The course structure and the different types of projects ensures that students will gain experience with practical problems and how to solve them.

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.

1. The entry requirements should be updated and be more detailed in relation to the required backgrounds, completed bachelor studies, and ECTS. Also there should be mention of any prerequisite knowledge.
2. The details of how the summer semester courses will be run needs to be clarified as they have a different number of ECTS compared to the other semesters.
3. It would be good to have a formal reference group of students for each course that can provide feedback during the course duration at important points in order to ensure that any problems are dealt with prior to course completion.
4. The international dimension of the program is rather underdeveloped and could be strengthened by inviting more visiting professors from abroad who could help in the development of the quality of the program and in the strengthening of the research profile of the program and staff through collaborations.
5. It would be also recommended to have visible information to students about distribution of grades in prior years of each course.

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

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

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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

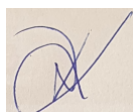
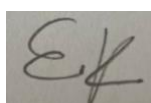
Standards

- *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

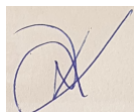
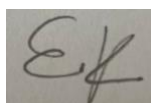
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*



- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for 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

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.

There is a well-structured, effective and well-implemented educational process. The former accreditation of the department in the main branch (UB) by AACSB and Middle States accreditation is a good indicator of quality in the educational process. There are well-documented academic procedures involving the head of the department, the study program director, the teaching staff and the students. The programme applies the ECTS so it aligns well with the standards of other institutions in Europe.

The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate, and well-communicated to the students. The assessment system is based on a mix of different assessment approaches which is well-aligned with best practice pedagogy.

There is good evidence of structured and well-organized taught material both synchronous and asynchronous (lecture presentations, good blending of theoretical material and practice, independent study etc). All teaching material is uploaded in the educational platform and students have easy access to it. Textbooks, datasets, and resources are revised regularly and students get the newest editions. The current structure of the courses and the supporting material appears to be up-to-date.

Strengths

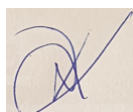
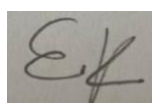
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The program is well aligned and competitive when compared to the related ones both in Cyprus and internationally. Learning outcome of the program align to the aims and objectives of the program and they are clearly communicated to the students (e.g. through the course description and tasks). In addition, the structure of the program appears to be reasonable in relation to the learning mechanisms for the effective delivery of the learning objectives.

The head of the study programme and the administration team associated to it are experienced and committed to its delivery and have good backgrounds and related knowledge. The committee feels that the program is managed by a group of academics and educators with the appropriate background for each course that they teach. There is also a team of dedicated administrators who are involved in the student support processes (library, enrolment, student complaints etc).

Internal quality assurance committees and processes are well described. The quality assurance of the program of study is ensured through active participation of the members of the academic personnel, the members of the administrative personnel and the students and is operated at different levels. The procedure of quality assurance of the program of study is documented in a clear way in the application and its supporting material and during the discussions that took place as part of the site visit.

Since the programme is of relatively small size it is expected that it will ensure a friendly and collegial environment between students and teaching/ administrative staff. The students interviewed by the Committee (these are the AUB) indicated that they are very satisfied with the quality of the program and the student services offered to them, and that they have access to important resources to ensure good connection to employers.



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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 international aspect of the program could be enhanced by providing more detail about companies that are involved in the courses and exercises of the students throughout their studies. In addition, including more industry invited guests talks from local organizations can ensure a strong and concrete connection with the local job market.

The links of the college to the local industry/ market could be improved through dedicated service and staff. This could provide students the opportunity to find employment after graduation and would add to the industry/market link of the program.

The programme has a small number of free elective courses that the students can take. This number must be increased if the programme is to grow in the future and allow for further development.

There should also be more introduction of students to research, either through small changes in some courses or by including them in ongoing debates in academic studies or participation in analysis and interpretation of research data.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
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

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.

During our meeting with the teaching staff we interviewed some full time professors and some lecturers that follow the teaching path. Full-time faculty has adequate qualifications and they show good balance between research output and teaching ability. Most of them hold Ph.D degrees from foreign institutions and make solid efforts to be research active in good journals and conference venues. They also appear to be well aware of the most prestigious and important conferences and events in their respective fields. The lecturers that follow a teaching path have a stronger emphasis on practical knowledge which they try to transfer in the courses they are responsible for and undertake efforts to write teaching cases which is a good practice. All faculty have excellent English language skills.

In addition, all teaching staff seem to be very happy with the working conditions and the overall balance of work and development. They recognize that they find teaching rewarding and consider it an integral part of their work duties. Many of faculty members have been employed for a long time at the university which is a sign of satisfaction. The staff is categorized into the standard academic ranks and promotion is based on teaching performance, research performance and administrative work. The college is supportive of research and offers initiatives to faculty members to enhance research performance, as well as a good amount of funding for participation in conferences and other events.

