

Doc. 300.1.2

# Higher Education Institution's Response

**Date:** July 2, 2021

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
American College

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

**In Greek:**

Δίπλωμα στις Μαγειρικές Τέχνες (2 έτη, 120 ECTS)

**In English:**

Diploma in Culinary Arts (2 years, 120 ECTS)

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

We have studied the report of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisted of Prof. Maria Papageorgiou, Prof. Antonia Matalas, Assoc. Prof. Adamantini Paraskevopoulou and Ms Katerina Nikolaou regarding the educational evaluation-accreditation of the Diploma in Culinary Arts carefully and thoroughly. We find that their report is objective and very positive. Below we provide our response to all the recommendations for revisions/improvements noted in the EEC report. In addition, we refer to issues we felt they needed us to provide clarifications or further information. The revisions/improvements we made, have already been implemented and they are fully documented below and in the annexes provided.

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

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

### **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

The Program's objectives particularly points 3 and 6, specifically mention competences and skills at an "entry-level of food preparation" in contrast to the standards of level 5B above. Thus, the ECC strongly recommends that the program's objectives (listed below) are revisited to comply with the national standards.

1. To provide a solid academic, technical and intellectual background that will enable students to pursue higher studies in catering management or other related field.
2. To develop their critical judgment on the food industry.
3. To help students to gain a unique product of both knowledge and skills competencies and be ready to face the challenge of an entry level position in the Catering industry.
4. To develop a professional vocabulary of terms related to food and its preparation.
5. To learn and effectively practice technical skills in food preparation.
6. To acquire the attributes of an entry-level catering employee, including professional skills, organizational abilities, and food presentation artistry.

To the opinion of the EEC, not all the courses offered under pillar A serve the objectives of the study program and the number should be limited to those with relevance to the diploma awarded, e.g. CSC102 Computer Applications, ECO101 Principles of Microeconomics, ENG101 English Communication, ENG102 English Writing, ENG201 Advanced English, FRE101 French Language, FRE201 French Language II, GRE101 Modern Greek, GRE201 Modern Greek II, MTH101 Mathematics, MTH102 Statistics).

Notwithstanding the absence of any reference to supporting data that back up his assertions, the programs' Coordinator maintains in the report that the students are "satisfied with the curriculum, the quality of standards of the courses taught as well as the academic personnel" and that the "program of study operates at high academic standards". Moreover, the EEC noted that these two documents bear dates that are subsequent to the 1st July 2019 that the unit has submitted its application for evaluation at CYQAA.

The Committee noticed that the instructor who is in charge for teaching the culinary arts-related subjects (Fundamentals of Culinary Arts, Hot Food Preparations, Pastry/bakery, buffet and Garde Manger and Butchery) appears to have a disproportionately excessive teaching workload amounting to 36 contact hours per week.

The internal quality assurance documents that the Committee had the opportunity to review (Minutes of the Quality Assurance Committee meeting on the 17th July 2019 and one Report dated 3rd July 2019 ) mention the reports prepared by the programs' coordinators on 10 different issues including statistics on students, progress and satisfaction and the "critical appraisal of the operation of each program study"; it is unfortunate that this appraisal amounts to four lines and, more importantly, lacks back up.

### **Public information**

Information on individual courses (instructors, descriptions, assessment methods, suggested bibliography etc.) is not publicly available. The course curriculum and outline do not provide the required info on the hours allowed for practical training in the Laboratory. Notably, there is no information about the unit's library or how students can access books and other sources. Last, no information is available on the site on any aspect of the programs Quality Assurance; more specifically, the Quality Assurance policy, the structure of the relevant Committee and previous Internal Evaluation Reports are missing from the website of the American College.

### **Information management**

Evidence on monitoring basic quality indices, such as students' success rates, drop-out rates and satisfaction by the program is lacking. Moreover, the unit does not appear to keep any information relevant to its graduates' career paths.

### **American College's Response**

#### **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

The program's objectives and learning outcomes were revisited to comply with the national standards. The revised objectives and learning outcomes can be found in **Annex 1 – Revised Curriculum**.

