

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: *Date.*

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus College

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων, 2έτη Δίπλωμα, 120 ECTS

In English:

Business Administration

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) 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 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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *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)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- As noted above, the committee strongly suggests updates in the program structure including:
 - bundling the two English courses together.
 - repackaging the sociology and psychology courses into a behavioral economics offering.
 - move introduction to statistics in semester 1.
 - making the introductory course on IT proficiencies more advanced.
 - introduce more contemporary topics into the curriculum such as corporate social responsibility.
 - overall ensure that the knowledge provided in the previous semester serves as a foundation for knowledge required for following semesters.
 - offer electives.

Following mostly British tradition, the program could benefit from employing external experts (called external examiners in the UK) to validate its offerings, provide feedback to course and program material and overall push for improvements and refinements when not picked up by internal faculty. Indeed, competing Colleges in Cyprus have started to employ such strategies.

While the committee views the flexibility of the program to allow its graduates to transition into the Bachelor's program as a strong component, it also notes that there might be space for strategic manoeuvring from the students' side. Students may be entering the Diploma even if they do plan to study for the Bachelor's as a means of a) easier admission and b) perhaps somewhat better chances to succeed in the courses they enrol into the first 4 semesters as the equivalent courses in the Bachelor's program may be more demanding.

Enforce a maximum number of courses in the program per faculty member. We suggest 3 courses.

Strengthen the admission criteria.

Following international standards, the committee also urges the college to consider offering more elective courses.

In addition, it would be beneficial if more processes were in place for instructors to communication across courses to prevent over-laps and improve integration.

Institution's answer

We would like to thank the committee for its constructive suggestions in the context of the re-accreditation of the Diploma in Business Administration of Cyprus College Nicosia.

Based on its suggestions the program is significantly restructured.

Point 1

Based on the suggestions by the EEC, an external expert panel consisting of experts in the field of Business, English and Social Sciences is formed. Experts in the field English advised us (see attached EMAIL) that instead of bundling the two **English** courses together (ENH101=Intermediate English & ENH102=Advanced English), it would be more scientifically feasible to exclude Advanced English and remain only with Intermediate English. As they advised, there is no room for the two course to be taught together, at the same time the ENH101 is more appropriate for new

students. Therefore, the new program structure has only one English course as suggested by the EEC, ENH101 (see ANNEX 2 for the new Program Structure both in Greek & English).

Sociology and Psychology were repackaged into a behavioral economics offering with code PSS100 (see ANNEX 1 for new syllabus both in Greek & English).

Statistics is moved to semester 1 (see ANNEX 2 for the new program structure).

CSC 190 (IT proficiencies) is updated into a more advanced course with code CPS100. Specifically, we have limited the topics on Microsoft word and we have upgraded topics on more advanced excel as well as added topics on information systems (see ANNEX 1 for updated syllabus).

A new course on **corporate social responsibility** with code PSS200 and another one on **leadership** with code LED200 is added (see ANNEXES 1 and 2 for new program structure and new syllabi).

A member of the expert panel has reviewed the program and provided suggestions for improvements. The program now ensures that knowledge provided in previous semesters serves as foundation for knowledge required for following semesters. As a general rule, the introductory courses (100 level courses), such as Computer Fundamentals & Information Systems, Introduction to Business, Introduction to Marketing, Introduction to Financial Accounting, Fundamentals of Speech, Principles of Management, are offered in the 1st year whereas more advanced courses (200 level courses), such as Human Resource Management, Leadership, Small Business Management, Marketing of Services, Consumer Behavior, Marketing Research are offered during the 2nd year. Statistics, which is a foundational course, is now offered in semester 1 as suggested by the EEC.

At the same time, we need to note that 2nd year courses have prerequisites in the 1st year that are supposed to precede the more advanced course. Specifically.....