In addition, full-time staff appear to have good connections with faculty of other institutions abroad. The involvement of the teaching staff in certain forms of research activities through the production of teaching cases indicates that they have the incentive to develop their skills and publish their work.

Strengths

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

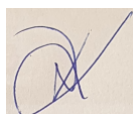
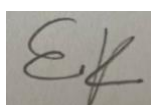
There appears to be a good balance between younger and experienced faculty members, with many younger faculty. The younger faculty appear to be very enthusiastic and motivated and appear to be open to suggestions about improving different aspects of teaching and evaluation. The faculty seems to be well integrated and on good working terms. The experienced faculty have been with the university for a long time, which implies a good working environment that is beneficial to the program.

In addition, there are several mechanisms to evaluate teaching which is monitored by the department and any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. There is also a good process of evaluation of the faculty by both students and the Head of the Department. Furthermore, faculty members are asked to evaluate their own courses and revise their teaching material. The faculty also appear to be up to date with international developments in the field and seem to be willing to revise the study program when and if the need arises.

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 college could provide more incentives to enhance quality. It would also be a good practice to make teacher training mandatory and ensure that several important areas about how to develop high quality and accessible resources are met. The budget offered for research activities could be increased to accommodate more than one conference per year. Furthermore, we advise the department to establish a research seminar series likely in collaboration with other colleges and universities in Cyprus to create better synergies for teaching and research. Such seminars could prompt faculty to improve their research via feedback, initiate collaborations among faculty and overall strengthen the research culture of the department. It would also be beneficial to have a seminar for staff about the educational system in Cyprus so that they are aware of the journey students take through junior and senior high school. This will provide a better picture of the skills they have and what courses they have been taught. It would also be beneficial to try to introduce some research in teaching activities so that students are aware of the activities that are done in research and how they connect to what they are taught. The requirements for promotion should also be more explicit in terms of number of publications, quality of output, the quality of outlets used, as well as other relevant criteria for career progression.



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

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

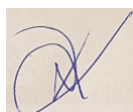
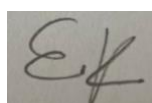
Standards

- *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.*

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

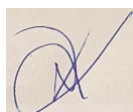
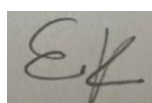
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The evaluation committee met several students from the Beirut campus who gave their input and their impressions since there are currently no students enrolled in the masters in business analytics. Some students were currently active participants of different programs offered by the corresponding department while others were recent alumni. All students were pleased with their experience in the university and pointed towards the reputation of the university and the excellent support they received in counselling and finding a job. Most of the students were positive about the courses they were taught and talked about their relevance in practice. They were also enthusiastic about the fact that the university allowed for an internship which they said greatly increased their prospects of finding a job and experiencing real working life conditions. The students suggested that course selection was an area that could be improved as there was limited availability of places in some popular courses. Overall through the input was very positive about the staff, the programme and the support they received throughout their studies.

Strengths

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

The committee finds that the AUB and the AUBM has a very student-oriented approach which pays attention to the student needs. The administrators and leadership seem to pay particular attention to this aspect. We find that both



administrative and teaching staff place weight on student satisfaction and on learning outcomes. This is demonstrated by the fact that courses are available also in online formats and in video form, and that there is attention paid to including students in international competitions. This is also reflected by the students' appreciation of such actions.

The students also mentioned the good relationship with teaching staff, and the strong support they receive helping them find suitable jobs and developing the necessary skills to fulfil such roles.

In addition, the students praised the information they receive about their studies and getting onboarded early on in the necessary activities of their study programs.

The university also makes sure that there are several measures to ensure that there is a good interaction between students and the international environment.

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.

While the university appears to cater to the student needs, there are some areas of improvement in relation to admission requirements that remain unclear, especially since the new programme will operate in a European environment.

It appears that the university is not particularly selective in its admission criteria in relation to previous studies and necessary background or skills. These need to be detailed more and a more thorough description of what study orientation applicants should/must have as well as what prerequisite knowledge.

In addition, admissions based in part on interviews could ensure students have found the right program for them to reduce drop-outs and to screen candidates out who are not a good fit for the business analytics master.

It would be beneficial to have a diploma supplement that conforms with European standards so that graduates are eligible to apply for other European institutes or jobs based on this. In addition, providing the option for additional 30 ECTS in the form of extra courses or a project would be beneficial students who are interested in pursuing a doctoral program at other European universities which require a total of 120 ECTS.

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

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

During our visit to the building of the AUBM in Pafos, we were able to examine the premises of one of the buildings that will be used as a back-up facility in case of delays or deviations of construction plans at the main campus. We visited several rooms, including some classrooms, faculty offices, and some common areas. We also spoke with the rector and head of department of the institution to understand their views on resource allocation among the various university programs.

