



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



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CDA College

MBA Master of Business Administration

External evaluation report

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 and 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015 and N. 47(I)/2016].

A. Introduction

The site visit at the CDA College premises in Nicosia took place on March 18, 2019. The Committee met with members of the Governing Board of CDA. More precisely, the Committee met the Chairman Athanasios Christoforou, the Head of the Program, General Director and Chairman of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee Dr. Pantelis Ioannou, the Director of CDA Limassol and the Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee Dr. Tryphon Pneumaticos, the Head of the Research Center and Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee Dr. Nicos Rodosthenous, the Head of ICT and Member of the Internal quality Assurance Committee Dr. Pavlos Panayi, the Head of Tourism Studies and member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee Athena Koliandri, the Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee and Higher Administrative Office Katerina Kyriakidou and the Student’s Representative-Student in MBA Asim Hussain Shah Syed.

The documents that were provided and examined included the Application for Evaluation-Accreditation, new Program of Study, student handbook and practical training guide, test for English language examination, an edition of “The Cyprus Research Facts” and the brochure of CDA College.

Furthermore, our committee interviewed members of the faculty teaching staff, a group of undergraduate students, administrative personnel related to admissions, registration, library facilities, IT and other admin support. Finally, CDA College facilities were visited. More specifically, we visited teaching areas, library, student meeting rooms, staff offices and some open areas.

Finally, the internal evaluation ‘Application’ and associated documents, which were submitted by C.D.A. College and examined by us, were considered complete, very satisfactory and illuminating.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Pavlos Dimitratos	Professor (Chair)	University of Glasgow
Kyriaki Kosmidou	Associate Professor (Member)	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Sebastian Becker	Associate Professor (Member)	HEC Paris
Georgios Aristotelous	Student (Member)	Cyprus University of Technology

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The assessment of study programs follows the structure of assessment areas. At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and some questions that EEC may find useful. The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards. The questions should be deleted when drafting the report, so that each assessment area consists of the standards and the description of the way in which the standards are met.

Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. For each assessment area, the report should include:

Findings

A short description of the situation in the higher education institution (HEI), based on elements from the self-evaluation report and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

In addition, for each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) on a scale from one (1) to ten (10). The scale used is explained below:

- 1 or 2: Non-compliant
- 3 or 4: Non-compliant
- 5 or 6: Partially compliant
- 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
- 9 or 10: Fully compliant

It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the HEI's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.

The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.

1. Study program and study program's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

Standards

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

- *The program of study:*
 - *is designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
 - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
 - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
 - *results to a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
 - *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the program is up to date*
 - *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program*
 - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
 - *about the program of study offered*
 - *the selection criteria*
 - *the intended learning outcomes*
 - *the qualification awarded*
 - *the teaching, learning and assessment procedures*

- *the pass rates*
- *the learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

Findings

Students are enrolled in the MBA (Master of Business Administration) (12 months, full-time or 24 months, part-time, Master in Business Administration). The anticipated mix between Cypriot and international students is quite satisfactory. The expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study is 20 students per semester, whereas the maximum planned number of students per class-section is up to 35 students. Finally, the countries of origin of the majority of students is Cyprus, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh. This academic program seeks to prepare students for leadership roles in profit and non-profit organizations in the global competitive business environment.

Generally, the program is well designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institution's strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes. The purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes are clearly communicated and well-justified. The intended learning outcomes spring clearly from the mission statement of the programme. The structure and content include appropriate core courses and few electives. The MBA Master in Business Administration consists of 12 courses (11 courses and the final project) and requires a minimum of 90 ECTS credits to graduate. It includes compulsory and elective courses. Students should follow 10 compulsory courses and 2 out of the 4 offered elective courses. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. The course content and the assessment system is uploaded to a Moodle (the technology CDA College uses) platform. The assessment system is course work 50%, final exam 50%, with a passing mark of 60%. The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students from the first week of the semester through the course syllabuses, the course outlines, the website of the College and the Moodle electronic platform.

