ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM)

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

In Greek:
Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διαχείριση δημόσιου τομέα (14 μήνες/ 90 πιστωτικές μονάδες)

Programme Name

In English: Master in Public Sector Management (14 months / 90 ECTS)

Programme Name

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *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)

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

The meetings gave the Committee a solid understanding of the proposed programme, its rationale and the underpinning processes of quality assurance. The policies for quality assurance of the programme of study have formal status and are supported by appropriate structures and processes. The policies enshrine the importance of quality assurance and the processes are mapped clearly and understood by faculty members. Anti-plagiarism measures are in place to maintain academic integrity. There are end of programme evaluations by students as well as 'exit interviews'. External public sector stakeholders have been involved in discussions about the reconfiguration and relaunch of the programme. The programme seems to be reasonably consistent with trends and developments in the public sector and is in line with the EQF. There is an emphasis on producing managers and leaders who can make beneficial changes in public sector settings, and there is good attention to the professional development goals of students. The blend of faculty (core and visiting) gives the CIIM a strong profile of staff who are involved in the design and delivery of the programme.

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

Good dialogue with public sector stakeholders in the design of the programme
Involvement of faculty with good research and publication profiles
Designed around a strong contemporary knowledge of practical and strategic issues facing the public sector in Cyprus (e.g. digital transformation
Swift pivoting to online provision during the pandemic and a very good learning orientation among faculty members who have been reflecting on their experience and how it will inform future pedagogy
A supportive culture among faculty members, particularly in relation to helping each other teach during the pandemic
The program is primed to attract well motivated career minded students who bring rich professional experience to the programme
Detailed orientation is provided to new students, using a range of methods and follow ups

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

There is scope for the greater integration of public management theories and concepts to complement the programme's emphasis on practice
Historically it has been difficult to attract international students. Doing so would enrich student cohorts and the potential for cross-national learning
Student feedback could be solicited at more regular intervals to supplement the 'end of year' evaluations
Some courses could be improved if the used literature would be renewed more regular.

CIIM Response:

Integrating theory and practice is a central tenet of CIIM's educational philosophy since its establishment in 1990 with the MPSM being one of its two founding programmes; the other was its sister programme, the MBA, with which still shares several of the management theory courses which are then apply to the public sector management practice. Therefore, we agree with the EEC that there is always more scope for integration of theory and practice, which we will actively pursue.

We agree that attracting international students would enrich student cohorts and the potential for cross-national learning, as our earlier experience with public sector students from China and India demonstrate.   With the Covid pandemic behind us we will promote our new MPSM beyond Cyprus to attract public students from abroad, especially the Middle East and North African region.

As a matter of CIIM policy and 30-years practice, student feedback is solicited after every single course, which is at least every month, and it is tabulated, analyzed and used in continuous improvement efforts. Student feedback is also solicited through surveys, focus groups and exit, end of the programme interviews.

In response to the EEC recommendation we developed a plan for renewing the literature used in the programme more regularly.

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

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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.

CIIM faculty have given good consideration to the learning and teaching design for the Masters programme. Staff were insightful and reflective about their teaching practices and the challenges (and opportunities) when working with post-practice students. There was a welcome emphasis on dialogue and discussion in the classroom, as well as evidence of using technology (e.g. Mentimeter, MS forms, and Moodle) in interesting ways. Teaching methodologies and mechanisms appear to be well chosen. During the meetings with teaching staff and students we heard evidence of pedagogical methods appropriate to the successful achievement of the programme's intended learning outcomes.
There was a good understanding of the distinctive aims of this Masters programme, and how it can develop the students professionally and in relation to their careers. The track record of alumni going on to very senior jobs in ministries and agencies is impressive.
Assessments processes are appropriate and overseen by the College's wider procedures and faculty have discretion about assessment choice within expected norms.
There are established processes in place to ensure feedback is given to students on their work. There is close management oversight of programmes, and we have the impression that there is a nicely integrated team of faculty and staff.

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

Historically the CIIM had a relatively small number of teaching-focused faculty, but has more recently expanded the numbers of faculty and has a strategy of employing research active academics
Close and active relationships with public organisations and ministries, and the involvement of such stakeholders in the programme design and scoping stages. Such linkages are also a significant aid to marketing and recruitment.

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

Many faculty have excellent links with alumni but there may be scope to consolidate and systematise the way in which the CIIM works with, and for, alumni.

Some alumni suggested they would welcome a greater number of guest expert speakers from public sector organisations in Cyprus

Some of the reading lists could be refreshed to reflect disciplinary knowledge relevant to the specific specialism of the programme. Doing so also needs to be supported by the library strategy, including targeting access to some key texts and journals.

