

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 25/11/2020

- **Higher Education Institution:**
CDA College

- **Town:** Limassol

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

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων
(1.5 ή 2 Έτη/90ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)

In English:

Master in Business Administration
(1.5 or 2 Years/90ECTS, Master)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings

In general, the EEC finds that the Master in Business Administration is a well thought and nicely developed program. The evaluation committee enquired and received information regarding entry criteria, learning outcomes, the student-centred learning approach of CDA, the delivery of course units, assessment procedures, and pass rates. We were also provided information about the employability and career path of graduates.

The EEC noted that the intended learning outcomes and objectives of the program are clearly outlined and well communicated to perspective students. The EEC finds the admission criteria to adequate and in line with those of other similar programs in the Cypriot market. The program consists of twelve (i.e., 10 compulsory and 2 electives) courses and requires a minimum of 90 ECTS

credits to graduate. The expected student workload in ECTS and years of completion (i.e., 1.5 or 2 years) are clearly defined and communicated and the EEC believes that the ECTS workload is along the expected lines.

The EEC identified that there are several internal policies and procedures in place that assure the quality of the of programme under evaluation. Evidence of quality assurance meetings, as part of an ongoing review and development, were provide by the college. Any changes to the program's structure are subject to a formal institutional approval process. Moreover, CDA's policies are clear when it comes to setting the standards across all aspects of the program (e.g., curriculum development, assessment policies, ECTS credits etc).

Finally, the evaluation committee finds that the program of study reflects the purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe.

Strengths

1. It was apparent from the internal report and from the data gathered, that the faculty members teaching on the Master of Business Administration, are highly qualified individuals with years of expertise in their respective fields. The faculty delivers the program with a student-centre learning approach.
2. The faculty uses a diverse set of methods for assessing the twelve modules of the programme which facilitates the development of different soft and hard skills. From the information gathered, it is apparent that the faculty/student ratio favours the customisation of the programme to the needs of students. The number of the students in the class is distributed equally among locals and foreigners which can result to diversity.
3. One of the strengths of the college itself is its internal quality assurance committee. The EEC noted that the college follows extensive policies and procedures to ensure the quality

and smooth delivery of its programmes. Finally, the evaluation committee believes that the CDA is devoted to developing and promoting research activities among its members. The 'Aristotle Research Centre' was developed for these purposes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the program of Master of Business Administration is well designed and structured, the EEC believes that the CDA and teaching team could consider ways with which the program can be improved.

1. Looking at the structure of the program, the evaluation committee is concerned with the potential overlap between 'Financial Management' (i.e., delivered in the second semester) and 'Financial & Managerial Accounting' (i.e., delivered in the first semester). The evaluation committee suggests the CDA and coordinator of MBA to consider moving 'Financial Management', which is a more general course unit, to the first semester and replace 'Financial & Managerial Accounting' with a 'Accounting & Finance'.
2. Also, the committee believes that important aspects of Business Administration, like 'Operations Management', and 'International Business' are not blended in the current curriculum of the Master of Business Administration. The EEC suggests that the college should consider blending 'Operations Management', and 'International Business' in current running course units to minimize drastic restructuring. For instance, the committee believes that 'Operations Management' can be taught alongside 'Total Quality Management' or 'Marketing'.
3. The MBA program is offering a list of seven specialized elective units that the student can choose two from and personalize his/her program of study. However, the EEC would like to point out that the list of elective units lacks electives from the specialization areas of 'Economics', 'Finance', and 'Entrepreneurship'. Electives in such areas of specialization could make the MBA of CDA stand out from competing Colleges and Universities.
4. Finally, the EEC suggests that the 'Final Project' of an MBA should have the format of either a 'consultancy project', or 'feasibility study' or that of a 'New Business Venture'. The final project of an MBA should be as practical as possible in order for students to apply the knowledge gained.