Quality assurance mechanisms are present and fairly well-aligned with international standards. There are 30 quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of programs of study. Moreover, the Head of the programme (Dr P Ioannou) is very capable, with appropriate expertise and committed to the successful fulfilment of his role.

Moreover, the program of study reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe that is, preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

Strengths

The program of study benefits from external expertise. It is designed so that it enables smooth student progression. It is subject to a formal institutional approval process. The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the

students. The course syllabuses and course outlines clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance. The structure of the program follows the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) that is applied by the College since 2008.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The content of courses could be expanded in order to include more elective courses regarding e.g. topics such as sustainability, digitalization or finance-oriented topics. This is to ensure that the recent educational and societal trends are followed (this content could be obtained from a benchmark study of comparable institutions).

Moreover, the international dimension is rather weak and could be improved with more visiting professors from abroad who could aid in the delivery of the program and strengthen the research profile of the programme through collaborations (or even the development of links with foreign job markets for MBA graduates intending to work abroad).

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
1.1	Quality assurance policy defines competences and procedures for the people involved.	8
1.2	Participation in quality assurance processes is ensured for:	
	1.2.1 the members of the teaching staff	8
	1.2.2 the members of the administrative staff	8
	1.2.3 the students	8
1.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.	8
1.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.	8
1.5	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:	

1.5.1	The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication	8
1.5.2	The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching staff	8
1.5.3	The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material	8
1.5.4	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	8
1.5.5	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	8
1.5.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process	8
1.6	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.	8
1.7	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.	8
1.8	The following ensure the achievement of the program's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes:	
1.8.1	The number of courses	7
1.8.2	The program's content	7
1.8.3	The methods of assessment	7
1.8.4	The teaching material	8
1.8.5	The equipment	7
1.9	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff.	8
1.10	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.	8
1.11	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.	8
1.12	The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses according to the European practice.	8

1.13	The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	7
1.14	New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.	7
1.15	The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree.	7
1.16	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.	8
1.17	The learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.	8
1.18	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions.	8
1.19	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.	8
1.20	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.	7
1.21	Program's management with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.	8
1.22	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.	8
1.23	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.	7
1.24	Procedures are applied so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates.	8
1.25	Indicators for the employability of graduates and the employability record of the department's graduates are described in the feasibility study.	8
1.26	The graduation rate for the program of study is analogous to other programs with similar content.	8
1.27	The program of study benefits the society.	7
1.28	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:	
1.28.1	The provisions regarding unit credits	8

1.28.2	The expected learning outcomes	8
1.28.3	The methodology	8
1.28.4	Course descriptions	8
1.28.5	The program's structure	8
1.28.6	The admission requirements	8
1.28.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment	8
1.28.8	The pass rates	8

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development and respects their needs.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*

Findings

There is a well-structured, effective and well-implemented educational process. The former Ministry of Cyprus accreditation (by SEKAP) warrants already a good educational quality. There are well-documented educational procedures engaging the Head of the Business Studies, teaching staff and students. The Management of the program of study does not encounter any problems whatsoever. The College successfully applies the ECTS.

The current students study on a full-time basis, although there is part-time route they could follow. There are effective student exchange programs of the CDA College in European countries. Current students are of two cohorts, viz. around 60% local Cypriot students who work full-time at the same time; and, around 40% foreign students from countries including primarily India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (who also sometimes work at the same time in their home countries from a distance). Current student intake is about 20 per semester. Students timely participate in the pedagogical process through their feedback in both courses as well as the program quality assessment.

There is good evidence of structured and well-organized taught material (lecture presentations, good blending of theoretical material and practice, independent study etc). There is also flipped learning at play.

