

Accreditation Report

Institutional Accreditation of Triagon Academy

I Procedure

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The **Assessment Report** of the peer-review experts is **based on** the self-assessment report of the TRIAGON ACEDEMY and extensive discussions with the TRIAGON ACADEMY's management, the board of trustees, representatives of the holding company, deans, heads of study programmes, lecturers, staff representatives, students, and alumni.

The basis of the **Assessment Criteria** is part 1 of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) in the current official version. Further, the assessment considers criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions" Section B.IV). At the same time the national context, particularly the national regulations regarding the establishment of study programmes, are taken into account.

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II Introduction

The experts would like to thank the representatives of the HEI as well as students that they have taken part in the discussions and willingly shared information and their views during the site visit. The discussions are valuable not only for the assessment of the institution, but also for a better understanding of the legal and sociocultural context of the local higher education system.

Evaluation basis for the peer-review experts is the self-assessment report of the HEI as well as intensive discussions during the site visit with the HEI management, board of trustees, representatives of the holding company, deans, head of study programs, study programme coordinators, teachers, lecturers, administrative staff, students, and graduates.

Main objective of the accreditation procedure is to assess the quality of the study programmes and compliance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). The ESG standards are applied as main assessment criteria in the international accreditation procedure. They are completed with criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions” Section B.IV). In addition, the respective country-specific criteria and standards are taken into account.

A group of experts was set up, which ensured that all areas relevant to the accreditation procedure (e.g. legal, structural, social etc. aspects) as well as the ESG, the WR criteria, and national criteria were considered. The peer-review experts include professors, representatives of the professional practice and the student representative. A certificate with the ACQUIN seal is awarded upon accreditation of the institution.

1 The Higher Education System in Malta

Higher education in Malta is regulated by the Education Act (Cap. 327). This Act sets the framework for the accreditation of institutions and the formal recognition of qualifications. It also outlines the role of the Ministry of Education, and the various Higher Education Institutions in Malta. In addition to this, the Education (Amendment) Act (Cap. 327 A) sets out the procedures for the establishment of private higher educational institutions and the accreditation of programs of study.

To ensure that the quality of higher education in Malta remains high, the government of Malta, through the amendment of the Education Act has launched the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). Previously known as the National Commission for Further and

Higher Education (NCFHE), the MFHEA is the regulatory body charged with higher education in Malta.

The Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) is a multi-level framework which is based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and consists of eight levels. Each of these levels is associated with an award, such as a diploma, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctoral degree. In addition, the MQF also sets out the minimum requirements for entry into higher education and outlines the learning outcomes that must be achieved in order to obtain an academic qualification. Furthermore, the MQF also sets out the credit system which is used to assess the number of credits earned in each course and the overall amount of credits required for the completion of a particular qualification.

The MFHEA is responsible for the issuance of licenses to both public and private higher education institutions and to ensure that all higher education institutions in Malta adhere to the standards set out in the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) after successful accreditation.

The MFHEA also contributes to the development of higher education in Malta by providing advice and guidance to educational institutions and by conducting research into the quality and effectiveness of higher education in Malta through institutional as well as program accreditations and unannounced spot checks.

Private universities in Malta are governed by the following provisions of SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 607.03 - FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION (LICENSING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE) REGULATIONS, LEGAL NOTICE 296 of 2012, as amended by Legal Notice 150 of 2015 and Act II of 2020.

“47. First, only accredited higher education institutions which comply with the following shall be eligible to apply for university status in order to be eligible to obtain a licence of a university as defined in the Second Schedule:

- (a) The primary activities of the higher education institution are higher education, teaching, research, and dissemination of knowledge.
- (b) The higher education institution has academic staff, an academic library and stable research training or stable research and development activities of a high standard.
- (c) The higher education institution has representative bodies of staff and students.
- (d) The higher education institution has an organisation and infrastructure for providing higher education and undertaking research.
- (e) The higher education institution provides programmes which lead to national qualifications classified at a combination of either Malta Qualifications Framework levels 5, 6,

or 7, or foreign qualifications at a comparable level, in at least four fields, and has independent competence in setting up the components of such programmes and an independent right to award degrees with respect to such programmes.

- (f) the higher education institution provides programmes which lead to national qualifications classified at Malta Qualifications Framework level 8, or a foreign qualification at a comparable level, and also has independent competence in setting up the components of such programmes and an independent right to award degrees with respect to such programmes.
- (g) The higher education institution is affiliated with international networks in connection with higher education and, or research and participates in national and international cooperation in teaching and, or research.

Provided that an accredited Higher Educational Institute shall be eligible to apply for university status if the Commission considers that such application is in the national interest and in fulfilment of national policies, on the basis of a different combination of higher education qualifications other than those indicated in paragraphs (e) and (f).

Second, an application for university status shall be subject to an evaluation by a panel of external experts and such evaluation shall comply with the following:

- (a) It shall include consideration of any offshore activities of the applicant higher education institution which are required to meet relevant regulatory and reporting requirements in Malta.
- (b) where the evaluation by the expert panel makes a proposal to the Commission for or against the granting of university status, the report of the evaluation shall clearly state the reasons for this.”

2 Short profile of HEI

TRIAGON was established with the intention to provide access to higher education and qualification, particularly for non-traditional learners, and to offer bachelor's to doctoral-level programs that are recognized in the European Union and beyond.

The principal objective of TRIAGON is to develop, provide access to and disseminate scientific knowledge through research, teaching and service to society. It carries out these tasks in a spirit of academic freedom and responsibility and it stimulates critical research and teaching, reflection, and debate on scientific, social, philosophical, and ethical questions.

To establish this type of higher educational institution in Malta TRIAGON completed a first institutional accreditation, as well as initial program accreditations, for several programs. At the

end of 2018, upon successful completion of the accreditations, TRIAGON was licensed as a higher education institution by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), formerly NCFHE (National Commission for Further and Higher Education). The same authority subsequently granted licenses for a portfolio of management degree programs at levels 6, 7, and 8 of the Maltese and European Qualification Framework (MQF/EQF).

Since November 2018 TRIAGON has offered accredited academic teaching based on scientific research. Its objective is the development and integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare its students to take responsibility in society. In this regard TRIAGON offers high-quality, innovative qualification programs in five different fields in a modern format that meet the needs of its main target groups and is committed to lifelong learning.

The first graduates were able to receive their certificates of completion as early as 2019. In recent years, the range of licensed degree programs has been continuously expanded and now includes a wide range of accredited bachelor's and master's programs in the fields of management, sports science, psychology, applied languages and creative media. The portfolio is crowned with two doctoral programs, a Doctor of Business-Administration (DBA) and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

From its very inception and the launch of its first study programs, TRIAGON has undergone consistent development. This applies to the number of students, the increase in faculty, and the recruitment of suitable administrative employees, who have been working from mobile offices and location-independently since the Covid19 pandemic.

A major consequence and reaction to the positive experiences during the pandemic is the conversion of the original semi-virtual study concept, with many on-site face-to-face events, to a fully online study format. Since the summer semester of 2022, teaching has taken place in a „virtual face-to-face study“ format. Teaching such as weekend lectures and workshops continue to be scheduled, but their implementation takes place virtually.

Since 2022 TRIAGON is a member of European Open Education (EOE), a charitable association whose members are accredited European universities that promote, among others, permeability in higher education. For the ongoing systematic development of teaching and continuing education, TRIAGON maintains an exchange with public and private educational institutions in Europe and around the world. In recent years, several strategic partnerships have also been established with major companies in the fields of business, sports, and education.

At TRIAGON, Quality Assurance is an essential component. In order to institutionalize the ongoing assurance and enhancement of quality in higher education, a high-end quality management system has been established for the teaching and service domain.

TRIAGON has constantly improved its governance and its operations and is now willing to undergo a process of an international accreditation as a university in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Maltese law and the Bologna process.

TRIAGON has intentionally chosen an international accreditation agency that is a full member of ENQA to demonstrate that it meets the highest standards in the European Educational Area.

Academic Programs

TRIAGON offers 19 study programs at levels 6,7 and 8 within the Maltese and European Qualifications Framework (i.e., Bachelor, Master and Doctorate) in five different fields. All study programs were unconditionally accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education (MFHEA). For example, in the field of management and law there is offered a Bachelor of Science in Business Management (with various specializations) as an undergraduate course. As post-graduate courses in the field of management TRIAGON provide a Master of Science in Leadership and Strategic Management, a Master of Business Administration (with various specializations), a Master of Science in Project Studies, a Doctor of Business Administration, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). The programs are generally offered in English and German. Detailed descriptions of the programs can be found on the TRIAGON website. Interested parties can also contact the Student Service at any time for further information. Further to this, all detailed information and statutes are available to students at any time on the learning platform.

Students

Currently, 760 students are enrolled at TRIAGON. They are distributed among the various bachelor's and master's programs as well as the two doctoral programs. The number of students has consistently grown to TRIAGON's satisfaction. But an institutional approval, as well as program accreditations by an accreditation agency with full membership status at ENCA and a good international reputation would have opened access to a much bigger market potential.

34% of the students are female, while the remaining 66% are male. As expected, the average age structure is rather high, with a mean of 33 years. They come from eight different countries throughout the European Union.

The COVID19 pandemic had a relatively strong impact on higher education in general. TRIAGON has successfully adapted to the situation with the conversion from the original semi-virtual study concept, with many face-to-face events, to a fully online study format. Since the summer semester of 2022, teaching has taken place in a „virtual face-to-face study“ format. Existing students are very pleased with TRIAGON's response, but since the epidemic began,

prospective students appear to be more hesitant, and companies and people' willingness to invest in further education has dropped perceptibly.

TRIAGON has successfully maintained and expanded its operations under difficult conditions and is well situated for the post-pandemic period.

Staff

TRIAGON's team consists of 36 members, all of whom have many years of experience in higher education. 19 members are involved in teaching and research as well as in the academic management of TRIAGON and 17 employees in the administration. A total of 22.86 full time equivalents (FTE) are available to carry out the TRIAGON's services. Faculty and staff come from five different countries. The proportion of women in the team is 42%.

Eight individuals hold full university professorships. In addition, another one associate and five assistant professors and five lecturers are active at TRIAGON. The current student-teacher ratio is 38:1.

TRIAGON draws on an individual adjunct faculty who may hold university professorships as well as associate or assistant professorships. TRIAGON has two affiliated professorships.

In the administrative area, as previously explained, TRIAGON uses a specialized external service provider (e.g., IT services, library services). This makes it possible to cover a range of services, both quantitatively and qualitatively, that can otherwise only be provided by large universities. The expansion of TRIAGON's capacity through the service contract accounts for about additional 10 full time equivalents (FTE).

TRIAGON adopts a comprehensive human resource management approach that supports the recruitment, training, retention, and development of their employees. This approach is regularly discussed with external experts to make sure it is in line with industry standards and best practices. The respective regulation can be found in the Faculty and Staff Policy, and the Quality Assurance Handbook.

Furthermore, TRIAGON invests in their employees' continuous professional development by providing them with training and career development opportunities that allow them to develop the skills and knowledge required to succeed in their chosen roles. As a result, TRIAGON is able to retain top talent while also ensuring that their workforce is highly competent and up to date on the latest trends and technologies in their respective fields.

TRIAGON also ensures that their employees are treated fairly and equitably, promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace culture that values and respects individual differences. TRIAGON is well-positioned to meet both current and future human resource needs by prioritizing their employees' well-being and providing them with the resources they require.

III Implementation and assessment of the criteria

1 Institutional Profile and Strategy: Strategic Planning, Mission and Vision

The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning [Examination Area 1].

Implementation

TRIAGON fulfils the requirements of a tertiary institution in teaching, research and further education and is dedicated to educational permeability in conformity with the Bologna reform and applicable EU law. At the same time, TRIAGON also considers progressing European integration in its development and orientation.