Our overall impression is that all the resources are in place and functional and of very high standard. In addition, there is appropriate local administrative staff who are well aware of the local regulations and will help streamline the process.

In our assessment the involvement of all members in planning and the adequacy of the physical resources is of a high level. There was not much mention of the process of technology infrastructure in the form of labs and network speeds/connectivity. One potential risk is the delay of building construction, especially if there is high student enrolment.

Strengths

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

The master in business analytics program appears to be well-resourced in terms of access to digital libraries and required materials. The head of the program stated that AUB has always been willing to invest much into the sustainability and the development of the university. There was also a very detailed and well-planned financial plan presented by the rector which ensures the financial viability of the program.

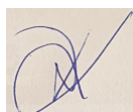
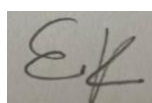
A great deal of investment is put into place to develop computer labs, teaching rooms and other facilities of the university at Pafos. Moreover, the rector indicated that there is active investment in human capital for both administrative and teaching purposes. It is expected that the program will attract a lot of students so there is already preparation for the necessary human resources.

We also noticed a high level of involvement of the administrative staff. Many of the current employees showed enthusiasm and dedication to moving to Pafos to ensure that the new program is a success. This continuity, level of experience and knowledge are important assets for the university and show that it is constructed on a solid basis of human capital and experience.

In our meeting with the management team of the program we understood that there is a strategic vision for the future of the program and how it will expand in the next years. The discussions showed that there is a good balance between doing everything needed at an operational level and applying a strategic plan for the future. This includes increasing the intake, hiring new faculty, and crafting collaborations and partnerships.

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.



Although the existing premises are in good condition and of high standard, there needs to be a plan B in the case that the new campus is not constructed in time. This includes finding classrooms that can accommodate the first cohort as well as spaces for study and for employees.

There is a computer lab, but it only has 25 stations. It is not clear if this is adequate.

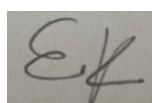
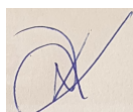
There seem to be no physical library yet or spaces for study for students to use. While there is a plan for the new building to accommodate these facilities, it would be good to have a contingency plan in case of any delays.

An online platform for uploading finalized theses in an open and transparent way is recommended.

There was limited information for physical planning for students with disabilities and how they would be accommodated.

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

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


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

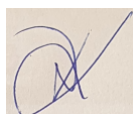
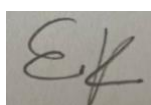
Standards

- *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		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	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

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

Overall the Master program in Business Analytics is well-placed in a market that requires knowledgeable graduates. The design of the programme is based on current academic standards and follow the typical set up of courses. In addition, there is a good coverage within the courses concerning different types of work, so that students can engage in practice with problems, gain theoretical knowledge, as well as work independently and in teams. The program leader is very well qualified as the leader of this study programme, and has good experience and research focus to ensure that the programme is a success. The employees also demonstrate a good mix of complementary knowledge within their respective domains. In terms of the set-up of the course structure and the distribution of work the programme shows great promise. One area that needs to be improved however is how the workload of tasks will be differentiated between the 7.5 ECTS courses, and the 6 ECTS courses during the summer semester. This change should also be communicated with students in order to ensure that they understand the differences, and also to ensure that there is sufficient staff available during those months to teach the courses.

In terms of admission criteria, there is not much information for candidates about how many ECTS they need to have in their bachelor degrees, nor what types of background and knowledge are best suited in order to enrol in this master program. If there is a willingness to attract students from other universities, it should be explicitly defined in the selection criteria. Also, it would be good to include criteria that correspond to European institutions. The program should also provide a diploma supplement to graduates that highlights the courses taken, the number of ECTS they have received, and follow the Bologna conventions to allow for students to be better integrated in the European market and academia.

The overall network and setup of the programme appears to follow a solid foundation. However, there should be more explicit measures of involvement of the local industry and other important stakeholders. This will benefit both the students as well as local employees. With such involvement the program can be better tailored to ensure that graduates have a high degree of employability.

In relation to the facilities, the current plan shows great promise and will be a state-of-the-art facility. However, it is possible that there will be deviations from the plan or delays, so the AUBM should develop a contingency plan with all the necessary infrastructure so that students can complete their studies. There should also be a plan for the necessary facilities of staff in the case of any deviations from the plan. However, the current facility is state-of-the art but has limited capacity.

In sum, the program is well-suited to student and market needs and ambitious and is likely to be a success given the investment in resources and the experience of core academic and professional. There are some minor areas of improvement that have been described in more detail in the corresponding sub-sections of this report.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Morris Altman	
Dimitrios Kousenidis	
Patrick Mikalef,	
Evangelos Kyriakides	

Date: 20/02/2023