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

According to the EEC's findings above, the program of study has many strengths and some minor weaknesses which have been fully satisfied in the 1st section **Study programme and study programme's design and development.**

1. The Academic Committee with the coordinator of the MBA have incorporated the EEC's suggestion regarding the structure of the program. The following changes have been made:

- MBA 611 Financial & Managerial Accounting is replaced with MBA 611 Accounting and Finance. (Appendix 1)
 - MBA 632 Financial Management is amended avoiding an overlap between the two courses MBA 611 & MBA 632. (Appendix 2)
 - Revised MBA structure. (Appendix 3)
2. Based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC) suggestion, the Operations Management should be merged with Total Quality Management.
- MBA 650 Total Quality Management is revised by incorporating the syllabus of Operations Management. The revised course is: MBA: 650 Operations Management & Total Quality Management. (Appendix 4).
3. Furthermore, as per the EEC's suggestion, the Academic Committee with the coordinator of the MBA have decided on the addition of more specialized elective courses in the field of Economics, Finance and Entrepreneurship as to make the MBA program more competitive.
- New elective course MBA 800 Business Economics (Appendix 5)
 - New elective course MBA 801 International Finance (Appendix 6)
 - New elective course MBA 760 Entrepreneurship (Appendix 7)
4. Finally, as per the EEC's suggestion the 'Final Project' of the MBA program has the format of a 'New Business Venture'. The final project of the program is now more practical in order for students to apply the knowledge gained from all the courses of the program. The MBA students undertake a research and they prepare a business plan of an organization or a new business. During their final project the student will also visit the organization under research and they will have a more practical involvement.
- MBA: 699 Final Project (Appendix 8)

Finally, the comments of the EEC are very positive and the 1st section **Study programme and study programme's design and development** is evaluated as Compliant by the EEC. The subunit 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review, is evaluated as partially compliant, which has been fully satisfied as per the above restructuring. (Appendix 3)

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

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Policy for quality assurance |
| 1.2 | Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review |
| 1.3 | Public information |
| 1.4 | Information management |

Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

- | |
|---------------------|
| Compliant |
| Partially Compliant |
| Compliant |
| Compliant |

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

Findings

Overall, the EEC finds that the process of teaching and learning at CDA to be well-structured and effective. The program coordinator, the faculty team, and the administrative supporting staff are all committed to the effective delivery of the MBA programme.

The educational process at CDA appears to be flexible and seems to support students' individual and social development. There is evidence that module leaders meet regularly (e.g., beginning of each semester) and coordinate their teaching approaches and modes of delivery, and material. This is done systematically to avoid overlaps and repetition among course units. The EEC notes that the assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear and well-communicated. Evidence of structured and well-organized taught material have been provided to the evaluation committee.

Finally, the evaluation committee believes that there is a process in place that monitors the latest field developments and updates the MBA programme when is deemed necessary. Evaluations such 8th as the one performed on the of October are an opportunity for CDA and the programme director to reflect on what is necessary for the program and its further improvement. To this extent the EEC has provided a list of suggestions and recommendations. From the data gathered, the MBA program also benefits from regular module-level amendments and changes. In addition, the EEC believes that the internal quality assurance procedures and guidelines ensure the effective and smooth implementation of the programme.

Strengths

1. Overall, the EEC believes that the MBA program compares favourably with similar programmes in the industry and the Cypriot market.
2. The pedagogical methods, tools and material used in the teaching and learning processes are the expected ones. The evaluation committee notes that overall delivery of the programme meets the expectations set by modern practices.
3. The program is fully managed by the faculty in place which can efficiently cover the current needs of the program. The EEC identifies the willingness of the teaching faculty regarding the implementation of student-centred learning approach.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. The EEC suggests the CDA and the program coordinator to consider appointing academics and practitioners as external advisors. Such appointments could play a pivotal role in disseminating and encouraging good practices. For example, external academic appointments could inform future curriculum reviews and improvements. Whereas external practitioners could provide insights as to the skills needed to possess for a successful future career in higher management positions. The latter is crucial for MBA students especially. The committee also suggests industrial visits to strengthen practical training.

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

According to the EEC's findings above 2nd section **Student-centered learning, teaching, and student assessment**, the program of study has many strengths.

1. As per the EEC's findings, one of the strengths of the College is its internal quality assurance committee. That is why, one of CDA College's policies for quality assurance is to invite other academics and practitioners as external advisors. Moreover, CDA College has established 25 international collaborations agreements with European universities through the ERASMUS + program. CDA College promotes the cooperation with these academic institutions/universities and attracts visiting professors and students through the exchange programs and invites visiting tutors in all the programs of study each semester. Foreign visiting instructors and students visited CDA College: (Appendix 9)
 - a. 120 foreign instructors visited CDA College the last 4 years
 - b. 150 foreign students from 25 EU universities