Introduction to Financial Accounting is a prerequisite for Introduction to Managerial Accounting

Introduction to Business is a prerequisite for Small Business Management

Introduction to Marketing is a prerequisite for Small Business Management

Introduction to Marketing is a prerequisite for Marketing of Services

Principles of Marketing is a prerequisite for Consumer Behavior

Principles of Marketing is a prerequisite for Marketing Research

Introduction to Business is a prerequisite for Human Resource Management

Principles of Management is a prerequisite for Human Resource Management

Communication class, besides being an introductory class, is offered during the 1st year so that students become more comfortable with presenting in front of an audience and become more competent during their second year courses.

Based on the suggestions of the expert panel we have also added electives to the program. During the 3rd and 4th semesters students can choose between 6 electives: Internship, Project, Social Network Management, Marketing Research, Consumer Behaviour, and Advertising & Sales Promotion (see ANNEX 2 for the new Program Structure).

An external expert panel consisting of experts in the field of Business, English and Social Sciences is formed. The panel's opinion will be crucial in providing helpful feedback and push for improvements. It will have a supervisory role and act as a third eye. Every June, at the end of each academic year the panel will be randomly presented with a number of assignments and final exams which will review and make recommendations for improvements. Recommendations will be approved by the internal quality committee. We have to note that the panel already provided feedback as to the bundling of the two English courses, on the electives provided, as well as to the repackaging of sociology and psychology which were all suggested by the EEC.

Point 3

A maximum number of 3 courses in the program per part time faculty and 6 courses for full time faculty is enforced. We would like to note that a full time instructor is assigned by contract a 15 hour workload per week. However, these 6 courses will be spread out in two years. Specifically, a full time instructor will teach on the Business program 3 courses in the Fall and 3 in the spring, whereas will teach the rest of the 2 classes per semester in other programs. Out of the 6 classes, 2 classes will be taught to new students who are enrolled in their 1st semester and 1 class to those who are enrolled in their 3rd semester. The same goes for those in the 2nd and 4th semester. This will allow students to have exposure to other expertise as well and in general will allow students to be exposed to a larger number of faculty members.

Point 4

The criteria for admission to Cyprus College have been prepared to enable the Office of Admissions to select students who have potential to do college-level work and to place students in courses and programs appropriate to the student's preparation, in an effort to help them successfully realize their academic potential.

The admission criteria for the Diploma in Business students follow the general college admission criteria, as these are foreseen in the College's Internal Regulations. All applicants must have completed a secondary (high) school education or twelve years of schooling to be considered for admission. Cyprus College recognizes a strong academic performance at high school level as the primary determinant for college level success. When making an admissions decision, the college is interested in applicants with a solid high school record, evidence of extra-curricular involvement, a high level of commitment, and potential for personal growth. Applications for admission to Cyprus College, together with the applicant's credentials, are examined and evaluated by the Office of Admissions, which makes the final decision for the application. The office of Admissions checks that students have the appropriate academic background, so as to reduce possible dropout cases.

Point 5

Satisfied in Point 1 above.

Point 6

Regarding communication across courses, the quality assurance policy (attached) and in particular procedure 1-g.1 has been adapted in accordance with the recommendations of the committee so that there is a process in place for instructors to communicate across courses to prevent overlaps and improve integration. Based on the quality assurance policy, at the end of each academic year the coordinator will have a special meeting with all teaching staff of the Business program and will complete a short report on actions that have taken place during the year, gaps



observed and ways to improve the Business program. Instructors will communicate with each other and possible gaps will be eliminated. The form of the report to be used for the evaluation of the program (ANNEX 3) is attached. Please note that the coordinator's meetings are not limited to one, since under procedure 1-g.10 of the quality assurance policy, the coordinator has regular meetings with his staff.

Besides the above, in an effort to improve quality and communication across courses we have placed in effect the "peer observation" scheme. It has been decided that the program coordinator will randomly visit classes every semester in order to monitor lectures and teaching methods, to identify any possible overlaps and make suggestions for improvement. Coordinator will be evaluated by the College Director or another coordinator. The decision has also been approved by the internal quality committee of the College. The minutes of the decision are attached (ANNEX_ 4B).