As suggested by the EEC, the list of courses offered under pillar A (General Education Requirements) were revised to serve the objectives of the study program, and the number of courses offered was decreased down to 12 (from the initial 17). Hence, the following courses were removed (see **Annex 1** for the Revised Curriculum):

- HST101 European History
- PHI101 Introduction to Philosophy
- POL101 Political Studies
- PSY101 Introduction to Psychology
- SOC101 Principles of Sociology

In paragraph 2 of the Review and Evaluation of the Culinary Arts Diploma Program of Study report prepared by the program coordinator entitled "A review of students' views", we write that "we have drawn the conclusion that, our students are satisfied with the curriculum, the quality standards of the courses taught as well as the academic personnel teaching in the Culinary Arts, Diploma Program of Study, and that the program of study operates at high academic standards". We have based our conclusions on the students' faculty evaluation statistics, on the classroom observations of the Head of the Department, on the student facilities and services evaluation statistics as well as on the faculty overall evaluation statistics. According to the Internal Quality Assurance Policy of our

College, our programs of study are reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee every two years. This program of study had been reviewed in July 2018 and in July 2020. Indeed, American College has submitted its application on the 1st July 2019 for evaluation accreditation to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). The Academic Committee, taking into consideration that the Culinary Arts (2 Years, 120 ECTS) program of study should undergo through the reaccreditation process, has decided that any necessary revisions of the program of study should be made by July 2019 when the Application for reaccreditation will be submitted to the CYQAA. Thus, the Academic Committee has initiated the process for revising the Program of Study and submitted its application for evaluation accreditation to the CYQAA, with all the necessary revisions. The revisions made in the program of study were prepared by the ad hoc committee, formed by the academic committee at its meeting on the 4/2/2019 and chaired by the program coordinator. By Monday, 3rd June 2019, the committee's chairperson had the responsibility to submit to the academic committee members the revised Program of Study, in order to be considered for approval at the Academic Committee's next meeting. By Friday, 14th June 2019, the Academic Committee approved the revisions suggested by the ad hoc committee and on the 1 July 2019 the application for evaluation accreditation was submitted to The Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The program's coordinator in his report of 3rd July 2020, has mentioned in paragraph 7, "Suggestions for Revising any of the Program's of Study Aspects", of the Review and Evaluation of the Culinary Arts Diploma Program of Study report, that: "Any revisions to the program of study have already been made and the suggestions have been sent to the CYQAA on the 1st July 2019 for evaluation accreditation.

The instructor who is in charge for teaching the culinary arts-related subjects has a teaching workload amounting to 36 hours per year and not per week. The 36 hours involve 16 hrs per week teaching overload for the Fall Semester (6 hrs Fundamentals of Culinary Arts and 10 hrs Garde Manger and Butchery) and 20 hrs per week teaching overload for the Spring Semester (8 hrs Hot Food Preparations and 12 hrs Pastry Arts and Baking).

In regard to the brevity of the Quality Assurance Committee minutes, we agree that we need to be more detailed on these reports. Effective immediately, all reports generated by the Quality Assurance Committee will include more details to back up the decisions of the committee. The details to be included in the reports are described in the revised **Annex 4 – Quality Assurance**.

## Public information

We have made various information publicly available through the College's website. In particular, we have added links to the program's main page (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm?id=929&lang=en>) directing to:

(a) Detailed Course Descriptions, providing information on the learning outcomes, assessment methods, required text books, and on the hours allowed for practical training in the Laboratory (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Course%20Description.pdf>)

(b) Information on the instructors teaching in the program ([https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Faculty%20Teaching%20\(Culinary%20Arts%20-%20Diploma\).pdf](https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Faculty%20Teaching%20(Culinary%20Arts%20-%20Diploma).pdf)).

(c) Information on the College's Library (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm?id=869&lang=en>), by further adding links on Library Regulations (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Library%20Regulations.pdf>) and Library Guide (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Library%20guide.pdf>).



(d) Lastly, we have added information on Quality Assurance Policy, Duties and Structure. The information can be found on the 'The College' tab in the home page (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/en/the-college/quality-assurance>).

## Information management

The Academic Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee at a joint meeting on Friday, 25 June 2021, have decided that the Review and Evaluation report prepared by a program coordinator must include performance indicators in the following areas:

- (a) Admissions, Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates for two academic years.

Regarding admissions, the percentage of students accepted to students applied will be considered.

Regarding Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates (per program of study per academic year), the following will be taken into consideration:

- Percentage of students who withdraw after Year 1
- Percentage of students who progress from Year 1 to Year 2
- Percentage of students who withdraw after Year 2
- Percentage of students who progress from Year 2 to Year 3
- Percentage of students who withdraw after Year 3
- Percentage of students who progress from Year 3 to Year 4
- Percentage of students who fail Year 4
- Percentage of students who graduate

- (b) Student Satisfaction Statistics on Facilities and Services and on Faculty and Course.