Strengths

The particular MBA CDA College programme compares very positively with relevant programmes offered in Cyprus. The learning objectives of the intended programme are well-aligned with the aims and objectives of the program, and there is evidence that they are effectively communicated to the students (e.g. through the course handbooks). Also, the design of the program as well as the learning mechanisms in place are appropriate for the effective delivery of the learning objectives.

The Head of the Business Studies responsible for the program and the administration associated to it are experienced and committed to its delivery. This ensures that the program can be managed by the academics in charge without inappropriate non-academic interventions. There is also a team of dedicated administrators who are involved in student support processes (library, student visas and accommodation etc).

There are quite effective internal quality assurance committees and processes. The quality assurance of the program of study is ensured through active participation of the members of the academic personnel, the members of the administrative personnel and the students. The procedure of quality assurance of the program of study is well documented and communicated in the application material and the presentations/ interviews taken place during our visit.

The College has a good network with local stakeholders, such as the local police. Also, there is good word-of-mouth in the local market, which seemingly ensures a constant supply of student applications. This is also reinforced by the fact that some current students of the MBA programme hold a prior bachelor's degree by the College.

The programme is of relatively small size and this reflects a friendly and collegiate environment between themselves and teaching/ administrative staff. Current students appear to be satisfied with the quality of the MBA programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The international aspect of the program could be enhanced. Student exchange into/from other European Erasmus collaborating institutions (in their second or third semesters of study) has not been capitalized in this MBA program so far.

The links to the local businesses/ market can be improved. This would enhance marketability of potential future students and would add to the industry/business link of the programme. Also, possible internships for current foreign students may be enhanced and intensified.

The programme has a small number (four) of elective courses that the students can take. This number has to be expanded if the programme is to grow in the future.

Although flipped learning seems to be there, interviewed students suggested that this could be incorporated to a higher extent into the program's delivery. As of now, what is presented as 'flipped classroom' simply means that slides of lectures are made available but these are still presented in a normal lecture instead of moving the lecturing part to outside of the classroom and then using classroom time for issues and particular problems that were encountered. Related to this, the use of Moodle could be more widespread such that all assignments/ homework to be deposited in the system.

There is evidence of a solid admission process with well-documented criteria, but this could be tightened up if the programme is to become more competitive in the future (e.g. higher prior Bachelor marks to enter into the programme etc.).

Furthermore, if the programme is to move to a higher 'league' of MBA programmes, accreditation by a well-recognized international body (e.g. AMBA) could be sought.

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: Non-compliant
- 3 or 4: Non-compliant
- 5 or 6: Partially compliant
- 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
- 9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
2.1	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication.	8

2.2	The number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	6
2.3	A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching staff and the students, is applied.	8
2.4	The methodology utilized in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	8
2.5	Formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.	8
2.6	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	8
2.7	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.	8
2.8	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.	6
2.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.	6
2.10	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been enlightened by research.	6
2.11	Students, teaching and administrative staff participate in research activities and projects.	7
2.12	Students are trained in the research process.	7

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Standards

- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study program, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participate in teaching the study program.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Assessment of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

Findings

We met with all but one of the teaching staff (the missing member was said to be travelling abroad) which means that we had a comprehensive view of the entire teaching staff of CDA college compared to speaking to only few of the faculty in larger institutions. The six faculty we met had a tenure of +12 years for three of them and of around +3 years for the other three. They all hold PhD degrees and many of them hold these and other degrees from foreign institutions. They all seem engaged and professional and have very good English language skills (it seems that all but one are Cyprus nationals).

In addition, they seem to be pleased with their salaries, working conditions and the overall College working environment. They appear to take teaching seriously and are supportive of the initiatives regarding research (i.e. they all seem to be doing some research, attending conferences and the like, and have a good understanding of the value of doing research for an educational institution). There is only a positive consequence (bonus, reduction of teaching load, recognition etc.) for faculty in case of research performance, but apparently not for teaching performance.