CIIM Response:
As the EEC recognizes the faculty and staff have excellent links with alumni but it is also right to identify more scope to consolidate and systematise the CIIM alumni relations. Indeed, our alumni would welcome a more opportunities to serve as guest speakers and practitioners in CIIM courses and we are committing ourselves to create more such opportunities. At the same time, we took action to activate the Alumni Association and create an alumni club for the MPSM   programme to assist us with student recruitments from across the public sector.

The CIIM library strategy, has already targeted access to key public sector texts and journals for both teaching and research purposes of the new MPSM, through both own acquisition and through our formal sharing arrangements with other schools and universities in Cyprus.

3. **Teaching staff**
    (ESG 1.5)

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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.

Teaching staff have successfully managed to transfer to a blended learning approach following COVID-19 restrictions.
The Programme Director discusses teaching evaluations with teaching staff. The program management can also directly observe classes by sitting in classes or reviewing teaching materials.
Time allocated for teaching is sufficient, and there is a formal mechanism to determine time allocation between research and teaching.
Junior staff is assisted by senior staff when starting to teach.
Visiting lecturers have strong academic profiles.

There appears to be a sufficient number of teaching staff. The Institute has concrete plans for the recruitment of additional staff.

Most core teaching staff have a full-time appointment.

There is extensive involvement of visiting staff, in particular for elective courses. 17

There is a strong connection between the academic profile of the teaching staff and the courses they are allocated to.

Teaching staff have a relevant academic background and have a PhD in a relevant discipline.

Some teaching staff is research active. There is an incentive scheme to stimulate research.

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

Teaching staff have good knowledge of public management practice through regular and consulting work for the public sector.

Teaching staff have a strong connection with the public sector in Cyprus, allowing them to relate theoretical content to local cases.

Most if not all faculty have foreign academic experience.

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

Research and teaching collaboration between visiting teaching staff and permanent staff could be improved.

In order to strengthen the 'public' dimension of its public management training, the Institute should strive for a stronger connection of the MPSM teaching staff with the scholarly discipline of Public Administration, through, amongst others, exposure to the relevant academic literature, publishing in the discipline´s journals, and attending its conferences.

CIIM Response:
The number of staff with a prior degree in public management or administration is limited.
Much of the research is of an applied nature, and the research profile of the teaching staff has increased recently with the new hires, a process that continues.

I response to the EEC recommendations we strengthened the incentives, already in place, encouraging research and teaching collaboration between visiting teaching staff and permanent staff, including research support and monetary awards for publications and twining in teaching.

The current Research Policy, provides that 30% of the faculty workload is allocated to research and specifying the strategic support for research and research-based target indicators and communicated to the faculty members as integral part of their contracts and in the Faculty.

The research and publication requirements for the resident faculty are stated in their contracts in terms of points (30 out of 100). These points are accumulated from any combination of the following:

- Internationally published Academic Research: Publication of a paper in an A-tier journal (30 points); publication of a paper in a B-tier journal (15 points); publication in C-tier refereed journal (10 points) publication of a textbook or an academic-calibre book (20 points).

- Internationally published Applied Research: International publication of a monograph based on applied research of global interest, OR a major book chapter in an international business book (10 points); OR an internationally published case study or international conference proceedings (10 points);

- Published Instructional Research related to pedagogy or teaching and learning (10 points)

- Locally or regionally published applied business research on themes that have a significant impact locally or regionally (5 points)

- Doctoral Thesis supervision (when it becomes available) for up to three doctoral candidates (5 points per doctoral thesis supervised and completed).

CIIM's Research Office assist faculty in preparing research proposals for national, EU and international projects and grants. The Director of CIIM's Research Center directs the Research activities of CIIM, of its faculty and of its collaborations; monitors research call announcements, identifies research calls from EU, Research & Innovation Foundation and others relevant to CIIM and related to CIIM faculty's initiate and engage CIIM's resident & visiting faculty in the preparation and submission of research proposals.

In response to the EEC recommendation to strive for a stronger connection of the MPSM teaching staff with the scholarly discipline of Public Administration, we are taking special steps to ensure that our public sector faculty keep up with the relevant academic literature, publish in public administration journals, and attend related academic conferences through research and conference allowances and targeted access to key public sector texts and journals.

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

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

The Student admission, progression, recognition and certification in general were found to be well organized. The admission process is well developed and contains several instruments of general and specific nature to select the fitting students for this program.
Much attention is put on cognitive, as well as soft skills of the students. Relatively objective assessments as GPA and language scores, are combined with check on former education and interviews which each student to determine possible gaps and offer if deemed useful pre master development. The committee noted that the heterogeneity of the background of students can be large, however, the program puts specific attention to this before and in the beginning of the courses to get the students to a comparable beginning level.
The progression is followed in a clear way, including support for personal development and if personal problems occur. With the relative small groups the committee can also imagine a very personal and social cohesive situation. In the discussion with alumni this was also brought forward by them.
Recognition of student efforts are well organized in line with the process as described before.
Certification is done in line with the explicit policies.