- Facilities and Services Student Satisfaction will be measured regarding the following areas:

Library

Online Library Platform

Librarian Services

Computer Laboratories

Computer Network Laboratory

Kitchen laboratories

Food-servicing laboratories

Classrooms

Cafeteria

Student Welfare Officer Services

Reception Administrator Services

Academic Advisor Services

- Faculty and Course Student Satisfaction (for all the courses taught in the curriculum per semester)
  - Instructor
  - Course
- Regarding the graduates' career paths, our College keeps a record of our Alumni and where possible we keep information relevant to our graduates' career paths. Based on our recent records below you may find a list of graduates of this program and their current employment position and employer:

	Student Name	Current position and employer
1	Nicolaou Nikolas	Last 6 months-Cook in Occhio
2	Kasapis Konstantinos	Last 3 years-Sous Chef Radisson Blue Hotel Larnaka
3	Kleanthous Kleanthis	Chef – Nursing home Aglantzias since 2014
4	Merkurjeva Christina	Cook - Netherlands
5	Varnava Thanasis	Last 10 months-Sous Chef- Zygi Fish tavern
6	Dimitriadis Kyriakos	Baristas in Gloria coffee house

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is recommended to align the program objectives and learning outcomes with level of knowledge, skills and competences of 5B Level of studies. The reference to ' an entry level position' or entry-level catering employee' should be reconsidered
- The courses offered under 'General Education Requirements' are too many (17) and not all of them directly serve the scope of the study program. A careful re-evaluation of the courses list should diminish the number to maximum 10 subjects.
- Quality Assurance procedures appear to be implemented only partially by the department
- Lack of formal advice in planning the curriculum
- Basic quality indices, such as students' success rates, drop-out rates and satisfaction by the program are not being monitored via a standardised methodology
- Public information is extremely meagre

### American College's Response

The program objectives and learning outcomes were revised and aligned with level of knowledge, skills and competences of 5B Level of studies (see **Annex 1 – Revised Curriculum**).

The list of courses offered under pillar A (General Education Requirements) has been revised to serve the objectives of the study program, and the number of courses offered is decreased down to 12 (from the initial 17) (see **Annex 1 – Revised Curriculum**).

All quality assurance procedures are fully implemented by the department, as described in **Annex 4 – Quality Assurance**. The relevant document on quality assurance supplied to the **EEC (Annex 4)** provides the purposes, responsibilities and details on the procedures to approve and develop a new program of study, to monitor the quality of education offered, to review and evaluate existing programs of study, to revise existing programs of study and to discontinue of an existing program of study.

It is the policy of the College to always bring-in professionals for their expert opinions in planning the curriculum. For the particular program of study, we have had the input of Christos Andreou and Tryfonas Panayiotou who have a long industry experience as chefs.

The Academic Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee at a joint meeting on Friday, 25 June 2021, have decided to utilize a standard methodology in keeping performance indicators in the following areas:

- (c) Admissions, Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates for two academic years.



(d) Student Satisfaction Statistics on Facilities and Services and on Faculty and Course.

- Facilities and Services Student Satisfaction will be measured regarding the following areas:
- Faculty and Course Student Satisfaction (for all the courses taught in the curriculum per semester)

More information on the above are provided in pages 5 and 6 (Information Management) of this report.

Detailed Course Descriptions, Information on the instructors, Information on the College's Library, and information on Quality Assurance are now publicly available via the College's website. This information is found at the following URLs:

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm?id=929&lang=en>

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Course%20Description.pdf>

[https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Faculty%20Teaching%20\(Culinary%20Arts%20-%20Diploma\).pdf](https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Faculty%20Teaching%20(Culinary%20Arts%20-%20Diploma).pdf)

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/easyconsole.cfm?id=869&lang=en>

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Library%20Regulations.pdf>

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Library%20guide.pdf>

<https://www.ac.ac.cy/en/the-college/quality-assurance>

## Recommendations

1. There is a need to demonstrate a clear Quality Assurance plan, procedure and its implementation
2. There is a need to implement a system for the continuous monitoring of basic indices related to students' performance
3. There is a need to implement a system for the monitoring basic indices related to graduate's position in the labour market
4. The unit should make publicly available sufficient information on the courses offered (learning goals and content), the teaching personnel (including biographical notes) as well as, it's Quality Assurance Policy
5. The unit should deal with the issue of the workload of the personnel in charge with the instruction of the core subjects / practical sessions of the curriculum

## American College's Response

At American College we believe in the Quality Assurance importance in maintaining and improving the quality of education, together with innovation practices in education. The Quality Assurance policies (Annex 4- Quality Assurance) we have in place are continually enhanced and augmented to meet to ensure quality standards are met. Referring to the EEC' s comment on the need to demonstrate a clear Quality Assurance plan, procedure and its implementation, as a college our goals relative to Quality Assurance are:

- a. To maintain and enhance the connection of our College with the society.
- b. To enhance management activities and support services.
- c. To maintain our programs of study at international standards.