TRIAGON complements the existing academic landscape by focusing on “non-traditional” students. Non-traditional learners are students who do not fit the traditional profile of a college or university student. This can include individuals who are older, working full-time, raising a family, may have financial constraints, or are returning to education after an extended break. TRIAGON emphasizes the importance of providing the opportunity for higher education studies to all members of society particularly to those who TRIAGON identify as non-traditional students – these prospective students make up a considerable percentage of our society.

The government of Malta also emphasizes and strongly promotes this approach. The Maltese legislature enacted a maturity clause allowing individuals over the certain ages and those returning to education after an extended break to enter higher education programs without the traditional credentials. In addition to a customized learning offer, TRIAGON cooperates with the Maltese government through the GetQualified scheme which offers a 70% scholarship to Maltese students who successfully complete their higher education.

To these students TRIAGON offers flexible learning options such as virtual face to face courses, part-time, evening, or weekend courses through an innovative blended learning block format.

This learning approach combines the advantages of various teaching and instructional formats, thereby generating particularly intensive and abiding learning results. This innovative educational format offers TRIAGON students the optimal conditions for combining their studies with professional employment or family obligations.

TRIAGON stands for a technology-enhanced learning culture based on a self-determination in learning that enables innovative possibilities for the acquisition of knowledge and focuses on a consistent competence orientation.

In addition to this, all teaching takes place in a block format, in which the modules are studied sequentially. This allows students to concentrate on one module at a time, making it much easier to combine their studies with work, family, or social commitments.

TRIAGON acknowledges the value of professional experience and is highly committed to the recognition of professional experience within the framework of the Lisbon Convention and the national regulations for Recognition of Prior Learning.

All degree programs can always be studied both full-time and in a career-integrated model (with a corresponding extension of the study duration).

TRIAGON is fully aware of the unique needs of non-traditional learners and is willing to provide the necessary support and resources to help them succeed.

First-generation students, for example, who are the first in their families to attend a degree program receive additional support and coaching to navigate the learning journey and to succeed academically. Students from low-income households may receive flexible payment schemes, financial aid, and other forms of support to defray the cost of education.

TRIAGON ensures that its students are well prepared for the professions of tomorrow. The specific conditions of a course of study at TRIAGON also particularly promote the development of professional, methodological, and social skills and enable the development of a high level of personal competence and leadership responsibility. Additionally, special emphasis is placed on the graduates' ability to act.

TRIAGON's study programs always correspond to comparable programs offered by state universities in terms of their objectives as well as their content and scope.

In research, TRIAGON pursues three approaches: first, each faculty member has the opportunity to set individual research priorities. Secondly, cooperation between the individual faculty members is specifically encouraged.

Finally, TRIAGON has project-based cooperation agreements with other universities and/or industry partners.

Dissemination of research results is primarily carried out in high-ranking publications with strict peer review procedures. Moreover the results are presented and discussed at conferences and presented to the interested public in the form of our own scientific events.

Mission Statement

TRIAGON's mission is to create new educational pathways and qualification opportunities for non-traditional students, especially through improved accessibility, credit transfers for professional experience, new bespoke programs, and a new innovative study format.

Subsequently the mission is condensed to TRIAGON's slogan; "New Pathways, New Opportunities."

Furthermore, the TRIAGON community is committed to living and performing to the following guiding principles:

- Our daily actions are guided by our participants' individual educational goals.
- We are motivated by the benefits we can create and provide to our customers and partners.
- We focus on hands-on competence, informed action, reflective practice and personal accountability.
- We think and act in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner.
- We practice "Responsible Leadership" and accept the global challenges.
- Disruptive innovation is integral to our organization.
- In everything we do, we strive for high quality (Excellence).
- We treat our participants, employees, and partners on an equal footing and as members of our family.
- Integrity is essential for us.
- Wherever it makes sense, we employ a system of teamwork and modern forms of cooperation.

TRIAGON's Strategy

The mission forms the foundation on which all further strategies and processes are built. It is regularly discussed in a participatory process with all TRIAGON stakeholders and reviewed to ensure that it is up to date.

Participation of all stakeholders is considered essential by TRIAGON as it is the key to aligning the ideas and efforts of everyone involved in the implementation of the strategic plan. Most recently, this process was conducted as part of the preparation for TRIAGON's reaccreditation.

The focus for the next development period was placed on the fields of further and continuous improvement of quality of teaching and learning, expanding the portfolio and accreditation of

further programs, moderate growth, internationalization, even stronger emphasis on future orientation and, further strengthening of applied research.

Following successful international accreditations by a full member of ENCA, TRIAGON will be in a strategic position to further embark on a solid and steady, yet moderate growth path and to move forward with internationalization.

Emphasis on future orientation shall be achieved by working on future-relevant topics in consultation with academics and the industry. This may draw from current development in areas such as artificial intelligence or new technologies that have an impact on the current study programs, for example, in management (Management Intelligence Systems), in sports science (wearable technologies etc.) or in psychology (digital forms of counselling and consulting). Another source of influence for TRIAGON's future orientation shall be the 17 interlinked Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations designed to serve as a „shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future“.

The satisfaction of customers and partners is always at the centre of TRIAGON's actions and further developments.

In terms of the strategic positioning and development of the organization, TRIAGON relies on a model in which structures grow continuously with the number of students (e.g. through the introduction of new Schools).

As a consequence, the strategic positioning and growth and the development of the organization rely on a model in which structures and processes broaden simultaneously with the number of students. At the same time, TRIAGON uses an approach in which it selectively expands its own capacities through strategic partnerships and networks. This applies equally to all core areas such as teaching, research, and administration.

Participation in the Quality University Network EOE

TRIAGON is an active member of the EOE quality network (European Open Education). TRIAGON now has access to nearly 20 years of experience in the establishment and development of higher education institutions and universities.

Several independent universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are currently part of the network. All universities are accredited and state-approved institutions, and their study programs are accredited. Furthermore, three of them have the authority to accredit their own programs.

TRIAGON benefits from its membership by gaining access to a wealth of expertise and experience, valuable resources, and active participation in two committees.

One committee is concerned with international quality management standards, the development of quality management processes, and the exchange of information on quality management reporting. All member institutions are free to reach their own conclusions and pursue whatever actions they find appropriate.

The second committee deals with operational issues. It focuses on benchmarking, internal quality standards for teaching, service, and research, further development of quality management processes and best practices sharing in quality management.

Services of IUNworld

TRIAGON employs IUNworld as an extended workbench that provides competence and resources for all aspect of administration of a higher education institution on demand and for competitive prices. Services are procured in the areas such as marketing and sales, real estate management and administration, accounting, human resource management, information technology, multimedia production and the online library.

IUNworld GmbH is a specialized service and support organization for tertiary educational institutions whose mission is to provide services to universities and higher education institutions where it is economically advantageous for both parties and allows universities to focus on their core responsibilities of teaching and learning and research.

The use of an online library is a distinct advantage of working with the service provider IUNworld. The library is accessible through TRIAGON's learning platform, and a highly qualified librarian is always available to answer any questions students or lecturers may have. ProQuest E-book Central is an international leader in eBook aggregation with its own platform.

TRIAGON considers the library infrastructure as a dynamic element which is constantly in flux. TRIAGON regularly communicates to its students and faculty that if they do not manage to identify a literary resource for which they are looking, they should contact the library staff so they can make the necessary arrangement to gain access to such publications. This is another bottom-up approach which contributes towards the competent development and sustainability of a modern library.

In doing so TRIAGON can provide services on the scale and quality of a large institution while maintaining the lean and agile structures of a small, specialized organization.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Equal treatment is implemented in accordance with the European Union's Equal Treatment Directive and the Maltese constitution. TRIAGON sees achieving equal opportunities as a comprehensive task that affects all of its operations. TRIAGON has defined general rules in the

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy to ensure equal opportunities for all internal and external target groups. Specific regulations can be found in other regulation chapter, for example in the Faculty and Staff Policy.

The main goals of TRIAGON's equal opportunity initiatives are to provide equal treatment and protection from discrimination to all TRIAGON members and stakeholders regardless of ethnic background, religion or ideology, age, sexual identity, gender, disability, or chronic disease.

TRIAGON promotes equal opportunities between all genders for the staff and students. All essential components of the equal opportunities policy are summarized in the concept for equal opportunities and equality and are communicated actively to employees and students.

TRIAGON has taken concrete steps in this regard, such as promoting the optimal compatibility of family and career for all genders.

The Equal Opportunity Officer is responsible for ensuring that discrimination and harassment are not tolerated in the workplace or institution, and that all employees or members have equal access to opportunities and resources. The Equal Opportunity Officer makes recommendations to help shape equal opportunities for all participants throughout the organization, such as raising awareness of the importance of equal opportunities and diversity among all TRIAGON members.

The Equal Opportunity Officer is involved in all human resource equal opportunity measures. Moreover, the Equal Opportunity Officer assists and advises TRIAGON members in individual cases involving career advancement, disadvantage elimination, and the reconciliation of family, studies, and employment.

Assessment

TRIAGON's academic strategy was based on a clear vision and mission, which outlined the institution's values, objectives, and long-term goals. The institution prioritized student success as its primary goal, by providing high-quality academic programs and support services that enhanced the learning and career development opportunities of its students.

The institution also focused on innovation and flexibility, by exploring new technologies, pedagogies, and teaching methods that enhanced student learning and engagement. This ensured that TRIAGON remained competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing education industry.

Moreover, TRIAGON ensured its financial sustainability, by managing resources efficiently and effectively, identifying new revenue streams, and reducing costs where possible. This enabled the institution to invest in its academic programs and facilities and provide additional resources and support for its students and faculty.

Finally, TRIAGON promoted collaboration and partnerships with other institutions, industry partners, and stakeholders, to enhance the quality of education and research, and to expand opportunities for students and faculty. This helped TRIAGON to build its reputation, develop new programs and initiatives, and enhance its global presence.

TRIAGON has clearly defined guiding principles that reflect its current and future priorities. These are congruent with its teaching, learning and research objectives and activities, and are being implemented. The institution's intent is to expand its international reach; its near-exclusive delivery of programs/courses in an on-line mode make this a viable proposition. TRIAGON's focus on offering non-traditional learners the opportunity to upgrade their academic qualifications is a clear differentiating factor of its strategy from other higher education institutions. TRIAGON's teaching, learning and research objectives and activities are regularly reviewed and monitored at the various levels of the organisation (board, administration, program management, teaching faculty). Resource and competence requirements and responsibilities are clearly defined within the institution.

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In order to further raise TRIAGON's profile, the expert group would like to make the following recommendations: TRIAGON should sharpen and specify its profile, identity, and strategy even more, and make these more transparent for its stakeholders. There should be an update of the quality assurance manual to better present the strategic goals. TRIAGON's strategy, Vision and Mission should be visible at all levels of academic and administrative staff.

In conclusion, TRIAGON 's academic strategy prioritized student success, innovation, financial sustainability, and collaboration, which ensured its long-term success and viability as an academic institution.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

2 Governance, Organization and Administration

Responsibilities, decision-making processes, and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning [Examination Area 2].

Implementation

The Governance of TRIAGON is regulated by its constitution, in which all bodies, key roles and their respective responsibilities are clearly defined. As part of preparing this accreditation with the goal of upgrading TRIAGON from a Higher Education Institution to a full-fledged University the statutes were completely revised and improved. All committees were adapted to the new regulations, so that TRIAGON has an up-to-date and complete committee structure such as is appropriate for a university. The following is an overview of the current organizational structure.