Strengths

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

The committee was impressed by the personal depth of the selection process and still being transparent.
Student progression is followed precisely and good procedures for following up when problems may arise are in place.

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

CIIM Response:

In some courses the amount of group assessment in comparison to individual assessment may obscure the performance of individual students in positive as well as negative sense. The committee proposes to check all courses assessment procedures and decide on a minimum individual assessment percentage (for example 60%).

The current minimum individual assessment percentage is 50% i.e. fifty percent of the final grade must come from individual work. This has been the case with all our courses for the past 30 years. This policy has been repeatedly reviewed by the Academic Committee and met the test of scrutiny and time. It should be mentioned that in many of our courses the individual assessment percentage is higher than 50% and in many courses 80-100%.

5. **Learning resources and student support**
   (ESG 1.6)

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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.

Adequate resources are provided, including access to online databases, a learning platform, and dedicated resource persons.
Physical facilities are modern and state-of the art.
A student handbook specifies students´ rights and responsibilities.
Appropriate measures are taken for students having practical needs, e.g. a visual impairment.
Courses and assignments are planned and scheduled in a way that allows the students, who are generally in employment, to easily combine work and education.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc
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The institution already used Moodle, and was already largely on-line, allowing for a swift transition during COVID-19
All students are assigned a faculty member who acts as academic advisor/tutor upon registration

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

The relatively small library does not contain many of the classic works in public management/public administration. It is recommended to develop a purchasing strategy to develop a core collection in public management.

CIIM Response:

Our Librarian has been working on two-pronged strategy to: a) develop a core collection of a few classic works in public management/ public administration and a couple of key journals; and b) secure student and faculty access to a wider collection of texts and journals by joining the Cyprus Libraries consortium, and requesting that further academic journals and databases be subscribed to. We also have an arrangement with the University of Cyprus that allows our students to utilize their library for study and research purposes. We have also incorporated in our library acquisition plans subscriptions to public-sector-related e-books and e-journals.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

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D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The committee is in general satisfied with the teaching quality performed in this program, which is in accordance with the EQF standard for a master in public management (level 7). The positions of the alumni and the progress in those positions support this.

Also the organization of the program and the courses could find ample support by the committee. However, some aspects need attention such as the constant renewal of the courses to stay up to date with the scientific literature. The resources for the students are fitting to the need. For the library a purchasing strategy could be developed in relation to (classics) of public management/public administration.

The policies for staff workload and development are in place, however, especially in relation to the research base underneath this program, the committee sees opportunities to develop that further into a more coherent and focused program. The committee appreciates the efforts of the institute to develop this. The committee observed the availability of strong senior researchers in the core faculty and also in the visiting faculty. What we missed is the joined work of senior-medior-junior researchers especially regarding the visiting with the resident faculty. We would recommend to improve collaboration between the researchers on public management in the institute. Also it may be fruitful to focus the research on an element of interest, for example digitalisation of public management. Third, the connection to "conversations" in the literature could be strengthened. The placement of public management as outside public administration can be a choice, however, such positioning calls for a very strong positioning in the (public) management field, or into more thematic interdisciplinary discussions such as on large societal challenges of which sustainability, ethical development of economy, digitalisation could be mentioned as close to at least subsets of academic staff of CIIM.

The committee was satisfied on how CIIM handled the covid issues, acknowledges the learning orientation.

CIIM Response:

We covered in section 5 above, the library purchasing strategy, already developed and currently in the process of being upgraded in relation to (classics) of public management/public administration.

The recommendation of the EEC to improve the teaching and research collaboration between junior and senior, resident and visiting faculty on public management, finds us in full agreement and we took immediate steps to both incentivise and support it as we described in detail in section 3 above.

We appreciate the EEC recommendation to more strongly position the programme in the (public) management field and engage faculty and students in thematic interdisciplinary discussions on large societal challenges, such as:

- Sustainability
- ethical development of economy
- digitalisation of public sector management

These are indeed important challenges both locally and globally, and we do have in-house expertise to engage not only the CIIM community but the society as a whole as well, especially by drawing on our alumni who are in key leadership positions throughout the public and the private sector. In terms of the programme itself we can draw on our other MSc Programmes relating to sustainability and digital transformation. As to sustainability ethical development, ethics, sustainability and social responsibility have been a core course of all CIIM programmes, including the MPSM, for at least two decades.

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B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Theodore Panayotou	Director and Dean	
Paris Cleanthous	Programme Director	
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: 7 June 2021