- d. To recruit, select and maintain faculty of international standards.
- e. To Maintain teaching and learning at internationally acceptable standards.

In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, the Quality Assurance Committee has established procedures and systems related to:

1. The access, admission and induction of students;
2. Systems for program of study design, approval and review;
3. Program of study operation, teaching and learning;
4. Student assessment, progression and levels of academic attainment;
5. Systems for the appointment, appraisal and promotion of staff and faculty members; and
6. Student guidance and learner support.

For the successful implementation of the Quality Assurance Plan, the Quality Assurance Committee has determined Key Performance Indicators when reviewing and evaluating existing programs of study, incorporated in **Annex 4 – Quality Assurance**.

Appraisals of the Faculty Members every semester by the Director of Academic Affairs and the Director of Research, monitor the implementation of the Quality Assurance plan. These appraisals include classroom observations, assessment of the course coverage, assessment of the final examination papers, of the course outlines prepared by the faculty members as well as assessment of the faculty portfolio. The assessment of the course outlines and the faculty portfolios monitors also the synergy between teaching and research and the level at which this synergy is accomplished.

The research activity of the faculty members is assessed by the Director of Research, with the intention to monitor and sustain the research activity of faculty members. Research activity, is also a factor which contributes to the promotion of faculty members.

Also, the Departmental Quality Assurance Committee plays an important role in the implementation of the Quality Assurance plan by considering the following elements of the educational work of the program of study, when evaluating a program of study:

- The effectiveness of the teaching work and the resources available for that purpose.
- The programs and the titles of study in relation to the scientific and professional objectives of each program of study.
- The research work and its synergy with teaching.
- The administration, student welfare and teaching support services.
- The adequacy in the number and quality of the academic and teaching staff.

The analysis and any attached data is forwarded to the Quality Assurance Committee to facilitate its work and is an integral part of the application for Institutional and Program of Study evaluation.

The Academic Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee at a joint meeting on Friday, 25 June 2021, have decided to utilize a standard methodology in keeping performance indicators in the following areas:

- (e) Admissions, Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates for two academic years.
- (f) Student Satisfaction Statistics on Facilities and Services and on Faculty and Course.

- Facilities and Services Student Satisfaction will be measured regarding the following areas:
- Faculty and Course Student Satisfaction (for all the courses taught in the curriculum per semester)

More information on the above are provided in pages 5 and 6 (Information Management) of this report.

Detailed Course Descriptions, Information on the instructors, Information on the College's Library, and information on Quality Assurance are now publicly available via the College's website.

The instructor who is in charge for teaching the culinary arts-related subjects has a teaching workload amounting to 36 hours per year and not per week. We provide our reply to this issue on page 5 and we explain that there is no excessive teaching load.

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

### Process of teaching and learning and student-centered teaching methodology

The EEC wishes to point out its concerns for the absence of reference to sources (e.g. pictures).

Overall, the teaching method contributes to effective learning because it combines theoretical training and practical training although not obvious from the course outline.

The opportunity for staff members to attend seminars at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute on the subject of Adult Education should contribute towards respect to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.

### Practical training

It is worth noting the absence of compulsory training placement in the program study, which comprises an invaluable element of this study level. The EEC is aware that the students are offered with the possibility of optional training placement during summer holidays. To this end the institution has provided a log book for the training placement. However, this option is neither depicted in the program outline nor associated with the attribution of ECTS that could be mentioned in the Diploma supplement. As reported to the Committee, the training placement offers employment opportunities for the students of the Program after their graduation. The study program should be revised to incorporate compulsory training placement of at least 12 weeks, e.g. placement could be divided in 2 summer-periods of 6 weeks each.

The EEC noted that in TABLE 2: COURSE DISTRIBUTION PER SEMESTER and in the course description-curriculum (Annex II) of the Application, there is no mention to actual LABORATORY HOURS for each subject. Following a relevant request, EEC has been provided with a supplementary table where the Laboratory hours for 7 courses are defined. The EEC strongly recommends that both the descriptions of these subjects (CSC 102, CUL110, CUL133, CUL134, CUL135, HOT104, HOT202) and the course outline (Table 2) are revised accordingly. Furthermore, this information should be communicated via the website of the program study.