Also, teaching staff seem to be in regular contact with other professors from institutions abroad as there are several visits by foreign faculty to CDA college also in order to present teaching material to the students – the existing Erasmus CDA College collaboration helps in that respect. In addition, the involvement of the teaching staff in research activities implies travelling abroad and interacting with their communities, so lectures seem to be connected to their respective academic communities.

Strengths

We found it very good that there is an equal balance of young and experienced faculty on board. The faculty seemed to be well integrated and on good working terms. The experienced faculty, in addition, have been with CDA College for a long time (between 12-14 years), which means there seems to be a good work environment that is beneficial to the MBA program.

In theory, the fact that there are four campuses in Cyprus implies that CDA College could be flexible in terms of teaching courses in case there was a need to staff short-term vacancies and to fill teaching gaps (yet, we did not hear of any of these things to take place, perhaps because there may be no such problems).

Furthermore, it seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of. There is also a process of “self-evaluation” of the faculty regarding their own courses which was often reported and mentioned during our field visit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

When we asked teaching staff about their interactions with outside stakeholders, we noticed that there are not enough touchpoints with practice. It seems that most people from outside who come to present and meet students are faculty from other teaching and research institutions but that these are not practitioners most of the times. This seems a bit unfortunate since this could be implemented easily e.g. by just inviting a practitioner to come and present for an hour regarding a topic the MBA students discussed in the classroom. These people, if not through other networks, could stem from former alumni of CDA College.

We further took note of the initiatives regarding research at the College (e.g. a dedicated research annual budget of 100.000 €, the publication of the College-owned journal viz. “The Cyprus Research Facts” as well as the recent establishment of the “Aristotelis” Research Centre). The definition of what counts as good research could be improved, i.e. the College could incorporate research quality indicators (journal quality lists e.g. that of the Association of Business Studies) and peer-reviewed work so that online publications and conference submissions (which sometimes may not be peer reviewed) are discussed with respective communities. In sum, a reflection and discussion about what good research is could be beneficial.

Further, and related to the above, it seems there is some interaction regarding the research process, i.e. how to apply and attend a research conference etc. Yet what we did not appear to find were actual research seminars in which faculty would present research papers to others in order to discuss these, a practice that may improve the quality of the research. These initiatives could be undertaken not only in the Nicosia campus but also together with the Limassol campus faculty or even together with other Cypriot Universities and Colleges (sharing of seminar email lists, organization of joint research seminars etc.).

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: Non-compliant
- 3 or 4: Non-compliant
- 5 or 6: Partially compliant
- 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
- 9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
3.1	The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.	8
3.2	The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:	8

	3.2.1	Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline	8
	3.2.2	Publications within the discipline	5
3.3		The program attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	6
3.4		The specializations of visiting professors adequately support the program of study.	6
3.5		Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.	6
3.6		In every program of study the special teaching staff does not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.	8
3.7		In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time staff, ensures the quality of the program of study.	8
3.8		The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards of the program's quality.	8
3.9		The teaching load allows the conduct of research and contribution to society.	8
3.10		Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of teaching staff safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.	7
3.11		The program's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the program of study.	8
3.12		The results of the teaching staff's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.	7
3.13		The teaching staff are provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	6
3.14		Feedback processes for teaching staff with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	8

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
- *Information on students, like key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analyzed.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*
- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities).*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff.*
- *Students' mobility is encouraged and supported.*

Findings

The evaluation committee met with five students and we asked them about their experiences, and what they liked and disliked as well as what they think could be improved at the college. In general we noted that students, in particular the local ones, were quite unresponsive or may even have been briefed by the school to be positive about the school. When we asked open questions about their experiences and what they would improve (we assume from our own experience that there are always things to improve), the answer was not really directly given but rather, we needed to actively aid them to actually say something which then was to the likes of "everything is perfect" or "nothing is to be improved". So, either this is because they were reluctant to say anything even slightly critical because they were briefed previously or in general because they were not what one could expect of an MBA level participant (reflection, critical thinking, speaking up etc.), or both.