Additionally, CDA College employs external professors and businessmen (examiners) to conduct lectures, inform and evaluate the development of the program. The students will also get more practical involvement during the preparation of their final project/business plan and their interaction with businessmen. Some of these external professors and entrepreneurs are the following:

- Dr. Anastasios Vasiliades - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development
- Dr. Antreas Stassis (Profesor) - Mechanical Engineering and Operations Management - Technical University of Cyprus
- Mr. Antreas Anastasiades - Cyber Technology & Business Crime
- Dr. Konstantinos Chatzimichael - Economist - TEPAK,
- Mr. Thomas Parissis, Business Development Manager, Project & Innovation Manager, EU funding Expert.
- Kinisis Travel Manager Nicosia and Limassol
- Haviaras & Philippou L.L.C (Law Firm)
- A.C. Techworx Manager (Telephone Communication Co.)
- GCC Computer Co, director

2. Finally, the comments of the EEC are very positive and the 2nd section **Student-centred learning, teaching and student assessment** is evaluated as Compliant by the EEC.

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

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

**Non-compliant/
Partially Compliant/Compliant**

Compliant

Partially Compliant

Compliant

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings

The evaluation committee noted that the program is supported by a well-qualified faculty (i.e., all members of the teaching staff have PhDs). It is evident that there is good fit between the teaching team's qualifications and expertise with the course units they deliver. A discussion with the faculty showed that there is a clear workload policy when it comes to teaching allocation. The committee believes that this fair and consistently applied

From the evidence gathered, it is apparent that the teaching staff is also involved with research activities (e.g., research publications and conference presentations). The EEC identified that there is a synergy between teaching and research. Such teaching and research spill-overs can enhance the students' learning experience.

The EEC also observed that members of staff have been employed for several years. This makes it possible to efficiently and effectively operationalise the program's curriculum.

Strengths

- 1. From the information gathered, the EEC identified that the college has a budget (i.e., 100,000€) available to support staffs' research, training, and professional development. The EEC also considers the work of the Aristotelis' and the concept of a center like this is to be a strength for CDA College.*
- 2. The evaluation committee had a long, open, and honest discussion about the working conditions and how the faculty really feels about their working environment and employer. The general sentiment among the members of the committee is that there is a positive and collegial environment at CDA. The college offers favourable working conditions for its members and supports staff for professional and personal development. The faculty met, expressed their overall satisfaction with the resources and time available to meet their personal goals and objectives.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- 1. Overall, the EEC is satisfied with the human resources supporting the program. One suggestion that the EEC would like to make for further improvement, is that the college needs to set clear rules on career progression and promotion and disseminate these the faculty.*

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

- As per the EEC's findings the teaching staff of the program is highly qualified PhD faculty members. CDA College recognizes that faculty development is to its advantage, as well as to the advantage of its faculty. Therefore, the College management has already developed various incentive mechanisms for teaching staff to ameliorate its teaching capabilities,

performance, career promotion and progression. CDA College has set clear rules on career progression and promotion through the faculty rank and research output table. (Appendix 10)

- a) Provide the faculty with the opportunity to continue to stay along with the developments in their area of expertise
- b) Attendance at local relevant conferences, seminars, lectures, symposia are encouraged and strongly recommended.
- c) Reasonable time off will be provided.
- d) The College will subsidize all participation fees for any of the above including any travel, board and lodging expenses.
- e) The College encourages and supports its faculty members to gain national and international recognition for excellence in their areas of expertise.
- f) Faculty members engaged in research supported by a research grant will call for fewer teaching hours than their colleagues so that they can devote time to research.
- g) The College will support faculty members who become active members of professional organizations and who present lectures of the latest developments in their field of study.
- h) The College will continue to establish links with the business community and international educational institutions.
- i) The College will encourage faculty members' exchanges with other local or international educational institutions.

2. Lastly, the comments of the EEC are very positive and the 3rd section **Teaching Staff** is evaluated as Compliant with well-qualified PhD faculty members.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas: Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Findings

The student admission requirements have been found to be clear and in line with the criteria set by the national HE framework. These are clearly communicated by the college to prospective students.

The EEC observed that the CDA and the MBA program have policies and mechanisms in place to ensure development of students. Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are also in place.