### Student assessment

In practical courses in particular, it is not clear whether full attendance of the course is compulsory; the EEC thus recommends that "attendance" is weighted as one of the assessment-scheme elements.

Methods of assessment and the criteria for grade-marking are consistent. The EEC was provided with "Marking Students' Written Work Guidelines". It is not clear how these guidelines become available to the students.

### American College's Response

#### Process of teaching and learning and student-centered teaching methodology

In regard to the absence of reference to sources (e.g. pictures) we have informed all faculty members on the importance, necessity and proper ways (Harvard Referencing System) to cite and reference material used in their lecture presentations and notes.

The Course Syllabuses were revised so to clearly state theoretical training hours and practical training hours for the courses which include laboratory hours. The revised course syllabuses are found in Annex 2.

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute deals with continuous education and training of Adult Education only in the Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education Sectors, and not Higher Education. However, we offer a variety of training opportunities for faculty members, which we discuss further in Section 3 (Teaching Staff) of this report.

### Practical training

In line with the suggestions of the EEC, we have added “MAJ101 Internship” in the program’s curriculum (see **Annex 1 – Revised Curriculum**). “MAJ101 Internship” is an optional internship program that concerns the industry placement of American College students so to gain first-hand experience in a real working environment. The current law does not permit foreign students to undertake any form of Internship, hence the module cannot be compulsory. In **Annex 3a** we enclose the module’s Syllabus entitled “MAJ101 Internship” together with all necessary documents describing the methodology, eligibility criteria and procedure for organized internships and related forms (**Annexes 3b-3e**).

According to the suggestions of the EEC, we have added the Laboratory Hours for each subject both in the Revised Curriculum (**Annex 1**) and in the course syllabi (**Annex 2**). However, we cannot revise and add this information to TABLE 2: COURSE DISTRIBUTION PER SEMESTER, as this forms a template by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) in which we cannot interfere with any changes. Furthermore, this information has also been added in the website of the program study (<https://www.ac.ac.cy/images/media/assetfile/Course%20Description.pdf>).

### Student assessment

Based on the recommendations by the EEC we have added ‘attendance’ in the assessment-scheme elements of the practical courses, with a 10% weight of the overall grade. This addition can be seen in the course syllabi of the practical courses, in **Annex 2**.

The “Marking Students’ Written Work Guidelines” provided to the EEC, are given to students by the instructor teaching the course in a hard copy form. Additionally, all guidelines and forms can be found in our Moodle platform which students can access remotely and download any document they need. This applies for all documents to support students, such as Course Outlines, Referencing Guidelines and others.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Lack of Compulsory internship in suitable workplaces- The study program should be revised to incorporate compulsory training placement of at least 12 weeks
- Marking Students’ Written Work Guidelines should be available to students
- Lecture presentations should follow the standards for referencing

- Attendance of practical sessions should be rendered mandatory (if not) and attendance should be weighted in the student assessment criteria for theoretical courses

### **American College's Response**

"MAJ101 Internship" is added in the program's curriculum (**Annex 1**), as an optional internship program; the current law does not permit foreign students to undertake any form of Internship, hence the module cannot be compulsory. In **Annex 3a** we enclose the module's Syllabus entitled "MAJ101 Internship" together with all necessary documents describing the methodology, eligibility criteria and procedure for organized internships and related forms (**Annexes 3b – 3e**).

The "Marking Students' Written Work Guidelines" are given to students by the instructor teaching the course in a hard copy form in the beginning of the semester. Additionally, all guidelines and forms are found in our Moodle platform which students can access remotely and download any document they need.

All faculty has been informed of the necessity to properly cite and provide the reference to sources (e.g. pictures) and other material used in their lecture presentations and notes.

We have added 'attendance' in the assessment-scheme elements of the practical courses, with a 10% weight of the overall grade. This addition can be seen in the course syllabi of the practical courses, in **Annex 2**.



### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### Findings

In the case of laboratory/practical courses, the EEC suggests recruiting additional personnel (i.e. a laboratory assistant) in order to comply with safety standards and good laboratory practice, as well as, achievement of the course's objectives.

No evidence was provided on opportunities offered to the teaching staff for their professional development, e.g. attendance of training seminars to further develop professional and teaching skills, acquaintance with new technologies and promotion of research activities (e.g. through Erasmus exchange programme). To this direction, the staff should be more strongly encouraged to take advantage of the institution's facilities that support research (e.g. databases, library services, etc.), while grants for attending conferences and seminars should be also allocated and communicated to all the staff. In addition, teaching-exchanges with academic organisms abroad should be more intensively stimulated. The EEC believes that through these activities, the academic profile of the programme will be enhanced and become compatible with corresponding programmes offered internationally.