We found it a bit strange that while the program is marketed as "full-time", most students, especially local ones, are working "full-time" next to their "full-time" studies – another remarkable thing to note.

Strengths

It seems that CDA College is very student-oriented and that they listen to and also institutionalized the listening to their needs. This in particular pertains to offering courses in the afternoon and evening so that students who work next to their studies can attend courses and obtain their degrees successfully. It also appears that this concern for student needs has resulted in new CDA College degree offerings, e.g. a degree in casino management or in public management.

As to students from foreign countries, it also seems that CDA College reaches out to help them as best as possible e.g. regarding the visa application and renewal process. Also, since these students often face more difficult economic conditions compared to the local students, there is financial aid in terms of more instalments to be made when paying student fees.

Also, we have noticed several times that the student is well taken care of by the College, that there is e.g. individual feedback by the teaching staff (an advantage of a small program) and that the administrative staff is also in close contact with the students.

In addition we also often noticed that there is an evaluation on the part of students and that the issues raised were taken seriously by faculty and administration.

Moreover, the institution seems to be perform well as the local students think they obtain good-quality education for their employability in Cyprus. The same applies to the foreign students in their home country.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

We were generally concerned about a lack of integration of the student body. We see several areas that could be improved. For example for students who do not work at all or work only part-time or from a distance (e.g. those working online for companies back in their home countries, as was stated to us, by example), could be given certain pedagogical activities to improve their learning and skills in the morning/early afternoon hours. This would enhance the flipped learning mentioned in Section 2 also.

Related to the above, we also felt a lack of “spirit” among the students and somewhat little interaction between local and international students. There also seem to be very few activities that would foster the genesis of such a “spirit”, like e.g. “cultural weeks”, “dinners”, “sports activities”, “team building” activities etc. One could also think of e.g. “a welcome week” to further make students meet and interact more among each other.

While the 12-month program is a short program, perhaps the students could be given the opportunity to study abroad in one of the three semesters to further increase their international mobility, as also mentioned in Section 2.

It seems as if the program is not that selective in its admission criteria: All students who want to study at CDA College and whose qualifications were sufficient (i.e. having a Bachelor’s degree and some fluency in the English language through language tests or if the initial

degree was obtained in a country where the native language is English) could do that. There seems to be no interviewing process for admissions. This could be beneficial in at least two ways. For one, in such an institutionalized process including also an interview, the College would learn about soft facts that are not easily discernible in CVs about a certain “fit” between the student body and the “culture” of the College. For another, based on the interviews (they could be undertaken online via skype also for foreign students), it could assemble an intake that has a diversity of experience, background and culture. We mentioned this since we were told that there is e.g. a predominantly male population in the cohorts, and additional diversity in the student body could improve the discussion and viewpoints raised; and, could raise the word-of-mouth of the CDA MBA programme.

Also, and related to the above point, it seems strange that it would be totally OK if a participant did not have any significant work experience. At many institutions, especially abroad, an MBA program would require at least 5-7 years of work experience; while at CDA College, students who elsewhere would do a Master of Science program, can actually become MBA students. This can be problematic if you then have a cohort of potential students who have between several years of work experience and no work experience at all.

Most reasons that were stated about why CDA College is an institution where students would like to study are the fact that students mentioned that “things are easy” and that the program was cheaper than the comparable programs at, for example, the University of Cyprus. Although these reasons may be acceptable or welcomed by present students, it could flag up areas of concerns. These factors however could be important issues to work on and develop in the future.