The Board of Trustees, as appointed by the supporting company, is currently composed of three individuals who have extensive experience in higher education. The main tasks of the Board of Trustees include: to oversee the strategic direction of TRIAGON and its implementation, to appoint the President, to provide advice and support to the President, the Senate, and other senior staff, to ensure that TRIAGON is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, and to monitor the budget.

The Senate serves as the main governing body of TRIAGON responsible for overseeing academic affairs and setting academic policy. It represents all groups of stakeholders. Members are the President, the Executive Dean and the Director of Administration, a representative from the academic staff and a representative of the students. In the case of such topics that are considered to be of strategic Importance or that concern the economic situation, the Chief Executive Office, who comprises the legal representative of TRIAGON, acts as an observer.

The President is responsible for the strategic orientation and positioning of TRIAGON, establishes principles for the development of the institution, ensures that the strategic planning is to be jointly designed and supported in a participatory process integrating all the necessary stakeholders. The President provides initiatives for the development of the institution and organizes the implementation of policies resulting from the participatory process particularly the decisions of the Senate and the other central bodies of the institution. The President provides guiding guidelines on the organization of the institution where necessary.

The Executive Dean manages the day-to-day operations related to teaching, learning and research. He is responsible for the educational programs, in addition to research. The main responsibilities further include the implementation of modern, innovative teaching and learning methods, the integrity and ongoing development of quality in teaching and research, and the monitoring, and approval of research which will be published in direct or indirect affiliation with TRIAGON. The Executive Dean establishes the principles for evaluation and quality management and takes the necessary actions if the evaluated quality does not meet the objectives set by the institutions. He manages the staff development plans of the academic staff working at TRIAGON and provides personnel development plans for the institution in general.

TRIAGON currently has five schools: the School of Management and Law, the School of Sports, the School of Creative Media, the School of Psychology and the School for Applied Languages. However, its constitution allows for the addition of more Schools in the case of expansion.

The administration department, managed by the Director of Administration bundles all activities which are associated with administrative tasks. The Director of Administration is responsible for the proper operation of the institution and shall maintain the technical conditions, accounting and controlling, business management and operations, as well as for the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure. He is the supervisor of all administrative staff. The following units belong to the administration: Student Services, Examination Office, Teaching Support and, Technical Support & Infrastructure.

The Scientific Advisory Board affords a necessary external perspective. It advises TRIAGON on issues of curriculum development, the institution's collaboration with other higher education institutions and it advocates for TRIAGON in the broader academic community.

The Chief Executive Officer has a range of responsibilities that are critical to the success and development of TRIAGON. The CEO must ensure that TRIAGON has the necessary funding to support its operations, research, and other initiatives. This may involve building relationships with donors and securing grants and other sources of funding. The CEO must oversee the budget, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently, but he shall not interfere in academic affairs in any way.

Processes

To ensure the quality and reliability of all processes TRIAGON applies a systematic approach to the creation, implementation, and maintenance workflows that are efficient, effective, and sustainable. All main and supporting processes are defined in a participatory process with all employees concerned under the guidance of the Quality Management Officer and approved

and published by the President on the institution's intranet. TRIAGON uses flowcharts to visualize its processes. The objective is to provide all employees with clear, actionable instructions to ensure quality-controlled procedures. The development of these processes and their visualization is a continuous process that also incorporates modifications based on feedback from students, teachers, and other stakeholders and also considers external developments. The development of these processes and the continuous improvement is part of the quality management of TRIAGON.

The process management of TRIAGON is quite thorough. Even external partners, such as the external service provider are included in the process descriptions to ensure that all procedures are followed faithfully.

TRIAGON consistently applies predefined and published regulations covering all phases of the student life cycle. It has introduced Admission Regulations, Study and Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Recognition of Prior Learning and Assessment Regulations that are fit-for-purpose.

In general, TRIAGON provides a framework, special conditions and comprehensive support services for all students to help them progress in their academic career. In addition, TRIAGON particularly supports non-traditional students and other students that are mobile within and across higher education systems.

TRIAGON's Admission Regulations contain policies, processes, and criteria. All regulations are duly followed, and actively communicated in a transparent manner through TRIAGON's website and the learning management system. Entry criteria are established per course or program and outlined in the course handbooks.

Student's induction includes useful information about TRIAGON and the particular study program, an introduction to student support services, such as counseling services and academic tutoring, an introduction to the virtual learning environment and other learning facilities such as the online-library, basic time management and study skills and finally, activities to help students to connect with each other and to build community.

TRIAGON has implemented processes and customized software to collect and monitor information along the entirety of the student life cycle. It acts on indicators and information on student progression e.g., students who do not progress as expected will be offered individual counselling to find suitable solutions so that they are able to achieve their personal educational goals.

TRIAGON practices fair recognition of higher education qualifications, as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Both components are essential for promoting permeability and mobility which is particularly important for non-traditional students. Appropriate

recognition procedures have been implemented in line with the Recognition of Prior Learning regulations introduced by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Recognition of prior learning is done in cooperation with other institutions, and the Malta ENIC/NARIC.

Upon graduation all students receive a Certificate, a Transcript of Results and a Diploma Supplement explaining the qualification gained, achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed.

TRIAGON puts an emphasis on timely, impartial, and targeted communication with all relevant stake holders. In this regard, both internal and external communication are governed by the mission statement's principles, which highlight the significance of transparency and open communication as a core value of TRIAGON.

In addition, constant communication contributes significantly to the successful implementation of the strategies, particularly TRIAGON's quality strategy, because it ensures that the quality objectives, processes, and outcomes are communicated regularly and openly to students, employees, and other stakeholders.

TRIAGON is committed to ensuring that all of its employees, students, and external stakeholders are properly aware of all regulatory changes and updates. This is a crucial component of establishing and continually enhancing the quality culture.

In order to meet this requirement, TRIAGON has a communication concept that clearly regulates who communicates what, to whom, and in what format. All due care is taken to make sure that communication is launched in a coordinated manner.

TRIAGON employs many techniques of gathering information. A customized university information software (UIS) provides access to credible data about student development, success, and drop-out rates and other critical performance metrics encompassing all aspects of the profile of the student population.

TRIAGON's internal quality assurance system is supported by efficient systems for collecting and analyzing data on study programs and other activities. The Quality Assurance Officer collects and analyses data regarding student satisfaction with their programs. This also applies to the graduating survey, which includes information regarding graduates' career paths.

The marketing team collects and analyses information regarding potential students' interests, needs, and decision-making criteria. The marketing team includes a marketing intelligence unit that collects information about the market and the competition as well as a data analytics unit.

TRIAGON considers it essential that students and staff play an active part in giving and analyzing information and to make informed decisions about action plans, while understanding what is working well and what needs attention.

The various employees are involved in the planning and implementation of communication based on their duties. For instance, the Quality Assurance unit is responsible for providing information regarding quality processes and outcomes. In addition, quality assurance procedures are accessible to the public on TRIAGON's website. In both instances, the fundamental documents are displayed in a highly accessible location.

Monthly faculty meetings are held at TRIAGON to facilitate communication among all faculty. There is a direct interchange of information regarding current topics, pedagogy, research, and quality development. The daily administrative staff meetings serve a similar purpose. Current issues of day-to-day business and questions of quality development are discussed in collaboration with administrative management.

Moreover, students are regularly and actively engaged in relevant topics via the learning platform.

TRIAGON releases information about its operations that is valuable for prospective and present students, alumni, other stakeholders, and the general public. TRIAGON discloses all relevant details about the institution, its personnel, and its partners. This information is always provided in an up-to-date, impartial and comprehensive manner.

TRIAGON provides full information about its services (study programs, continuing education programs, research and services) via its website. The information about the study programs includes the duration of the program, the number of ECTS credits, selection criteria, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications they award, the teaching model, and assessment procedures used and the and the cost of the program. Detailed information, such as study and examination regulations, course handbooks or the General Examination Regulations, are made available by the Examinations Office via a separate section of the learning platform.

TRIAGON provides frequent information sessions to supplement its textual materials.

In addition, TRIAGON provides targeted information to external stakeholders and the general public via a range of information channels. A communication concept coordinates and outlines the communication measures. TRIAGON, for instance, tells the public about its operations, successes, and completed projects via press releases.

Interested parties are updated via multiple social media channels (Facebook, Instagram) and a newsletter about new offerings of education and training, research activities, and services,

as well as current developments, new projects and cooperations, and current employment openings.

Assessment

Good governance was essential for the effective functioning of an academic institution. Triagon, for example, established clear policies, procedures, and systems that ensured accountability, transparency, and ethical behavior. The institution had a well-defined structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities for its leadership, faculty, and staff. Triagon also had effective mechanisms for decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution. Additionally, the institution's good governance framework ensured that its resources were managed efficiently and effectively, and that its financial and operational performance was monitored regularly. Ultimately, good governance in Triagon fostered an environment of trust, collaboration, and innovation, and helped to build the institution's reputation, enhance its academic programs, and achieve its strategic objectives.

TRIAGON's organisational and management structure are congruent with its objectives. Teaching and research staff are sufficiently involved in decision-making. Rules and procedures for the recruitment of academic staff are clearly defined.

TRIAGON Academy's activities are carried out by a strong hierarchical structure (cascade model in different level). The responsibilities of boards, members etc. were clearly defined.

TRIAGON is a relatively small higher education institution. The organizational and management structure is appropriate to its size. Accordingly, the group of leading and managing persons is manageable. Consequently, this group is involved in a leading role in the various decision-making processes. Freedom in teaching and research is part of TRIAGON's self-image and is ensured in the best possible way by the regulations of the higher education institution and the acting persons.

TRIAGON recruits staff from other universities or use contacts with industries so that their employees can combine working and teaching. The recruitment of younger highly qualified staff is hard due to lower salary than the industry. TRIAGON is aware of this problem than in other countries.

The different areas inside TRIAGON seem to be highly interconnected by institutionalised meetings and exchange programmes. Everybody is highly informed and the individual statements are highly congruent.

The financial activities of TRIAGON are regulated by internal documents, official policies and a long-term development plan. The higher education institution's financial activities were audited by an external commission. In 2021 it was confirmed that TRIAGON used effectively their

budget. No violations have been found. The main source of funding for TRIAGON is the income from educational programs (90%), which leads to a high degree of independency. During the pandemic, they looked additionally for new sources of income. They implemented innovative programs and new startups which are profitable or tried to attract funding from the companies and industries by determining their research needs. About 10% of the TRIAGON's budget is reserved for research.

However, the expert group would like to make the following recommendation regarding the publication culture: Public information available to the broader public online should be extended and updated on a regular basis.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

3 Teaching and Learning

Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined. The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff [Examination Area 4, ESG Standard 1.2, ESG Standard 1.3, ESG Standard 1.4].

Implementation

TRIAGON utilizes a web-enhanced face-to-face teaching and learning model. This model was developed for TRIAGON's intended audience. Consequently, TRIAGON created a model that satisfies their requirements. This model is comprised of two essential elements, which contains a blended learning with "virtual face to face teaching" and the block format. The virtual face to face teaching ensures that social interaction during learning can still take place through live encounters, while mitigating issues of practicality by organizing face to face interaction through digital means. Learners at TRIAGON reinforce the learning that takes place during live sessions via asynchronous study material provided in the virtual learning environment. In addition to this, the teaching staff at TRIAGON offer scheduled tutorials and are committed to providing individual attention to each student by offering unlimited personal academic tutorials.

A wide range of teaching and learning methods are used to create a purposeful blended learning experience to impart competencies. For asynchronous, self-directed learning, a wide variety of materials are available on the learning platform, which accommodates the discrete needs

different learning types. Furthermore, synchronous lectures and virtual classrooms are scheduled. There are extensive lectures (e.g., on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. or from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) with intense online face-to-face interactions as well as one shorter session during each week that takes place in a virtual classroom to assist students with their self-study.

All online lectures are recorded and made available during the module so that students can refer to them as needed.