#### American College's Response

In the case of laboratory/practical courses, American College complies with all safety standards and good laboratory practice. We believe that at the moment there is no need to recruit a laboratory assistant as in each practical class the best student academically is appointed by the Instructor as a Teaching Assistant, which helps to maintain safety standards, and meet the objectives of the course as well. In addition, our classes have a small number of students, which makes it easier to control and ensure the safety of each student. Culinary Arts students have classes on Safety, First Aid, and Sanitation, as well as classes which incorporate knife and equipment identification, therefore they are familiar with the standards they have to follow in a Kitchen laboratory. Regarding the good laboratory practices in each lab/practical class students follow a weekly Cleaning schedule for duties such as sweeping, mopping, cleaning, and sanitizing stoves and surface etc. An example of a cleaning schedule is found in **Annex 5**.

At American College we believe that in the effort of increasing and improving the quality of education of the programs of study offered, faculty should also continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills. In that framework, we implement specialised in-house training seminars and workshops throughout the year, addressed to all faculty. In particular, the following training seminars were organised in June and July 2021:

- (a) Effective Instruction in a Diversified Classroom (Mr. Doros Christofi) – Pedagogy Expert, the seminar already took place)
- (b) Interactive Tools and Contemporary Teaching Techniques (Mr. Doros Christofi – Pedagogy Expert)

Faculty members are also encouraged to participate in external training seminars. The American College Research Center covers all costs of attending the training seminar assuming the eligibility criteria are met (e.g. topic relevance). **Annex 6** presents a list of Staff Development Activities in the recent years.

In terms of conference participation an internal funding policy of the academic personnel's research activity is in place which financially supports faculty members to participate and present papers at international conferences as well as at conferences held in Cyprus. The College Academic Committee in its 20 February 2020 meeting decided to increase the internal funding of our academic personnel's research activities. The revised policy (**Annex 7**) applies as from the date of the academic committee's meeting and it aims to enhance the research activities of our faculty members and to help them in networking with other academics in other institutions. Furthermore, to enhance and intensify the research activities of our faculty we are circulating a list of resources (**Annex 8**) to all our faculty members with the recommendation to get acquainted with the resources and to use them wherever possible for their current and future research.

Although the College engages in international mobility programs the last 10 years (see **Annex 9** for Staff Mobility Activity), we aim at enhancing the mobility opportunities for students, faculty and staff, in the following mobility actions of Student Mobility for studies, Student Mobility for Placements, Staff Mobility for Teaching, and Staff Mobility for Training. Due to the unpleasant effects of the pandemic to the society in general, the mobility programs were suspended. Following the end of the pandemic, our staff will continue participating in mobility programs.

### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

- There is a need for training activities of the staff to be encouraged and supported by financial means.
- Recruitment of additional personnel to assist instruction of practical sessions is advised.

### **American College's Response**

We have specialised in-house training seminars and workshops throughout the year, addressed to all faculty. In particular, the following training seminars were organised for June and July 2021:

- (a) Effective Instruction in a Diversified Classroom (Mr. Doros Christofi – Pedagogy Expert) / the seminar already took place
- (b) Interactive Tools and Contemporary Teaching Techniques (Mr. Doros Christofi – Pedagogy Expert)

Faculty members are also encouraged to participate in external training seminars with all costs covered by the American College Research Center assuming the eligibility criteria are met (e.g. topic relevance). **Annex 6** presents a list of Staff Development Activities in the recent years. Additionally, the internal funding for conference participation has been increased since 20 February 2020, aiming to enhance the research activities of our faculty members and to help them in networking with other academics in other institutions. The revised policy is found in **Annex 7**.

At American College we comply with all safety standards and good laboratory practice. We believe that at the moment there is no need to recruit a laboratory assistant as in each practical class the best student academically is selected by the Instructor as a Teaching Assistant, which helps to maintain safety standards, and meet the objectives of the program as well.

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

##### 4.2 Student progression

No evidence was provided for monitoring the student participation in the educational process (keeping of an electronic record).