Strengths

1. The EEC identified that the college and the program are student oriented. From our discussions with two currently enrolled students on the program and one that has recently graduated the program, the committee observed that the students are overall satisfied with CDA and the program itself. The students promoted the academic environment of the college and spoke positively about the teaching abilities of the academic staff.
2. In addition, the evaluation committee noted that CDA college offers scholarships (i.e., bursaries) on a competitive basis and that the college welcomes students with special needs/abilities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. Overall, the evaluation committee is satisfied regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification. No further suggestions.

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

1. There are no weaknesses on the 4th section. According to the EEC's findings above, the program of study has many strengths in the 4th section **Students admission, progression, recognition and certification**. The comments of the EEC are very positive with no further suggestions and it is evaluated as Compliant by the EEC.

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

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 4 | Student admission, processes and criteria |
| 4.2 | Student progression |
| 4.3 | Student recognition |
| 4.4 | Student certification |

Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

- | |
|-----------|
| Compliant |
| Compliant |
| Compliant |
| Compliant |

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Findings

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

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the EEC did not have the opportunity to visit the premises of CDA college in Limassol. The view of the EEC related to facilities, teaching, physical and human support resources is primarily based on the internal report, the videos links provided, and the discussions with CDA's stakeholders. Overall, the EEC believes that CDA offers adequate resources and a wide range of services to both students and teaching staff (e.g., access to library material, IT infrastructure and administrative support). This especially applies to the library facilities that feature a wide range of sources (e.g., books, e-books, journal databases, etc) from reputable publishers. In terms of human capital support, the college is performing well on that front as well; there is an adequate number of experienced and well-educated staff that supports the smooth operations of the college and the program.

Strengths

1. The EEC from the data gathered believed that the leadership team of college is committed in providing quality programs and supporting staff with the necessary resources needed to perform their duties.
2. In terms of personnel and staffing, the EEC also notes the ethos and zealous of the supporting staff to help students of any ethnic background and ability/disability.
3. From the discussion with the faculty and supporting staff, the committee noted that the college was able to migrate teaching activities online when circumstances related to the pandemic dictated so. This is a testimony to the resilience of the Institution and its people.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

There are no weaknesses on the 5th section. The comments of the EEC are very positive and the 5th section **Learning resources and student support** is evaluated as Compliant by the EEC.

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

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



Additional for distance learning programmes

(ALL ESG)

N/A



6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

N/A



7. Additional for joint programmes
(ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The EEC found the college and the MBA program to be along the expected national and international practices. The program of MBA has been running successfully for a number of years now and it meets the learning objectives set and students expectations. Despite the good design of the program, the EEC believes that there are further improvements, pertaining to the curriculum and its structure, that can be made. We advise the faculty to take into consideration the feedback provided above and adopt necessary changes. The EEC believes that these changes could further strengthen and improve the program and make it more competitive in an already saturated small market like Cyprus.

The committee would like to express its gratitude to the staff and leadership of CDA college for their support and their professionalism during the online evaluation.

We remain at the disposal of CYQAA for any clarification, if necessary.

Response of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) rated all modules of the program very positively and the College has already taken the appropriate measures by immediately implementing all the minor weaknesses.

There is full compliance to all the weaknesses raised by the EEC. In the above program the College applies high quality criteria and it is constantly upgraded in accordance with the regulations of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Certification of Higher Education (CY.Q.A.A). As can be seen from our response, we have already taken immediate action and adopt the EEC's suggestions and recommendations for further improvement and competitiveness of our MBA program.

CDA College will strengthen its position and be more competitive in the education market by further highlighting the strengths of the College and the curriculum. The College firmly believes that the program "MBA Business Administration, 1.5 or 2 Years, Master/90 ECTS" has a lot to offer to the Higher Education and to the vital business sector. The EEC found out that the Master in Business Administration is a well thought and nicely developed program with highly qualified PhD faculty members. The program is also as per the expected national and international practices.

Finally, we once again point out the very positive evaluation of the program by the EEC which was largely evaluated compatible / compliant in all modules with the required standards and the full compliance and implementation of all the minor weaknesses raised by the EEC and we look forward in your positive response.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr. Pantelis Ioannou	General Director	
Dr. Nikos Rodosthenous	Director of Research Centre «Aristotelis»	
Dr. Pavlos Panayi	Head of ICT Department	
Mr. Efstathios Michael	Director of C.D.A. College Pafos	
Mrs. Athina Kolinatri	Director of International Affairs	
Mrs. Katerina Kyriakidou	Director of C.D.A. College Nicosia	

Date: 25/11/2020



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