Typically, all modules have the same fundamental instructional design. At the beginning of a module the students get an overview of the structure and content of the relevant module, as well as the names and contact information of the lecturers, dates for online classroom sessions and lectures, and information about the exam they will take at the conclusion of the module. This information is shared during an onboarding meeting and is also available on the digital learning platform.

Every week the lecturers offer a quiz to support the learning progress and to give additional support where needed. Lecturers provide formative feedback to students in each module, highlighting existing strengths and future learning needs. Feedback on draft research papers may also be provided, allowing students to substantially improve their work before submission.

On the online learning platform, students have full access to the library resources. That includes (but is not limited to) textbooks, monographs, and scientific journals. Students can use their learning resources (Moodle, Teams, and so on) as are provided by TRIAGON to engage in social learning with their peers but are not limited to those only. They may freely use additional channels and social media to optimize their learning.

This didactic model keeps the students actively engaged throughout the whole learning process and serves to assist them in continuously developing their individual approach to learning.

All other study-related general information (mission statement, statutes, examination regulations, etc.) is always accessible via the Moodle learning platform. Moreover, current information serves to always keep students up to date.

Lecturers design the content of the modules they teach and create (or compile) the instructional materials. Further, they create learning activities such as groupwork, guiding questions, and case studies. Teaching Support provides pedagogical, technical, and graphical assistance to all internal and external instructors.

The assessment used in each module depends on the learning outcomes themselves. The curriculum team ensures that the learning objectives are written so that they can be evaluated using summative or formative methods, or a combination of the two.

As needed, students can also attend individual coaching sessions with members of the Student Services team during their studies. Individualized study plans are created, if deemed necessary, during these sessions. Topics of these individual coaching sessions may also include any personal issues that affect academic performance. In each instance, an attempt is made to arrive at an equitable and distinctive resolution.

TRIAGON applies a block format to all taught courses in which an entire module is to be completed before the next one starts. Participants usually study five modules with 6 ECTS each per semester. This allows students to concentrate on one subject, which can improve their focus, comprehension of the material as well as the ability to retain the relevant information. This can reduce the likelihood of procrastination and subsequently increase productivity because students know exactly what they need to study and when.

The block study format encourages students to plan their study time and stick to a schedule. And finally, the block format makes it possible to monitor and experience continuous study progress, which has a strong effect on learning motivation. Learning progress and success are continuously monitored.

Since 2018, this instructional approach has undergone continuous development. Much care has been taken over the years to ensure that new pedagogical findings and technological advancements are continuously incorporated. The approach has been evaluated multiple times in the context of program and system accreditations and has consistently received very positive feedback.

The ethos of TRIAGON is focused on providing high-quality education that prepares non-traditional students for the challenges of the modern world, particularly when it comes to career advancement. To achieve this, the institution seeks to offer courses that align with the demands of the job market, provide students with practical skills, and emphasize innovation and creativity.

In general, only the Senate has the power to decide on the introduction and implementation of new study programs. Members on the Senate regularly discuss TRIAGON's course portfolio. During these discussions, a preliminary gap analysis is carried out on the educational offer vis-à-vis the students' needs and industry requirements. TRIAGON's mission its positioning in the market, alignment with the strategy among other aspects are taken into due consideration.

TRIAGON invests in market research to identify the needs of the job market and tailor its academic offerings accordingly. But the impulse to create a new course can come from a variety of sources, including market research, competitor analysis, student feedback, feedback from lecturers, inquiries from corporate partners, feedback from the Academic Advisory Board and,

proposals from other stakeholders. In addition, TRIAGON also refers to statistics and official skills-gap documents.

The development of new courses occurs in five stages as defined in the Quality Assurance Handbook.

Stage 1: Project Outline

The Executive Dean and his team develop a project outline, which transforms an idea into a concrete concept. The Senate decides whether to continue the planning work based on the information in the project outline. If the area is completely novel to TRIAGON, the Senate assigns the task to an internal or external expert; otherwise, it assigns the task to an internal team (including student representatives).

Stage 2: Market analysis

The experts or team compile a market and competitive analysis and an investigation of potential job profiles for graduates. This research provides market information as well as opportunities and risks for the potential new program. The Executive Dean in consultation with the President and CEO determines whether the prospects are promising enough to proceed to the next stage and generates the commitment of the CEO to provide the necessary resources for the course.

Stage 3: Course Design & Planning

Course Design & Planning includes the concrete formulation of the qualification objectives, the desired learning outcomes, the layout of the curriculum, the creation of a course handbook including the description of all modules. This document serves as a guideline to design the list of modules and determine the total learning hours, self-study, supervision, and assessment, that are designed so that they enable smooth student progression.

Stage 4: Accreditation

Once the Senate approved a program, the Executive Dean submits the program to the accreditation bodies.

Stage 5: Market Launch

Following successful accreditation, the project advances to the final stage, and the market launch will be carried out in accordance with an operational plan as developed by the Executive Dean, which includes marketing, communication, and acquisition strategies.

TRIAGON is guided by the Malta Further and Higher Education (MFHEA) 'Referencing Report' which regulates the standard of delivery of programs included the quality of learning outcome and the corresponding framework. Furthermore, the MFHEA issues guidelines from time to time related to Quality Assurance and carries out unannounced spot checks to ensure that the delivery of programs and related higher education services are in line with national regulations.

The following programs are a selection of courses which have been developed since the accreditation of the first bundle: Master by Project, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), LLD, Creative Media Studies (top-up), Music (top-up).

Apart from involving industry stakeholders and students during the program development phase, TRIAGON seeks the consultation of academics. In addition to this, the accreditation of each program is carried out by the Malta Further and Higher Authority who places the program under a double-blind peer review carried out by such academics as are specialized in the respective academic field. The process consists of three rounds where these academics provide feedback for the further improvement of the program. This assures that all programs meet current academic standards.

The workload of students is based on the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority guidelines that for each ECTS, the total student load should comprise 25 hours. These are divided into learning contact hours, supervised learning hours, self-study hours and assessment hours. For each ECTS the Malta Qualification Frameworks requests between 5-7 learning contact hours. TRIAGON Academy uses the model of 5 contact hours for each ECTS.

First Cycle degrees at TRIAGON have 180 ECTS, while second cycle degrees have 90 ECTS. The institution also offers top-up degrees for the first cycle which add up to 60 ECTS. All programs offered at TRIAGON can be either taken full-time or on part-time basis. First-cycle programs with 180 ECTS take three full years to complete on full-time basis and five years on part-time basis. While top-up degrees and second cycle degrees last between 12 months to 18 months. Third Cycle degree last for a minimum of three years and can take up to five calendar years to complete.

Each program of study offered by TRIAGON has a strong element of research training through modules such as research methods or advanced research methods and a thesis of considerable workload. The program handbooks also specify the course's relationship to the occupation to ensure learners are aware of their future occupation prospects. In addition, based on the nature of the program, the curriculum developers identify the right balance between theory and practice – these are reflected in the types of modules in the study program and the respective learning outcomes.

All study programs developed and implemented by TRIAGON have an adequate element of transversal modules and cross-sectional curricular elements which aim at addressing specific skills required if, in the future, graduates decide to further their studies in the same field; but also if they opt for a career change. In general, the competence model applied by TRIAGON includes subject knowledge, methods, social and personal competences in each module.

TRIAGON courses are designed to provide learners with an international perspective and prepare them to address global issues in their respective field of study. As an international higher education provider, TRIAGON ensures that there is an international dimension to all the courses it offers. This is primarily done through specific curricular elements which are reflected in the scheme of works, namely, international case studies, guest lectures and a visiting faculty from different parts of the world, and opportunities for international networking. Additionally, TRIAGON's faculty is international.

By including these international elements in their study programs, TRIAGON allows its learners to become effective leaders and problem solvers in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

In general, TRIAGON's mission is directly linked to continuing education. In fact, its program portfolio reflects this important aspect. One of TRIAGON's most important and established target audience are learners who have previously achieved either a vocational education or a higher diploma and have decided to start working immediately after. For such a demographic, TRIAGON has developed top-up programs which last one year and which aim at upskilling and upgrading the learner's academic credentials in an efficient and effective manner.

The students are predominantly recruited through online-marketing, social media and word of mouth. Usually, TRIAGON can offer a place for every qualified applicant. If this is not possible there is a selection process clearly defined in the Admission Regulations. The Student Services compare the students' credentials against the requirements as defined in the respective course handbook.

TRIAGON offers a wide range of student services ranging from student counselling to general student support, such as IT assistance. These services also include academic advising and tutoring, library assistance, career counselling and directions in regard to mental health and wellness issues, as well as adaptation for students who have specific needs – particularly when it comes to adaptation of assessments.

The Student Services also actively consults students who do not progress as reasonably expected (and may be considering dropping out) and tries to find a bespoke solution for each individual case.

The combination of these academic and administrative factors collectively set the institution apart from its competitors and make it a top choice for students seeking high-quality, forward-thinking education.

Student-centered teaching and learning are at the heart of TRIAGON's didactical model. Both play a crucial role in fostering students' motivation, self-reflection, and engagement with the learning process. TRIAGON places extremely high value to all components which ensure full

compliance with the ESGs. Therefore, careful consideration is given to the design, delivery, and evaluation of TRIAGON's educational programs.

Learning outcomes are an essential part of the students' learning experience at TRIAGON. These help to provide structure and guides the learning process for both students and academic staff. From a practical point of view, TRIAGON perceives a learning outcome as a statement that specifies what a student should know, understand and to be able to do after completing a learning activity or a module. Composing appropriate learning outcomes is key to the higher education provision of TRIAGON as this allows and ensures that educational goals or objectives of a course are successfully met. Once developed and approved through accreditation procedures, learning outcomes are communicated to students so as to ensure that the learners are aware of the learning objectives.

Proper learning outcomes serve as a roadmap for both the student and the academic faculty, helping them to stay focused on the desired outcomes of the learning experience. TRIAGON defines learning outcomes with the intention of providing students with a sense of direction and purpose in their learning. When students are aware of what they are expected to learn and can measure their progress against the learning outcomes, they are more motivated to engage in the learning process.

From an academic point of view, learning outcomes inform TRIAGON's semester planning, module design, and assessment. It allows those delivering the learning to ensure that their instruction is relevant and up-to-date and to assess student learning, as well as to identify any areas of improvement needed for future lectures.

Academics at TRIAGON use learning outcomes to determine which teaching methods and resources are best suited to help students achieve the desired learnings. By doing so, academics ensure that the learning experience is tailored to meet the needs of the students – this is important as it falls in line with the institution's vision and mission.

TRIAGON differentiates between teaching, learning, and assessment by emphasizing the importance of each step in the education process. Academics at TRIAGON are trained to perform well in all three areas during their onboarding as well as during the course of their affiliation with TRIAGON.

Teaching is the most visible part of the process, as the academics are responsible for providing students with the knowledge, skills, and techniques they need to succeed. Teaching includes activities such as lectures, discussions, demonstrations, role playing, and other activities that actively engage students. Teaching also includes providing feedback and guidance to students.

At TRIAGON, learning is considered as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and techniques. It includes active engagement in activities such as reading, practicing, discussing, and reflecting on what has been learned. Learning is a dynamic process that involves both student and academic participation.

At TRIAGON, each step of the teaching, learning, and assessment process is given equal importance. By emphasizing all three steps, TRIAGON strives to provide the best learning experience possible.

At TRIAGON, academics use a variety of methods and resources to ensure that students are actively engaged in the learning process. For example, academics use discussions and activities to help students explore a topic more deeply or use projects and presentations to help students apply the knowledge they have learned. TRIAGON academics encourage students to take an active role in their learning, to actively participate in class discussions and activities, practice and apply the knowledge they have learned, and seek feedback from their teachers. Online forums are a common activity typically used by academics as this serves not only to promote peer-to-peer interaction, but it also helps students employ critical and lateral thinking.