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- While the option to transition Diploma graduates in the 3rd year of the Bachelor’s program is a strong plus, it is not entirely clear how the transition may differ for students of different backgrounds. The committee suggest for clear guidelines to be published.
- The College should improve its support regarding the professional development of faculty in relation to staying up to date with teaching methods and research that can later be incorporated into the teaching provision.
- The College should give more consideration to the teaching and learning design. Required readings should be flagged as such clearly, students should be clearer on how pedagogical methods relate to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the like.
- Overall, the program could be improved considerably. The intended learning objectives of the program should conform linearly to the aims and objectives of the program and they should be effectively communicated to the students. Also, the structure of the program as well as the learning mechanisms should be appropriate for the effective delivery of the learning objectives.

Institution’s answer

Point 1

A detailed Transfer Credit Evaluation Report procedure is attached, both in Greek and English (ANNEX 5).

Point 2

Satisfied in Section 3 – “Teaching Staff” (please refer to section 3 below, next page).

Point 3

As suggested by the EEC we will give more emphasis on the teaching and learning design. Required readings as well as intended learning outcomes are announced and flagged in every course outline very clearly. These are discussed by faculty at the beginning of each semester, specifically at the 1st class of the semester, as to how they are achieved through the pedagogical methods, so students are well informed. An example of a course outline is attached where you can see with yellow the required readings and learning outcomes.

Point 4

The learning objectives of the program have been completely revised so that they conform linearly with the aims of the program (see ANNEX 6 both in English and Greek). The new program structure is now better suited for the effective delivery of the learning objectives. Learning objectives as well as the aims of the program will be communicated to all faculty members so that they ensure that their delivery methods and mechanisms are such that satisfy the effective delivery of these learning objectives. Program objectives will also be included from now on, on every course outline so that they are well communicated to students.

Furthermore, based on the recommendation of the EEC, it is recommended to all faculty members to have a guest speaker from the industry in their classes at least once every academic year. The decision has been approved by the internal quality committee of the College. The minutes of the decision are attached (ANNEX 4) as well as a special form which will be completed and archived for this purpose (ANNEX 7).

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The College should engage with research more strongly as a means to deepen the expertise of each faculty within their domains and therefore allow them to feed that expertise into their teaching. Engagement with research could manifest in different ways:

- ☒ One, hiring decisions should place more weight in having a PhD.
- ☒ Two, promote existing faculty to engage more heavily with research. This could for instance be via sabbaticals, reductions in teaching loads when conducting research and via incorporation of research activities in the criteria for promotion within the college.
- ☒ Three, infuse the college with a mentality that favors research. For example, you could develop a seminar series with external research active faculty from other colleges and universities in Cyprus and elsewhere. Similarly, you could launch internal research awaydays in hopes of developing research collaborations between existing faculty.

The committee also noted the relatively small number of faculty who teach in the program. This is a point of concern. You should ensure that students are exposed to a larger number of faculty members.

Institution's answer

The college's Quality Assurance Policy (attached) outlines specifically in Procedure 2, page 4, that the College has made improvements on research and has specific procedures to encourage and promote research and to create and maintain a research culture and direction within the College.

Even though research is not mandatory for two year diplomas, there is a number of faculty members who are engaged in research. Please refer to ANNEX 8 that outlines the research activity of the members of the teaching personnel involved in the program as this was submitted to the EEC. At this point we wish to highlight that the College research committee has regular internal research briefings in which the faculty members are trained on research and in general are infused with the research mentality but also exchange ideas as to new teaching methods.