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
4.1	The student admission requirements of the program of study, are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria.	6
4.2	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.	6
4.3	The program’ s evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	8
4.4	Students participation in exchange programs is compared favorably to similar programs across Europe.	1

4.5	There is a student welfare service that supports students with regards to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	8
4.6	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	8
4.7	Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.	6
4.8	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.	7

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

As mentioned above, there seems to be no exchange program in place for the MBA degree at CDA College. When probing for this point, the answer given to us was that the program as such is very short (12 months only) and that for this reason, an exchange program was not feasible. Upon reflection of this point, we believe that there could be one out of the three semesters that could be offered as an exchange semester. There is a CDA College network in place (Erasmus) with other universities to build upon, and the MBA program can capitalize on it.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, financial, physical and human support resources*) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study program.*
* *Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.*
Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counselors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Teaching staff is involved in the management of financial resources regarding the program of study.*

Findings

Through our visit in two buildings of CDA College in Nicosia, we were able to look at two premises of the College, including a visit to the cafeteria, the library (and interaction with librarians), classrooms, and some common areas. We also spoke with the Head of the

Business Studies and the Chairman (owner) of the institution to understand their views on resource allocation among different CDA College programs.

Our impression was that all the resources are generally in place and functional, and that these are managed by engaged administrative staff that know a great deal about what happens at the institution. All staff also have very good English language skills.

Regarding one point in the standards in “5. Resources (ESG 1.6)” and the “involvement of teaching staff in the management of financial resources regarding the program of study”: we observed that teaching staff may not be very involved in administrative matters beyond the organization of their own courses. This can be good since it allows them having more time to use for doing research. On the other hand, the lack of formal authority over financial resources could be detrimental for a student-oriented learning (according to the DIPAE guidelines). Yet, we also learned that there are lots of mechanisms in place that allow for feedback and empowerment of the faculty (e.g. the self-evaluation in place).

Strengths

It seems that overall and compared to the other programs (45) offered at CDA College, the MBA is a well-resourced and prominent program. At worst, we also learned that management of the College would be willing to engage in cross-subsidization by more profitable programs to less profitable ones.

The Chairman (and owner) in general stated that despite the fact that CDA College is a for-profit organization, he was willing to invest much into the sustainability and the going concern of CDA College. He gave us a few examples of his willingness to invest in computers in labs (despite the option to insist on students owning and bringing to class their personal computers). In another example, the CDA College seems to invest 100.000 € in a research budget in the absence of any clear business case for these resources. These examples, the general involvement of the Chairman and the way they were explained can be regarded as strengths.

We further definitely noted a high level of engagement in particular of the administrative staff (but also of the faculty) as well as a very low level of churn. Many of the current employees have been with the College for more than ten years. This continuity, level of experience and knowledge are important assets for the College and certify that it seems to be a good employer.

The College seems to understand well how it can leverage government aid for students (1.500 € - 3.500 € per students for the duration of the program). This is a significant amount given that the total fees for students are 8.000 €. Yet, it only pertains to local students. Foreign students, as stated above, do receive aid in the form of favorable instalment plans.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

We did perceive a lack of the bigger picture or strategic guidance for the program. We questioned the interviewees regarding a strategy or where the MBA program shall be taken

in the future, yet the response showed a sort of “muddling through” and doing everything needed at an operational level. This is done well, but we did not perceive what the strategic mission could be for the future (e.g. improving the quality of the program, increasing the intake, hiring new faculty, crafting collaborations and partnerships, intensifying research etc).

We also think that CDA College could leverage its resources in a more effective way. The College has four campuses all over Cyprus and offers business degrees (Bachelor and MBA with dedicated resources and faculty) at two of these campuses. This could be leveraged in terms of e.g. offering more courses (electives) or to the benefit of students (more and better networking, creating the image of a larger cohort etc.)

We further believe that premises are in good shape but they could be modernized here and there.

There seem to be few books in the library and the existing books are not updated with the most recent editions.

The online platform Moodle could be used with more of its functionalities (e.g. uploading of student assignments), as discussed in Section 2.