TRIAGON also places a strong emphasis on assessment. TRIAGON uses both summative and formative modes of assessment. Tests and quizzes, projects, presentations, and discussions are used to evaluate student understanding and mastery of the material. Feedback is used to help students assess their own progress and help teachers provide guidance. Assessment is important for gauging student progress and providing relevant feedback to academics and student.

TRIAGON has introduced comprehensive Assessment Regulations to promote fair, accurate, and meaningful assessments that support learning and to encourage students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to develop strategies to improve their performance. Academics offer well-designed, valid, and reliable assessments that accurately measure the students' knowledge and skills. All students are assessed on an equal footing, regardless of their background or circumstances. The Assessment Regulations include mitigation measures for disadvantaged learners.

By emphasizing the importance of teaching, learning, and assessment, TRIAGON provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to education. By equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and techniques they need to succeed, TRIAGON strives to provide the best learning experience possible.

TRIAGON is a forward-thinking educational institution that has embraced digital technology to enhance learning from its inception. It is important to note that TRIAGON was among the few

higher education institutions in Malta whose educational operations were not impacted by the restrictions imposed due to COVID19 pandemic given the adequate implementation of a model which draws from an innovative digital learning approach. As part of its commitment to providing a high-quality and comprehensive education, TRIAGON is committed to continuously enhancing its level of digital technology to increase student engagement, facilitate collaboration, and promote a more comprehensive understanding of course material.

TRIAGON has incorporated digital learning tools into its teaching. These tools range from online live interaction to a fully-fledged virtual learning environment. These digital tools allow students to engage with course material in new and exciting ways. For example, online materials allow students to explore course material in more depth because they are able to study at their own pace and with their preferred learning styles.

In addition to this, TRIAGON has implemented digital collaboration tools that allow students to collaborate with each other in real-time. Through these tools, students can participate in group discussions, share ideas, and work together on projects. This encourages students to engage with each other, share knowledge, and work together to solve problems. It also allows students to gain valuable social skills, such as communication and teamwork.

Digital assessment tools also allow TRIAGON academics to assess and track student progress. These tools allow teachers to provide feedback to students in real-time, letting them know if they are on track or need to make adjustments. This helps to ensure that students are making steady progress and are not falling behind.

TRIAGON has implemented digital technology to improve communication between students and teachers. Through various platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, teachers can provide students with timely feedback, answer any questions they may have, and offer support. This helps to keep students engaged and motivated, as well as ensuring that they feel supported by their instructors. Overall, TRIAGON has embraced digital technology to enhance learning. With the implementation of digital learning tools, collaboration tools, assessment tools, and communication tools, students are able to stay engaged and better understand course material. This ensures that students receive a high-quality education and are better prepared to succeed in their future endeavours.

TRIAGON is dedicated to providing a student-centered learning environment that ensures students reach their full potential. Respecting and attending to the diversity of students and their needs,

TRIAGON places a strong emphasis on individualized instruction. TRIAGON recognizes that each student has different learning needs, and we strive to meet these needs with tailored

instruction. We use a variety of methods to assess each student's unique strengths and weaknesses and then design instruction that is likewise tailored to their individual needs. This includes providing additional support for students who require it, as well as introducing more challenging material for those who need and benefit from it.

In addition to individualized instruction, TRIAGON also promotes collaboration and peer-to-peer

learning. TRIAGON understands that students often learn best when they work together, and we encourage them to do so. Our academics create opportunities for students to participate in group activities and projects that allow them to practice their skills and help each other. This collaborative approach allows students to take ownership of their own learning, as well as gain valuable insights from their peers.

Through its organisational structure TRIAGON provides a range of student support services to ensure that all students have available to them the resources they need to succeed. TRIAGON have dedicated staff who are available to provide additional support to students who may be struggling academically or socially. Our staff also work closely with students to create individualized learning plans that can help students reach their academic goals. This holistic approach to providing a student-centered learning environment ensures all students reach their full potential.

TRIAGON has several systems in place to foster student feedback, including student-led surveys, open ended feedback forms, and a student representative who is the main contact point for students who wish to provide ad-hoc feedback to TRIAGON's management. Student-led surveys are conducted on a regular basis in order to assess student satisfaction with the institution and its programs. These surveys are designed to be brief and direct, so as to make it easy for students to provide their opinions. The results of these surveys are then used to inform decisions about changes to the curriculum, policies, and other aspects of the institution.

Open-ended feedback forms are also available for students to provide more detailed feedback on specific aspects. These forms are available online and allow students to provide their opinions on specific topics such as course design, performance of academics during teaching of modules, and the overall atmosphere. These forms are then reviewed by the Executive Dean and the Director of Administration who communicate the overall feedback to the Senate – the latter then takes informed decisions about changes to the institution if and when it proves necessary.

TRIAGON also has a student representative on the senate that is a full member with voting rights. The student representative regularly meets other students and give them the opportunity to voice their opinions and offer suggestions – this feedback then is also raised during Senate meetings.

Student feedback is also considered key for curriculum development at TRIAGON, as it allows the

institution to gain an understanding what students want and need from their education. By collecting feedback from students, TRIAGON gains a better understanding of what students are interested in and what topics they are struggling with. This information then is used to inform decisions about changes to the curriculum, such as adding more engaging material, more comprehensive instruction, and more active learning opportunities. Student feedback is also used by TRIAGON to help to identify areas where the curriculum is not meeting student needs. This information can then be used to make necessary improvements and ensure that the curriculum is providing students with the best possible learning experience. Student feedback is considered essential for the proper administration of TRIAGON, including but not limited to updating and adjusting policies and procedures, updating facilities, and improving the overall atmosphere of the institution as well as the online environment.

TRIAGON has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints. A formal procedure for student appeals is in place, as is laid down in the Quality Management Handbook.

Quality assurance in teaching and learning at TRIAGON is an essential part of our commitment to providing high-quality education.

Assessment

Teaching and learning at Triagon was a top priority, and the institution focused on providing high-quality academic programs and support services to its students. The faculty members at Triagon were highly qualified and experienced in their respective fields, and they were committed to creating a positive and engaging learning environment for their students.

To facilitate effective teaching and learning, Triagon used a variety of teaching methods and technologies, such as lectures, group discussions, online learning platforms, and multimedia resources. These methods helped to enhance student engagement and promote active learning, which was important for ensuring that students could apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios.

Moreover, Triagon provided a range of support services to its students, including academic advising, tutoring, counseling, and career services. These services were designed to help students succeed academically, socially, and professionally, and they were tailored to meet the diverse needs of Triagon's student population.

Overall, Triagon's focus on teaching and learning helped to create a supportive and stimulating academic environment that enabled students to develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their careers.

The broad objectives of TRIAGON's programmes are for students to take responsibility in society and these include a focus of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The broad objectives and the specific objectives of the programmes focus on preparing students for the professions of tomorrow. The broad and specific objectives are achieved through the institution's strategy for programme development, the use of several case studies in teaching and learning activities, online programmes and hence reducing the carbon footprint, reaching equality through diverse staff, the assessment that promotes intercultural differences, and more. TRIAGON envisages tomorrow's skills and competencies by working with industry, in line with what the industry needs. It also prioritises digital skills and competencies, for its students to facilitate progression. TRIAGON believes in transversality where the industry is fluid.

The assessment procedures are various and include group work, individual assignments, research papers, examinations - although these are being used less frequently, take-home examinations. To ensure quality, students fill out a declaration of originality for each assessment taken. Different assessment methods capture different aspects of the students' learning. Students that fail a module have the right to repeat the assessment. Students can also appeal the result and have the right to retake the assessment. In such instances, the assessor drafts a report, which gets reviewed by QA and a 2nd reviewer assesses the students' work and drafts a report. The examination committee take a final decision based on the outcomes of the two reviewers.

TRIAGON is very interested in the market but also in the sustainability of the programmes, and maintains direct relationships with the industry. Various stakeholders are directly or indirectly involved in the design and implementation of study programmes, such as lecturers, programme managers, administration, quality assurance, student services and the Senate. There are two pillars at TRIAGON – one is the interplay between the institution and the industry (market research, consultation with industry and the public) and the other is the relationship between the institution and prospective students. The final decision on whether to develop the programme or not is taken by the Senate. Once designed, a programme is sent for accreditation.

Offering further education possibilities is one of TRIAGON's strengths where prospective non-traditional students are provided opportunities at bachelor, master, and doctorate level. The meeting with students included an alumna who graduated with a bachelor's and master's degree and another who finished a doctorate and is now teaching at TRIAGON. The institution awards professorships too and this can motivate the PhD and DBA students to engage in further research after completing their doctorate. Some alumni end up teaching assistants themselves.

The academic staff-to-student ratio stands at 38:1 and TRIAGON is comfortable with this, where around 40% of the expenses go to HR. Once the students increase, the number of members of staff will also increase. TRIAGON is encouraged to explore lowering the ratio, especially since they mostly target non-traditional students, who may require additional support and guidance.

The programmes offered do comply with the European Standards and Guidelines but may not comply with all national regulations of the home countries of the students. Hence TRIAGON is encouraged to explore if some of the programmes offered can be tweaked to comply with national legal regulations, especially for specific cohorts.

There is currently no policy for scholarships at TRIAGON for even though the institution is offering financial support to doctorate students from Ghana. Currently there are around 20 Ghanaian students that are benefiting from this. TRIAGON is encouraged to consider a policy for scholarships which includes the eligibility criteria.

Several support services are offered to students at TRIAGON, e.g. financial support where students can call the accounts department and they get special arrangements for payment. Students' attendance and performance are monitored and lecturers are informed if students require additional support. Furthermore, students are contacted each semester by the student services staff. They also receive technical support for virtual lessons and multimedia content and are informed on how to go about the application process.

TRIAGON can make better use of social media to reach a wider audience and to disseminate information on activities carried by the institution, e.g. students' graduations and publication of research.

The language of instruction at TRIAGON, who describe themselves as a virtual face-to-face institution, is either German or English, depending on the cohort. Students need B2 in the respective language of instruction.

For the future development, Triagon should strive to provide its graduates with the opportunity to participate in a graduation ceremony to both acknowledge their academic achievements and to promote its own visibility.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

4 Research

Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution [Examination Area 5, ESG Standard 1.8]

Implementation

TRIAGON places a high value on research and the transfer of knowledge into teaching and practice, as defined in its mission statement.

When academic institutions are first established, teaching and administrative responsibilities usually take precedence over research. This is due to the fact that initial capacities for teaching and

administration are required. Nonetheless, TRIAGON has taken a number of steps to minimize the effect of this occurrence, such as ensuring that the teaching workload allows for research. At TRIAGON, each professorial position has at least 40% of their workload dedicated to research and publication.

When assembling the academic team, TRIAGON sought out research-active professors who were well connected within the scientific community, actively engaged in research projects, and capable of initiating and directing research activities. Furthermore, by leveraging their networks, these researchers have formed productive research collaborations.

All faculty members were involved in developing a reasonable research concept for TRIAGON. The concept will be revised as and when new colleagues join the research team. The research objectives set by the researchers are based on market research and analysis and consulting with academics in the relevant fields as well as with industry experts or other stakeholders, to ensure that its research concept aligns with the needs and priorities of the community which it serves.

Currently, the research activities are funded by the supporting company based on the concrete resources required. Incentives for high-ranked publication and third-party funding acquisition are also provided by the supporting company. TRIAGON's incentive system is made up of several components (e.g., financial rewards, research-related reductions in teaching obligations).

TRIAGON intends to apply for third-party funding in the future to further expand its research capacities and to provide start-up funding for research projects.