##### 4.3 Student recognition

The EEA, during the interaction with the students was informed of their wish, in the case of merit in their Academic performance to be further recognized (e.g. reduction in the fees of the subsequent year)

#### American College's Response

##### 4.2 Student progression

Student participation in the educational process occurs through their input in various committees at the College, where they can take part in decision making, and also through various evaluation processes, where students can express their satisfaction levels, and likewise their opinion in various elements. For example, students participate in the following committees (see **Annex 10 - Organization, Administration and Faculty Handbook**), through representation:

- College Council - President of Students' Union (pg. 1)
- Academic Committee - President of Students' Union (pg. 2)
- Administrative Committee - President of Students' Union (pg. 3)
- Disciplinary Committee - President of Students' Union (pg. 4)
- Quality Assurance Committee - Undergraduate students' representative and Postgraduate student's representative (pg. 5)
- Departmental Quality Assurance Committees - Student studying in the 3rd year of an undergraduate program of study of the department (pg. 6)

Furthermore, in terms of measuring students' satisfaction, there is a formal process which occurs every semester. Students evaluate both Faculty members and Courses, the College Facilities (Library, Online Library, Librarian, Laboratories, Classrooms, Cafeterias) and College Services (services offered by the Welfare Officer, Reception Officers and Administrators, and Academic Advisors). The evaluation forms for the above along with a sample of results, are found in **Annexes 11a – 11d**.

##### 4.3 Student recognition

We offer scholarships to students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement while at the American College (The application for scholarship is found in **Annex 12**). The scholarships are in the form of a tuition fee discount for one academic semester, the amount of which varies according to the schedule below:

Cumulative GPA	Tuition Reduction for	
	Academic Programs	Vocational Programs
4.00	50%	20%
3.75 – 3.99	20%	10%
3.50 – 3.74	10%	10%

In addition to the above scholarship scheme based on academic merit, we also offer other scholarships based on the financial needs of students or demonstration of outstanding athletic skills and participation in the college athletic activities.

### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

An electronic system for monitoring the student participation in the educational process may contribute towards a more efficient monitoring.

Indicators such as success rates in examinations, drop-out rates, mean duration to graduation etc. should be monitored in a systematic way.

Non-credit coursework and the industrial placement, should be included in the diploma supplement

### **American College's Response**

Student participation in the educational process occurs through their input in various committees (see **Annex 10** for student participation in Committees) at the College, where they can take part in decision making, and also through various evaluation processes, where students can express their satisfaction levels, and likewise their opinion in various elements. Furthermore, in terms of student evaluation as a contributor in the educational process, please refer to our response above in section 4.2.

For systematically monitoring performance indicators, the Academic Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee at a joint meeting on Friday, 25 June 2021, have decided that the Review and Evaluation report prepared by a program coordinator must include performance indicators in the following areas:

- (g) Admissions, Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates for two academic years.
- (h) Student Satisfaction Statistics on Facilities and Services and on Faculty and Course.
  - Facilities and Services Student Satisfaction will be measured regarding the following areas:
  - Faculty and Course Student Satisfaction (for all the courses taught in the curriculum per semester)

More information on the above are provided in pages 5 and 6 (Information Management) of this report.

Credit based industrial placement (MAJ101 Internship) is now included in the diploma supplement for those providing all standardised course details. For any non-credit industrial placement, a letter will be provided as part of the Diploma Supplement containing the following details:

- Student details
- Program of Study
- Duration of Training
- Place of Training (Organization)
- Position
- Description of the Training
- Comments by the Supervisor(s)

## 5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

### Findings

To the opinion of the EEA the function of a Welfare Officer neither entails maintenance of enrolled students' academic records -rather a task for administrative personnel (Faculty Administration)- nor student counselling on academic issues which is overlapping with the Academic Advisor Function.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

Overlapping of duties among Welfare Officer-Faculty Administration - Academic Advisor. A clearer description of responsibilities with no overlaps will render the above functions more effective.

### American College's Response

Following the suggestions of the EEA the duties of the Welfare Officers were revised (**Annex 10**, pg. 9) to avoid overlapping of responsibilities with those of the academic advisors. Extracting from **Annex 10**, the revised duties are:

#### 1.3.8 Student Welfare Officers

Student Welfare Officers are responsible for the following matters:

1. Student counselling on personal issues;
2. Orientation of new students;
3. Student accommodation;
4. Oversee student welfare; and
5. Student recreation activities.



## 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

EEC considers that the vocational training curriculum in the subject of Culinary Arts (2 years, 120 ECTS) has been set up on the solid basis i.e. to meet the needs of Tourism sector in Cyprus. In addition, the experience of the management staff of the American College, the teaching staff and the existing infrastructure ensure satisfactory completion of the educational processes. It is estimated that the scope and objectives of the Program can be improved to respond more effectively to 5B level of studies

There are four major weaknesses in the curriculum as it exists. These are:

- Learning goals do not to comply with the standard qualifications of 5B level of studies
- Limited exposure of students to industrial training, only on an optional basis. The Committee proposes introducing compulsory training placement of at least 12 weeks split in the 2 summer periods of the 1st and 2nd year of studies
- Quality Assurance procedures appear to be implemented only partially by the Department. There is a need to demonstrate a clear Quality Assurance plan, procedure and its implementation
- The courses offered under 'General Education Requirements' should be limited to those directly serving the scope of the study program. The rest can form a list of free elective courses.