Furthermore, a new promotion structure with academic ranks is now in place based on which faculty can be promoted within the college through PhDs and research activities (see ANNEX_4A for minutes). From now on faculty will be promoted based on research. At the same time our Research Policy, (attached) outlines ways through which we promote existing faculty to engage in research. For example, section 7, page 20 of the Policy specifies how a faculty member can take a reduction in teaching hours for doing research. We would like to note furthermore that we have members of the teaching personnel, like Mr. Athanasios Maimaris, who has been taking advantage of this option. Specifically Mr. Maimaris had a reduction of teaching hours for his project *SmartPedestrianNet*: Co-funded by the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation and JPI Urban Europe's fourth call, ERA-NET Cofund Smart Urban Futures (ENSUF) — supported by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 program. Teaching personnel has the opportunity and is encouraged to take advantage of this provision in order to have a reduced workload. This will allow them to engage more extensively in research and / or submit research proposals. As a result, this will further strengthen research and enhance research and teaching synergy.

Finally, as explained in Section 1-Point 3, we will ensure that students will be exposed to a larger number of faculty members. More classes will be given to new faculty from now on.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The level of admission criteria should be raised.
- The College should ensure the safe transfer from Diploma to other programmes without overlapping courses, material, etc.

Institution's answer

Point 1

The criteria for admission to Cyprus College have been prepared to enable the Office of Admissions to select students who have potential to do college-level work and to place students in courses and programs appropriate to the student's preparation, in an effort to help them successfully realize their academic potential.

The admission criteria for the Diploma in Business students follow the general college admission criteria, as these are foreseen in the College's Internal Regulations. All applicants must have completed a secondary (high) school education or twelve years of schooling to be considered for admission. Cyprus College recognizes a strong academic performance at high school level as the primary determinant for college level success. When making an admissions decision, the college is interested in applicants with a solid high school record, evidence of extra-curricular involvement, a high level of commitment, and potential for personal growth. Applications for admission to Cyprus College, together with the applicant's credentials, are examined and evaluated by the Office of Admissions, which makes the final decision for the application. The office of Admissions checks that students have the appropriate academic background, so as to reduce possible dropout cases.

Point 2

Regarding transfer to other programmes, based on the Transfer Credit Evaluation Report procedure as this is explained in (ANNEX 5), transfer from Diploma to other programmes is safeguarded.

5. Learning resources and student support

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The uncertainty about 'face to face' teaching post-Covid19 faced by all education institutions means that the College will need to ensure that it has 'fail safe' contingencies in place to ensure that students can access materials and learning remotely at any times when this is necessary.

Institution's answer

In the college there is a "fail safe" contingency in place that ensures that all students can access their material as well as their online sessions remotely at any time. All instructors use the Moodle platform for uploading their material and the Blackboard Collaborate for online sessions. Every student has a unique username and password with which can access his/her class material (notes etc) on Moodle at any time as well as get into his/her online class on Blackboard at the appropriate time. We should highlight that on-line session recordings are uploaded on the Moodle platform so that students have access to watch their session at any time (see attached screen shot 1 for Moodle & 2 for recordings).



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

The committee thanks Cyprus College for a thorough submission. Faculty and staff made themselves available to the committee and engaged flexibly during the remote visit. We also appreciate the fact that the College followed up with suggestions for additional material after the online visit. Overall, the committee was provided with all necessary material and found the interactions with the College representatives constructive.

As noted above, while it is clear that education is student centered, the program should be restructured in a number of ways. The committee has offered concrete suggestions on how to improve the program including the sequencing of modules in a more linear way, and the offering of modules of more contemporary nature. The committee also offered suggestions on the role of each faculty member in the program so that students have the opportunity to interact with and learn from faculty of different expertise. Along the same lines, the college is strongly encouraged to engage more strongly with research as a means to generate synergies between research and teaching.

Students appear to be happy with the College and this is noted by the committee. However, as alluded above, there is space for improvement on the student experience front as well.

In the committee's assessment, the program needs generous restructuring before accreditation.

Institution's answer

We would like to thank again the committee for its constructive suggestions in the context of the re-accreditation of the Diploma in Business Administration of Cyprus College Nicosia. The committee's suggestions were implemented and the program is significantly restructured.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr. Nasios Orinos	Director-Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 21/4/2021