Additionally, TRIAGON establishes partnerships with other research institutions or universities. Based on this, TRIAGON develops research projects that are informed, innovative, and impactful, and that contribute towards the advancement of knowledge in the field.

To be able to conduct high-quality international research as a young institution, TRIAGON has concentrated its research efforts on a limited number of important research areas and promotes a culture of cooperation in research.

TRIAGON actively pursues impactful research. Consequently, TRIAGON's research focuses on

developing solutions for the most pressing issues facing the Maltese and international communities. Research and development initiatives are intended to bridge the gap between academia and industry and are focused on providing quantifiable outcomes and solutions to real-world problems. This is made possible by the numerous bachelor's and master's theses and doctoral research projects that have been ongoing since TRIAGON's inception.

TRIAGON encourages the publication of doctoral research in leading journals, and the pipeline is currently full. There are currently close to a hundred research projects that investigate a variety of important topics which are highly relevant for industry.

TRIAGON is assisting its students and faculty in advancing their research and development endeavours. Researchers enjoy a variety of facilities and services. This includes, among other things, providing access to an online library with full access to scientific journals, offering Seminars, workshops and hands-on training for research and publication skills, holding by-monthly colloquiums with doctoral candidates and finally, giving individual assistance with publication in peer reviewed journals.

So far two students have successfully completed their doctoral degrees and it is envisaged that by April and October 2023 an additional 10 and 20 students will be awarded with a doctorate respectively.

It is essential to point out that tenured academics pursuing academic careers at TRIAGON are very active in their academic fields. For example, Prof. Dr. Glen Farrugia, Associate Professor, publishes journal articles on a frequent basis and is well-connected within the academic community. He holds editorial positions in prestigious organizations such as the International Journal of Tour Guiding Research. Professor Farrugia is also the editor of the University Network for European Capitals of Culture and the chief editor of the Futuristic Journal. Since the year 2020, he has published in international journals and given presentations at prestigious scientific conferences. And he is maintaining collaborations with national and international publication-focused scientists from other universities.

The research conducted by TRIAGON faculty is directly incorporated into the curriculum. This strategy promotes continuous activity between research and education. Faculty members are encouraged to use their research knowledge in their teaching and to involve students in TRIAGON's research projects on an ongoing basis. By incorporating its research findings into its curriculum, TRIAGON ensures that all students are exposed to the most recent thinking and findings in their respective fields.

TRIAGON uses its faculty's research to form partnerships with industry and governments, which provides important opportunities for knowledge transfer and collaboration.

TRIAGON offers knowledge transfer services, working with local and international industry partners and organizations to help them develop and implement innovative solutions. TRIAGON has established strong ties with the local and international communities, which creates opportunities for application-oriented research. Industry partners assist TRIAGON's students by providing access to existing data or by permitting them to collect valuable data.

In the coming years, TRIAGON intends to increase both the quality and quantity of research. As part of this self-assessment, TRIAGON has outlined the following research objectives: First, TRIAGON seeks external funding particularly tapping into European funds, specifically Horizon European research funding to increase its research capacity. Furthermore, TRIAGON wants to develop and communicate a straightforward mechanism for engaging the students in applied research. Moreover, TRIAGON seeks membership in international research associations. Finally, TRIAGON aims to attract high caliber researchers for professorships.

Assessment

The overall structure and the general institutional conditions provide adequate opportunities and possibilities of state of the art research activities, especially in the area of applied research and knowledge transfer for business management, also in an international content.

The intended research strategy of TRIAGON's provides sufficient and relevant space for sound research activities of its faculty members, given a reasonable and doable teaching load, at least for those parts of the faculty, who are expected to contribute to TRIAGON's outlined research strategy.

The recruitment of faculty members is based on internationally accepted and required standards for research personnel by applying strict academic criteria for qualified research, i.e. publication record, relevant academic degrees and demonstrated academic skills in teaching, research and knowledge transfer.

The research strategy of TRIAGON deliberately includes and involves the faculty members into the procedures of developing and formulating intended research goals and projects, both

individually and collectively, i.e. by encouraging research ideas and projects, which fit the overall research strategy of the institution. Research findings and research projects are published frequently and the least partially in renowned publication media and generally accessible online resp. via the usual electronic media.

TRIAGON fulfils the requirements of pertinent research ambitions.

For the further development of the research area, the expert group would like to make the following recommendations: TRIAGON should specify its short and long-term plans for securing additional party funding for its research endeavours. Research efforts of separate units and individuals should be consolidated in the policy of research at the academy, for instance, by creating a common research matrix of the academy. Targeted efforts should be outlined and taken to enhance the visibility of the research conducted by the academy within the international academic community.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

5 Resources

The HEI has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards [Examination Area 3, Examination Area 6, Examination Area 7, ESG Standard 1.5, ESG Standard 1.6].

5.1 Human resources

Implementation

The quality of the personnel is a decisive success factor for TRIAGON in teaching, research and administration. Therefore, there are a variety of processes (from selection to annual goalsetting and appraisal and personnel development) to ensure that the employees have the necessary professional knowledge and skills as well as the required methodological, personal and social competencies.

Faculty and Staff Regulations regulate the appointment procedure in a clear and understandable manner. To attract as many competent persons as possible, position requirements are established and distributed broadly (advertisements, TRIAGON's website, social media, networks, and portals) with the assistance of an external service provider.

In a competence-based selection procedure, candidates are chosen based on the required competencies. The selecting procedure is conducted using the software „BITE”. This facilitates communication between applicants, recruiters, and TRIAGON's relevant persons responsible.

Full professors are selected in a particular competitive appointment process. The Senate convenes a Professorial Appointment Committee to ensure that the process is transparent, objective, and fair.

To be able to deploy personnel to their full potential as early as possible, the onboarding process is given special attention to help them understand TRIAGON's culture, regulations, and procedures and to introduce them to their co-workers and students. An organized onboarding plan is supported by the responsible manager.

The performance of professors and lecturers in the classroom is evaluated systematically, as outlined in the quality management handbook. The outcomes of these evaluations are communicated directly to the respective employees in order to encourage self-reflection.

Moreover, TRIAGON places particular emphasis on the Annual Goal Setting and Appraisal Meeting and the University Score Card. The purpose of the annual goal setting meeting is to review the progress made in the previous year and set attainable goals for the upcoming year.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity for the employee and their supervisor to discuss any challenges or opportunities for growth. TRIAGON's University Score Card is a valuable tool to evaluate the performance of professors and to identify any areas for improvement. It covers four areas: teaching, research, transfer and governance. At the end of the meeting the participants are supposed to agree on measures for personal development. This allows TRIAGON to ensure support for career development of all staff and especially of young scientists.

By investing in professional development, faculty members can enhance their skills and knowledge, improve their teaching and research capabilities and to stay current with new research and teaching methodologies. TRIAGON encourages such scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research.

TRIAGON provides many avenues for faculty to engage in professional development, including attending conferences, collaborating with colleagues, seeking mentorship, engaging in professional organizations, attending workshops and seminars, and to participate in modules or courses.

All employees have access to various workshops courses and online materials via the virtual learning environment. But they can also take advantage of the continuing education opportunities offered by the partner universities of the EOE quality network. Young faculty members can seek mentorship from more experienced colleagues who can then provide support, feedback, and career advice. Supporting young scientists is crucial to TRIAGON's growth and success. That is accomplished through the doctoral and post- doctoral options offered by TRIAGON, which provide dedicated research time. The PhD program at TRIAGON provides competent and motivated students with the opportunity to earn a research doctorate in preparation for an academic career. They then have the chance to progress from assistant professor to associate professor to full professor. All applicable procedures are regulated transparently and comprehensibly in the Faculty and Staff Handbook.

The recruiting of temporary academic staff follows a simplified procedure which does not however water down the quality and academic credential required by TRIAGON to reach its specific teaching objectives. Based on the academic teaching plan, the Executive Dean identifies such resources as are required and scouts for the best academic talents – through the academic network of TRIAGON, the management is usually able to identify promising potential academic temporary staff.

The academic CV and statement of competencies are requested at the initial stages to ensure that the person identified to carry out the academic task is fully qualified and at least one level

up on the European Qualification Framework he/she/they will be teaching – the latter is a requirement of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority which TRIAGON always abides by.

Assessment

Sound human resource and financial management was critical to Triagon's success, ensuring that the institution's resources were used effectively and efficiently to achieve its strategic goals.

Human resource management at Triagon included attracting and retaining top talent, providing opportunities for professional development and creating a positive and engaging work environment. The institution had policies and procedures in place for recruitment, selection and performance management that helped ensure that faculty and staff members were selected based on their qualifications and experience and that their performance was regularly reviewed and evaluated.

Triagon also offered a range of benefits and incentives to its faculty and staff, such as health insurance, pension plans and flexible work arrangements. These benefits helped to attract and retain top talent and also helped to create a positive and supportive work environment that fostered creativity, innovation and collaboration. However, in this context, the development of a programme of continuous professional development for academic staff is recommended.

At the current stage of TRIAGON's development, it can be confirmed that the university has sufficient human resources. Nevertheless, for the further development steps, it is recommended to develop a transparent and comprehensible personnel planning for both the scientific and the non-scientific areas and also to present these, especially the job shares that are to be allocated exclusively to TRIAGON and not to any partner institution. TRIAGON shall adjust the number of faculty and staff to the growing number of students. The "Faculty and Staff Policy" regulations of December 2022 set out TRIAGON's clearly defined selection and recruitment process. As a new staff member, you will be involved in all quality processes and there is a very good onboarding programme that also offers many development opportunities.

For the further development phase of TRIAGON, it is recommended to involve part-time teachers in a more structured way in the institution and in the teaching and learning processes as well as in the quality assurance procedures and mechanisms.

In addition, TRIAGON also encourages faculty members to engage in professional development activities such as attending conferences, participating in research projects and collaborating with industry partners. These activities help to keep the teachers up to date with the

latest developments in their fields and have provided them with opportunities to improve their teaching skills and approaches.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

5.2 Financial Resources

Implementation

In the build-up phase TRIAGON was financed by own funds of the supporting company, through tuition fees, and third-party funding. In the long term, tuition revenue and research project funding will become the main sources of funding. TRIAGON remains on a very solid financial footing despite the pandemic and has reached a level of financial stability and independence thanks to the founder's contributions to cover ongoing administrative expenses in the build-up phase.

TRIAGON's finances are always transparent and clearly understandable. The audited financial information is disclosed to the authorities only to the extent that it satisfies legal requirements.

With the employed business model and despite the institution's youth, financial data demonstrates that TRIAGON's finances are extremely self-sufficient and immensely sustainable. Nevertheless, the founder of TRIAGON has pledged to cover any losses that may occur. This ensures that TRIAGON always has the funds necessary for both teaching and research.

Assessment

Financial management at TRIAGON involved establishing clear financial policies and procedures, ensuring that financial resources were managed effectively and efficiently, and providing regular reporting and analysis of financial performance. The institution had a budgeting process that involved input from faculty and staff members, which helped to ensure that financial resources were allocated to strategic priorities and that the institution's financial performance was monitored regularly.

TRIAGON also had established policies and procedures for managing its financial resources, which helped to ensure that resources were used effectively and efficiently. The institution had implemented controls to prevent fraud and mismanagement of financial resources, and it had established an internal audit function that provided independent oversight of financial operations.

Overall, sound human resources and financial management were critical to TRIAGON 's success, as they helped to attract and retain top talent, ensure that financial resources were used effectively and efficiently, and provide regular reporting and analysis of financial performance. These practices helped to ensure that TRIAGON could achieve its strategic objectives and maintain its position as a leading academic institution.

At this point, the expert group would like to recommend improving the reporting structure for resource management, as this still has potential for optimisation.