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:	
	5.1.1 facilities	6
	5.1.2 library	5
	5.1.3 infrastructure	6
	5.1.4 student welfare	8
	5.1.5 academic mentoring	7
5.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	8

5.3	Suitable books and reputable journals support the program of study.	6
5.4	An internal communication platform supports the program of study.	8
5.5	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	6
5.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.	6
5.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.	5

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

6. Additional for distance learning programs (ALL ESG)

Standards

- ***The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular program of study.***
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *Specific plan is developed to ensure student interaction with each other, with the teaching staff, and the study material.*
- *Teacher training programs focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning are offered.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, guidance are set.*
- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the program, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*

- *Presentation of course material, on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
- *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
- *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
- *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
- *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
- *Synopsis*

N/A

Findings

Strengths

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
6.1	The pedagogical planning unit for distance learning supports the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment.	
6.2	The institution safeguards the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and study guides/material of study.	
6.3	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of teaching staff, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for distance learning education.	
6.4	Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff, through appropriate procedures.	
6.5	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.	

6.6	Adequate mentoring by the teaching staff, is provided to students, through established procedures.	
6.7	The unimpeded distance learning communication between the teaching staff and the students, is ensured.	
6.8	Assessment consistency is ensured.	
6.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the distance learning education methodology and are updated regularly.	
6.10	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of distance learning.	
6.11	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.	
6.12	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.	
6.13	Procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are set.	
6.14	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.	
6.15	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and the teaching staff.	
6.16	The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.	

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

7. Additional for doctoral programs (ALL ESG)

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the program as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree program are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the program*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*
- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defences his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student, are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*
 - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
 - *support for writing research papers*
 - *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time, are determined.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library, is set.*

N/A

Findings

Strengths

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
7.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	
7.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.	
7.3	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.	
7.4	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff enables continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	
7.5	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.	
7.6	Research equipment, laboratories, workshops and existing bibliographic material support the program of study.	
7.7	The quality of the doctoral theses of the program in this field is in line with international standards.	
7.8	Doctoral candidates have publications in scientific journals and/ or participate in international conferences.	
7.9	The institution has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	

7.10	The candidates demonstrate skills in designing and in conducting productive self-directed research.	
7.11	Candidates are aware of the ethical implications of their research and of their responsibilities as scientists.	
7.12	Suitable procedures of monitoring and periodic assessment of students' research progress are set.	
7.13	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.

8. Additional for joint programs (ALL ESG)

Standards

- *The joint program is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint program is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the program.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint program are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
 - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the program*
 - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
 - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
 - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
 - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
 - *Handling of different semester periods, if exists*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the program.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*
-

N/A

Findings

Strengths

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3 or 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
8.1	The joint study program promotes the fulfilment of the mission and achievement of the goals of the partner universities.	
8.2	The joint study program has been developed by all the partner universities, which are also involved in its further development.	

8.3	The partner universities have defined the responsibility of the parties in the common agreement.	
8.4	The joint study program conforms to the requirements and directions of national and international legislation.	
8.5	The joint study program is based on the needs of the target group and the labor market.	
8.6	Students are provided with advisory and support systems concerning learning and teaching at the partner universities.	
8.7	The cooperation contract sets out the procedure for resolving disputes concerning the execution of the joint study program, which ensures the protection of the rights of students and teaching staff.	
8.8	The partner universities have agreed on how to seek feedback from students regarding the organisation and process of their study.	
8.9	The partner universities ensure the economic sustainability of the joint study program.	

Justify the answer you have provided for numerical scores 1 to 4 and 9 or 10, and note any additional comments you may have on each indicator/criterion.



D. Conclusions and final remarks

Findings and strengths:

- A well-structured and organized program adhering to the ECTS standards.
- The program of study is well-designed and delivered in line with its objectives and the College's strategy.
- Management, teaching and administrative staff committed to the delivery of the program.
- A well-resourced program.
- The process of teaching and learning supports student needs and development.

Areas of improvement:

- Research can be intensified.
- Internationalization could be improved (primarily through student exchange).
- Intensify links with the industry

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Pavlos Dimitratos	
Kyriaki Kosmidou	
Sebastian Becker	
Georgios Aristotelous	

Date: 19 March 2019