In specific, the EEC wishes to propose the following improvements to the existing Program:

- Implement a system for the continuous monitoring of basic indices related to students' performance
- Implement a system for the monitoring basic indices related to graduate's position in the labour market
- Make publicly available sufficient information on the courses offered (learning goals and content), the teaching personnel (including biographical notes) as well as, it's Quality Assurance Policy
- Deal with the issue of the workload of the personnel in charge with the instruction of the core subjects / practical sessions of the curriculum
- Revise the course curriculum and outline need so as to provide the required information on the hours allowed for practical training in the Laboratory.
- Publish in advance for students the 'Marking Students' Written Work Guidelines'
- Follow the standards for referencing in all course material
- Offer continuous training activities, supported by financial means, for staff members
- Recruit Laboratory assistants during practical sessions is advised in particular for Kitchen laboratories.
- Alleviate overlapping of duties among Welfare Officer-Faculty Administration - Academic Advisor

## American College's Response

As described in our responses in sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 above:

We have revised the program's objectives and learning outcomes to comply with the standard qualifications of 5B level of studies.

To further expose students to industrial training, an optional internship program is added in the program's curriculum (**Annexes 1 and 3a-e**).

To demonstrate a clear Quality Assurance plan, the Quality Assurance Committee has established procedures and systems related to: The access, admission and induction of students; Systems for program of study design, approval and review; Program of study operation, teaching and learning; Student assessment, progression and levels of academic attainment; Systems for the appointment, appraisal and promotion of staff and faculty members; and Student guidance and learner support. For the successful implementation of the Quality Assurance Plan, the Quality Assurance Committee has determined Key Performance Indicators when reviewing and evaluating existing programs of study, incorporated in **Annex 4 – Quality Assurance**.

The courses offered under General Education Requirements has been revised to serve the objectives of the study program, and the number of courses offered is decreased down to 12 (see **Annex 1** for the Revised Curriculum).

A standard methodology is now utilized in keeping performance indicators in the areas of (a) Admissions, Withdrawal, Progression and Graduation Rates for two academic years, and (b) Student Satisfaction Statistics on Facilities and Services and on Faculty and Course. The process also includes the systematic collection of data associated to our graduates; these data relate with the percentage of those graduates who continued for further full-time studies, those who were employed full-time, those who were employed full-time in a sector relevant to their studies, and those who were neither employed nor continued their studies.

Detailed Course Descriptions, Information on the instructors, Information on the College's Library, and information on Quality Assurance are now publicly available via the College's website.

The instructor who is in charge for teaching the culinary arts-related subjects has a teaching workload amounting to 36 hours per year and not per week (16 hrs per week teaching overload for the Fall Semester and 20 hrs per week teaching overload for the Spring Semester).

The Laboratory Hours allowed for each subject are added in both in the Revised Curriculum (**Annex 1**) and in the course syllabi (**Annex 2**).

The "Marking Students' Written Work Guidelines" are given to students by the instructor teaching the course in a hard copy form in the beginning of the semester. Additionally, all guidelines and forms can be found in Moodle which students can access remotely and download any document they need.

All faculty has been informed for the need to properly cite and provide the reference to sources (e.g. pictures) and other material used in lecture presentations and notes.

We have specialised in-house training seminars and workshops throughout the year, addressed to all faculty ranks and positions; for full time faculty, these sessions are compulsory. Faculty members are also encouraged to participate in external training seminars with all costs covered by the American College Research Center (see policy in **Annex 7**) assuming the eligibility criteria are met (e.g. topic relevance).



We comply with all safety standards and good laboratory practice. We believe that at the moment there is no need to recruit a laboratory assistant as in each practical class the best student academically is selected by the Instructor as a Teaching Assistant.

The duties of Academic Advisors and Welfare Officers are revised (**Annex 10**, pg. 9 and pg. 24) to avoid overlapping of responsibilities.

As a conclusion, we want to state that we took into account all EEC's comments for revisions/improvements and we have implemented all necessary revisions/improvements. Once again we would like to thank the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their very positive report.



### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Ms. Maria Charitou	Program 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:** July 2, 2021