5.3 Facilities and Equipment

Implementation

TRIAGON possesses the necessary technical infrastructure to offer a cutting-edge virtual work environment, which includes a virtual learning environment and Windows 365 as a digital environment for work and teaching and learning. TRIAGON provides all modern resources and virtual facilities as are required to assist student learning, such as an advanced online library supported by a qualified librarian. Moreover, TRIAGON also provides technical support for students, faculty and staff which has unquestionably proven its value especially under pandemic conditions.

This virtual study environment offers a flexibly adjustable framework that is suited to satisfy the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), allows flexible modes of learning and teaching and supports student-centered teaching and learning.

Since TRIAGON's inception, the learning platform has been regularly updated multiple times. The technical infrastructure is now up- dated on a almost weekly basis.

TRIAGON´s internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are fit for purpose, accessible, and that students are informed about all services available.

All employees and contractual lecturers have access to the required hardware and software. The working conditions for faculty, staff, and students are state-of-the-art.

The requirements for work equipment, investments and consumables are budgeted from the bottom up, with employees notifying management of their needs. The Director of Administration consolidates these demands, agrees with management, and then discusses them with the Senate. All justified requirements have so far been accepted without any deductions.

The staff delivering support services is qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

TRIAGON resides in a renovated historical villa in Marsa, just ten minutes by car from the airport, five minutes from Valletta, and on the outskirts of a massive regional development project that includes the former Marsa power station and its surroundings.

The building was one of the first investments of the founder. It contains 12 workstations, some of which are occupied by full-time employees who typically work from the villa, such as the Head of Student Service, Examination Office colleagues, Director of Administration, Executive Dean, and President. Some workstations can be utilized with greater flexibility. Even prior to the pandemic, TRIAGON offered numerous opportunities for mobile work.

As Malta is a relatively small island it seemed inevitable to use technology to create an international and intercultural team with faculty and staff working from home, regardless of their location.

The TRIAGON teaching model is optimal for this approach. The completely virtual working environment allows the employees not only to carry out virtual teaching or virtual consultations from anywhere in the world, but also to remain closely connected with each other at all times. The new technical possibilities allow the employees a maximum of online collaboration.

This allows faculty and staff to reduce travel costs, reduce environmental impact, and use travel time for higher-value activities in research and teaching. Through the provided intranet and a fully virtual work environment, co-workers are not only able to perform virtual teaching from anywhere in the world but are also able to remain in constant contact with one another. Even simultaneous work on a joint paper is now feasible due to the advancements in technology.

The construction of a contemporary new structure adjacent to the historic villa is already underway. The architect's blueprints are accessible. The funding has been secured.

Assessment

TRIAGON's infrastructure and equipment are commensurate with its defined strategic goals. Its infrastructure provides sufficient quantitative and qualitative access to learning materials for students enrolled in the institution's programs.

TRIAGON made use of student centres in the past, but since the Covid-19 pandemic shifted its teaching and learning to virtual face-to-face. Students make use of MS Teams as a platform for communication and Moodle to access learning resources. Students have access to online journals and books. The institution also makes use of plagiarism software to ensure the originality of students' work. TRIAGON uses a university management system which tracks the

students' journey from registration to graduation. The meetings with the academic students and staff revealed that TRIAGON has sufficient resources for its operations as a higher education institution.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

6 Quality Assurance

The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement [Examination Area 2, ESG Standard 1.1, ESG Standard 1.7, ESG Standard 1.9, ESG Standard 1.10].

Implementation

TRIAGON has developed and established a comprehensive quality management system for the areas of teaching, research and service with the participation of all internal and external stakeholders in order to institutionalize the review, assurance and improvement of quality in these areas. In doing so, TRIAGON has systematically oriented itself to best practices. A central element of the quality management system is the Quality Management Handbook which contains the Policy for Quality Assurance. It defines the overall perspective of TRIAGON's quality assurance and focuses on the required long-term quality assurance and quality improvement.

This quality assurance strategy and the quality management system are summarized in TRIAGON's Quality Management Handbook and anchored in both the mission statement and the constitution. The Quality Management Handbook regulates all areas, all processes, and all responsibilities of the quality management as well as management mechanisms and decision-making structures. It contains a complete and coherent collection of regulations and procedures that ensure the realization of the strategic goals of the institution.

The quality assurance strategy specifically supports the implementation of strategic decisions and the measures required for their realization. This is systematically accompanied by the ongoing evaluation of all service areas and the consistent derivation of adjustment measures. This approach (plan, do check, act) ensures a continuous improvement of TRIAGON's activities and ensures a continuous adaptation to the developments in its environment and in the European Higher Education Area.

The anchoring of the understanding of quality in the mission statement, the participatory approach and the continuous involvement of all status groups are excellent prerequisites for further development of the quality culture that has already been created.

TRIAGON is aware that quality standards and procedures cannot be imposed „top down“. The shared understanding of quality, the implemented instruments and processes, and the clearly defined duties guarantee a tight quality management loop and support the institution's efforts to provide the highest quality in teaching, research, and service.

Consequently, quality measurement and control are always understood as instruments for continuous development and not as mere control of compliance with defined quality standards.

This internal quality assurance system is designed to ensure that TRIAGON's procedures and the programs it offers are 'fit for purpose' and conform to the conditions outlined in the latest published version of the National Quality Assurance Framework of Further and Higher Education and the Quality Assurance standards established by The Malta Higher Education Authority. The quality assurance system has been and will be applied and continuously developed during ongoing operations. It is evaluated and revised periodically to ensure its appropriateness, effectiveness, and functionality. The Scientific Advisory Board adds an external perspective. At regular meetings of the Scientific Advisory Board, aspects of the quality assurance system are discussed and corresponding suggestions for optimizing the system are offered and considered.

In addition, TRIAGON must undergo periodic provider and program quality audits (once every five years) conducted by the MFHEA for the purposes of confirming the license awarded (Subsidiary Law 607.03.) applying the relevant European and international standards, guidelines and criteria for external quality assurance, and respect for international treaties and agreements relevant to further and higher education provision, as ratified and endorsed by Malta.

Quality Assurance System

TRIAGON has implemented a Quality Management System for teaching and service with a view to ensure continuous quality monitoring, assurance, and improvement. The Quality Management System is an expression of TRIAGON's self-awareness and desire to provide superior teaching and service.

Quality management cannot be implemented from the top down. As a result, a Quality Management Policy was created, and all TRIAGON employees were involved in the process. The Quality Management Policy is extensively documented in the Quality Management Handbook, which serves as the guiding document for all quality management activities and provides the binding framework for all quality management activities.

Stakeholders are involved in the quality management process at multiple levels, from the institutional to the program level and to the strategic level. In fact, stakeholders not only provide feedback, but also contribute to continuous improvement by submitting ideas and proposals. Furthermore, through various representations, stakeholders are invited to participate in policy decision making. This is the foundation for the development of a thriving high-quality culture.

Quality measurement and control should therefore be understood as the necessary instruments for continuous development and not merely as tools for control of compliance with defined quality standards. TRIAGON uses the PDCA cycle of quality development. The cycle is closed by taking the necessary corrective action to ensure enhancement of the operations and higher education provision.

The responsibility of implementing the quality assurance systems is up to the Senate through the President in collaboration with the Executive Dean and the Director of Administration, while the Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for monitoring overall quality.

TRIAGON offers scientifically sound, professionally qualifying and innovative programs in modern study formats. These are embedded in a quality culture that is oriented towards international standards and modern development trends. This also includes a commitment to the continuous development of quality standards.

Quality assurance assists and motivates TRIAGON members in completing their tasks and provides the opportunity for independent quality improvement in their work. In the case of a positive evaluation, these enhancements represent recognition and appreciation for the services provided, whereas in the case of negative feedback, they provide those involved with indications of where improvements are needed and how they can be achieved. It is critical that all employees understand and accept their responsibility for quality.

Predominantly, the quality assurance tools that are employed to evaluate the level of quality are: formal online feedback form, descriptive summaries and informal discourse analysis. These three measurement tools are interlinked together and provide an opportunity for data triangulation of the feedback obtained – this is important to ensure good quality, reliable and representative feedback provided by all stakeholders which include students, staff, alumni, the industry and the general public. This is especially important considering that TRIAGON's teaching model involves small study groups, and even with high relative response rates, quantitative feedback alone may not be sufficient for a fair and reliable evaluation.

The involvement of the aforementioned stakeholders can range from formal to more informal settings, where students, for example, can access their learning platform's feedback system and submit their thoughts on a number of pre-determined components. The feedback from the industry, on the other hand, is derived from the discourse that occurs during TRIAGON activities, such as consultation for program development.

The President is in charge of overall quality assurance and specifies the framework conditions under which the quality management system is established. He is also in charge of the overall concept and defining the strategic goals of quality management. The school principals and department heads are responsible for putting all necessary measures in place. They ensure that the principles and implementation of TRIAGON's quality management principles are followed.

The Executive Dean is in charge of all academic matters, including continuing education quality. To that end, the Executive Dean establishes the necessary framework, provides the tools and personnel support, and facilitates the implementation of quality assurance and improvement measures. The Executive Dean sets the internal standards in teaching and research.

The Director of Administration oversees all administrative matters, including the quality of the Student Support Services. The Director of Administration provides the required framework, tools, and staff support for the administration, and facilitates the implementation of quality assurance and improvement measures. The Director of Administration establishes internal standards for the administration's services.

The Quality Management Officer reviews internal quality assurance processes in teaching and initiates their optimization on the instructions of the Rectorate. The Quality Management Officer evaluates the evaluations in the area of service, prepares an evaluation report and submits it to the administrative management. It reviews service-specific quality assurance processes and initiates their optimization on the instructions of the administrative management.

The Senate is in charge of initiating, implementing, and introducing measures to improve the quality management system.

On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programs

Study programs are dynamic in nature and dynamic are the regulatory framework and the labor market. Consequently, TRIAGON programs are reviewed, renewed, and adapted not only to meet the quality assurance requirements but also to satisfy the needs of the students and the industry. Although the programs' review is an ongoing process, TRIAGON conducts a comprehensive review of its programs at least every five years.

There are several elements which TRIAGON uses for a program review, such as feedback from the student surveys, feedback from the Scientific Advisory Board, lecturers' modules self-review, suggestions from the Senat, external assessors' feedback and industry consultation.

The feedback obtained from the stakeholders, together with the necessary data collected during this exercise, is analyzed by a Programme Review Committee together with the Program

Manager and the Executive Dean. The findings of this study indicate the need for program modifications. This process is an important aspect of TRIAGON's quality assurance system and serves to ensure that programs are of acceptable quality, appropriate academic and vocational standards and relevant to the needs of the industry. The whole exercise can be seen as the preparation for a program reaccreditation.

A TRIAGON program review includes the evaluation of the program's learning outcome, the changing needs of industry and society, the students expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program, the students' actual workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, the mode of learning and whether this is still adequate, the virtual learning environment and the support services and their fitness for purpose.

The Senate decides whether or not to conduct a study program review (SPR) and has the responsibility to set up Review Committees. It may determine that the internal Quality Assurance team for a program can function as such Committee. The composition of the Review Committee shall be determined by pragmatic factors, such as the number of programs to be evaluated.

The SPR Committee will study the current documents and collect and analyse new data. It is free to choose which sources to employ. The Review Committee submits a report that details shortcomings and merits of the study program as well as its curriculum and the individual modules. The Committee must officially transmit the results to the Senate, along with any required modifications. After internal consideration, the Senate must choose which proposed amendments to implement. The Executive Dean is responsible for revising and, if required, initiating a new external accreditation process. The following statistic information shall be used from the current and previous year: Admissions, including ratio of applications to entrants, rise or fall of the number of application; Numbers of student and staff/student ratio; Student profile, including analysis by age, domicile, gender, full-time/part-time ratio, and disability; Progression dropout and graduation rates; Student achievement e.g. pattern of grades; and information regarding students' first employment destinations.

TRIAGON embraces the concept of Cyclical External Quality Assurance as a process of periodic external evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions as well as of academic programs. A successful accreditation by a recognized, independent accreditation agency enhances the credibility of an institution.

A valid accreditation from a recognized agency is a prerequisite in many countries for the formal recognition of degrees.

External evaluations assist TRIAGON to identify areas of strength and weakness and provides recommendations for improvement and ultimately assists TRIAGON to enhance the quality of the institution and the academic programs, research, and transfer.

TRIAGON sees quality assurance as a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report. Cyclical External Quality Assurance practice is valid element of the PDCA cycle. Consequently, an external accreditation documenting the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next activity.

Assessment

Quality assurance was a critical component of Triagon's academic strategy, as the institution was committed to providing high-quality education and support services to its students. To ensure that its academic programs and services met the highest standards of quality, Triagon had established a robust quality assurance framework.

The framework involved regular monitoring and evaluation of the institution's academic programs and services, as well as the implementation of continuous improvement initiatives. Triagon used a range of tools and techniques, such as student surveys, faculty evaluations, and academic audits, to assess the quality of its programs and services.

Triagon also had a rigorous process for program development and review, which involved input from faculty members, industry partners, and other stakeholders. This ensured that the institution's academic programs were up-to-date and relevant to the needs of the students and the industry.

Moreover, Triagon had established partnerships with other institutions, industry partners, and professional organizations, which helped to enhance the quality of its academic programs and services. These partnerships provided opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives, which helped to keep Triagon at the forefront of the education industry.

Finally, Triagon had a strong commitment to transparency and accountability, which was evident in its regular reporting and dissemination of information about its academic programs and services. This helped to build trust and confidence among the institution's stakeholders, and it also helped to identify areas for improvement and further development.

Overall, Triagon's quality assurance framework was instrumental in ensuring that its academic programs and services met the highest standards of quality. This commitment to quality helped to enhance the institution's reputation, attract top talent, and provide students with the knowledge and skills they needed to succeed in their careers.

In assessing the very well-functioning quality management system, the expert group was able to identify the following optimisation indications:

The Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Management Manual should be reviewed regularly to reflect changes implemented in the Academy; an internal Quality Assurance Action Plan would be a good addition to the tools currently available in the Academy. Systematic updating of internal policies and procedures should also be undertaken in order to have an up-to-date quality management manual.

Furthermore, consideration of introducing a strategic quality assurance process on an annual basis is recommended.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

7 Internationalisation

This criterion only applies in those cases where internationalisation is part of the institutional strategy [Vision and Objectives on Internationalisation].

Implementation

Malta aspires to become a hub for international higher education. TRIAGON's internationalization strategy and its didactical model align perfectly with this approach. TRIAGON wants to position itself as a high-quality institution with a global perspective.

TRIAGON already supports a multicultural student population, with students from more than ten different countries, and its academic programs incorporate global perspectives and cultural diversity. This assists students in acquiring intercultural competence. TRIAGON defined distinct intercultural learning outcomes that reflect the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should acquire as a result of internationalizing the curriculum. Intercultural communication, cultural self-awareness, critical reflection, and cultural sensitivity are among these outcomes.

Another important element that reflects the international nature of TRIAGON is the international exposure of its staff members, particularly the academic staff. TRIAGON faculty is international as all members derive from different countries and have acquired academic experience at a variety of international universities. TRIAGON will continue to attract faculty and staff from a broad variety of countries and cultures.

In addition, TRIAGON encourages its faculty to attend international conferences, as participation in such events leads to the acquisition of essential international experience and networking opportunities. The international experience gained by employees through such activities can then be shared with students and co-workers to enrich their overall education at TRIAGON.

As a member of the EOE network TRIAGON has already established close partnership with four universities in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In the long run TRIAGON seeks to establish partnerships with other universities around the world, particularly in regions that have significant student populations that would be interested in studying in Malta. TRIAGON develops these alliances through memorandums of understanding, faculty and student exchange programs, and collaborative research endeavours.

As a relatively small institution, TRIAGON focuses its recruitment efforts on attracting international students from specific regions with a sizable population that possesses the required language proficiency.

To this end, TRIAGON develops inclusive practices to ensure that internationalized curricula are accessible to all students, regardless of their cultural background language proficiency or even financial status – for example, in 2022 the supporting company has approved a 50% reduction in the fees of the Doctor of Business Administration for the Ghanaian community.

TRIAGON provides language learning opportunities to support the development of intercultural communication skills. This is done through language courses such as the BSc and MSc in Applied Languages that have already been accredited by MFHEA. TRIAGON evaluates and improves its internationalization efforts on a continuous basis, utilizing feedback from students, faculty, and international partners. TRIAGON ensures that the intercultural learning outcomes are met and that the institution is preparing its students to succeed in a globalized world.

By putting these plans into action, TRIAGON hopes to improve its international reputation, which will eventually attract a greater number of international students and faculty.

Assessment

Triagon has outlined its internationalisation strategy by a) setting ambitious goals for the promotion of its international cooperation efforts, both in the area of continuing education programmes and in the area of joint international research projects, articulation agreements with partner institutions, international faculty and student exchanges, thus contributing to an increasingly strong international networking effect of higher education institutions. Triagon intends to attract additional resources, e.g. in the form of financial support, in addition to providing its own infrastructural resources. Institutional and personal partnerships through competitive participation in relevant international project funding programmes (EU programmes, DAAD, etc.). The internationalisation strategy should be expanded and enriched to include international cooperation with other higher education institutions.

Internationalisation should also be seen as a greater advantage and approached consciously so that the academy's students benefit from it to a greater extent. The internationalisation strategy should not only be circumscribed in general terms, but should be conceived in a faculty-specific way and individual measures should be elaborated. The internationalisation strategy could be a central building block in the further development of TRIAGON. In this context, as TRIAGON itself has already noted, international outgoing opportunities for students should be developed, for example, which take into account their particular non-traditional approach to study. The organisational form of the TRIAGON study programme could also be very interesting for incoming exchange students.

Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

IV Recommendation to the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN

1 **Assessment of compliance the Standards and Guidelines in the Higher European Area (ESG) in the actual official version and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR)**

The institutional structures and performance were assessed on the basis of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions" Section B.IV), and the national or other relevant regulations.

The expert group concludes that the **ESG standards** 1.1 (Policy for quality assurance), 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes), 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment), 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification), 1.5 (Teaching staff), 1.6 (Learning resources and student support), 1.7 (Information management), 1.8 (Public information), 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes) and 1.10 (Cyclical external quality assurance) are fulfilled.

The expert group concludes that the **WR examination areas** 1 (Institutional conception, profile, and development objectives), 2 (Governance structure, organization, and quality management), 3 (Staff), 4 (Study and teaching), 5 (Research), 6 (Equipment (rooms and facilities)) and 7 (Funding) are fulfilled.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

Institutional Profile and Strategy (Mission and Vision)

The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Governance, Organisation and Administration

Responsibilities, decision-making processes and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Teaching and Learning

Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined.

The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Research

Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Resources

The institution has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Quality Assurance

The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

Internationalisation

The HEI has an internationalisation strategy which is consistent with the strategy of the institution. The activities in the area of internationalisation fit into the internationalisation strategy.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

2 Accreditation Recommendation

The peer-review experts recommends an unconditional accreditation as an university of **TRIAGON ACADEMY** with the following **recommendations**:

1. TRIAGON should sharpen and specify its profile, identity, and strategy even more, and make these more transparent for its stakeholders.
2. Updating the quality assurance manual to better reflect the strategic objectives is recommended.
3. Dissemination of the strategy to all levels of academic and administrative staff should be sustained.
4. Public information available to the broader public online should be extended and updated on a regular basis.
5. TRIAGON should strive to provide its graduates with the opportunity to participate in a graduation ceremony to both acknowledge their academic achievements and to promote its own visibility.
6. TRIAGON should specify its short and long-term plans for securing additional third party funding for its research endeavors.
7. Research efforts of separate units and individuals should be consolidated in the policy of research at the TRIAGON, for instance, by creating a common research matrix of the academy.
8. Targeted efforts should be outlined and taken to enhance the visibility of the research conducted by the academy within the international academic community.
9. TRIAGON shall adjust the number of faculty and staff to the growing number of students.
10. For the further development phase of TRIAGON, it is recommended to involve part-time teachers in a more structured way in the institution and in the teaching and learning processes as well as in the quality assurance procedures and mechanisms.
11. For the further development steps of TRIAGON, it is recommended to develop a transparent and comprehensible personnel planning for both the scientific and the non-scientific areas and to also present this, in particular the job shares that are to be assigned exclusively to TRIAGON and not to any partner institution.
12. The development of a programme of continuous professional development for academic staff is recommended.

13. The improvement of the reporting structure for resource management is recommended, as it still has potential for optimisation.
14. The Quality Assurance Policy and the Quality Management Manual should be reviewed regularly to reflect the changes implemented in the TRIAGON; an internal Quality Assurance Action Plan would be a good addition to the tools currently available in the TRIAGON.
15. Systematic updating of internal policies and procedures should be undertaken in order to have an up-to-date quality management manual.
16. Consideration of implementing a strategic quality assurance process on an annual basis is recommended.
17. Internationalisation should be considered a bigger asset and approached in a conscious way that would benefit the students of the academy to a greater degree.
18. The internationalisation strategy should be expanded and enriched to include international cooperation with other universities.

V Decisions of the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN

Based on the evaluation report of the peer group and the statement of the university the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN decided on 09 May 2023:

The Triagon Academy is for the first time institutionally accredited without conditions. The accreditation is limited until 30 September 2029.

The following recommendations are given for the further development:

- Triagon Academy should sharpen and specify its profile, identity, and strategy even more, and make these more transparent for its stakeholders.
- Updating the quality assurance manual to better reflect the strategic objectives is recommended.
- Dissemination of the strategy to all levels of academic and administrative staff should be sustained.
- Public information available to the broader public online should be extended and updated on a regular basis.
- Triagon Academy should strive to provide its graduates with the opportunity to participate in a graduation ceremony to both acknowledge their academic achievements and to promote its own visibility.
- Triagon should specify its short and long-term plans for securing additional third party funding for its research endeavors.
- Research efforts of separate units and individuals should be consolidated in the policy of research at the Triagon Academy, for instance, by creating a common research matrix of the academy.
- Targeted efforts should be outlined and taken to enhance the visibility of the research conducted by the academy within the international academic community.
- TRIAGON shall adjust the number of faculty and staff to the growing number of students.
- For the further development phase of Triagon Academy, it is recommended to involve part-time teachers in a more structured way in the institution and in the teaching and learning processes as well as in the quality assurance procedures and mechanisms.
- For the further development steps of Triagon Academy, it is recommended to develop a transparent and comprehensible personnel planning for both the scientific and the

non-scientific areas and to also present this, in particular the job shares that are to be assigned exclusively to Triagon Academy and not to any partner institution.

- The development of a programme of continuous professional development for academic staff is recommended.
- The improvement of the reporting structure for resource management is recommended, as it still has potential for optimisation.
- The Quality Assurance Policy and the Quality Management Manual should be reviewed regularly to reflect the changes implemented in the Triagon Academy; an internal Quality Assurance Action Plan would be a good addition to the tools currently available in the Triagon Academy.
- Systematic updating of internal policies and procedures should be undertaken in order to have an up-to-date quality management manual.
- Consideration of implementing a strategic quality assurance process on an annual basis is recommended.
- Internationalisation should be considered a bigger asset and approached in a conscious way that would benefit the students of the academy to a greater degree.
- The internationalisation strategy should be expanded and enriched to include international cooperation with other universities.