

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** KES College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

In English:

BA Business Management

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English and 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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) would like to thank the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) for the invitation to evaluate the BA in Business Management currently offered by KES College, Nicosia.

The evaluation took place online on the 28th of July 2022, as per the schedule provided by the CYQAA.

The EEC consisted of three academics with relevant disciplinary expertise to the programme evaluated and a student representative. The agenda provided featured several meetings with the Director General, Head of Academic Affairs, Program Coordinator, various members of the teaching faculty and administrative personnel and students.

It is worth noting that the evaluation took place online due to the on-going pandemic restrictions. As such the EEC did not have the opportunity to visit the College in person and experience the on-offer services and infrastructure. Still, a video presentation was provided which was considered sufficient for the purposes of this evaluation.

Beyond the above, the meetings and the evidence provided in the form of the self-evaluation report, presentations and additional documents offered sufficient information for the EEC to compile this report. The report discusses in detail areas of strength and areas that work may be required to further develop the BA in Business Management. The EEC report provides constructive suggestions as to how the College could address the points raised and strengthen the programme.

If CYQAA have any queries with regards to the report, the EEC members will be more than happy to attend to them in due course.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Savvas Papagiannidis	Professor	Newcastle University
Pernille Eskerod	Professor	Webster Vienna Private University
Louis Brennan	Professor	Trinity College Dublin
Artemis Stivaktaki	Student Representative	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

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.

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

The BA in Business Management is a 4-year programme (240 ECTS).

A three-stage process was followed to design and develop the revised programme. A number of inputs such as operational performance, applicable statutory/regulatory requirements, information from similar programmes etc were used to ground decisions on the programme's objectives, intended learning outcomes and curriculum. The internal evaluation, teaching staff and students (through the feedback provided by surveys) were involved/input in the process.

The programme aims to offer a holistic approach to business education, to build a strong foundation for long-term career agility and to develop mastery in key competences for future professionals. These were in line with expectations of what a business management degree typically offers.

Disciplinary knowledge is gradually developed from one stage to another also focusing on wider/horizontal skills (e.g. statistics/quantitative methods or research skills).

Prerequisites are in place to ensure a smooth transition from one semester/stage to the other.

It was positive to see a mapping of learning outcomes to courses by stage.

The College has published admission, progression, recognition and certification processes. Information about the programme and its admissions criteria are publicly available.

Teaching staff have the opportunity to adapt a course based on the outlines provided when recruited.

Strengths

The College has undertaken a comprehensive SWOT analysis that helps capture and prioritise key areas of development.

The programme features courses that one typically expects to find in such a programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

More explicit input from local practitioners could have enhanced the practical nature of the programme and the potentially employability prospects of its graduates.

Feasibility of changing to Greek in terms of getting enough students is a questionable one. This is not just a challenge with regards to recruiting students, but also with regards to the effort required by the teaching team to produce/refresh materials in a given language in what appears to be a short time window between recruitment and the start of term.

It would be useful to consider how to best position the courses so that stages 1 and 2 are more diverse and engaging to ensure that students develop and maintain an interest in the programme. In turn, such a reshuffling could help address the imbalance that currently exists when it comes to practising and assessing the learning outcomes. Courses dealing with contemporary issues, e.g.

the courses on Business & Society, Global Environment Problems, and Business & Management in a Global Context could be used to give the programme an edge and a more explicit differentiation from other institutions' similar programmes, if they were positioned in earlier stages.

Courses that are more relevant to the research/thesis could be positioned later in the programme.

All courses are compulsory. There are no electives. This appears to contract the ambition of the programme team to not follow a "one-approach-fits-all".

A mapping of assessment against the courses (similar to the one used for the learning objectives) could help provide a high level perspective as to how knowledge and skills are assessed.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

Findings

The intended process of teaching and learning is detailed and well described in the syllabi and other provided materials. Through exclusively use of compulsory courses as well as the application of pre-requisites clear academic progression is ensured throughout the programme (courses could be “grouped”, e.g. all marketing modules or all economics modules, so that these links from one term to the next can be more explicitly shown).

Different modes of delivery as well as a variety of pedagogical methods are described, and the teaching staff explained in a highly engaged and convincing way during the meeting with EEC how they aimed and managed to understand each student’s needs and interests and adapt the teaching accordingly. In other words, the College offers a clearly personalized and student-centred learning environment, enabling flexible learning paths.

Educational technologies are implemented and a variety of materials are offered (i.e. so-called slow learning materials, e.g. text books, standard learning materials, e.g. videos, and fast learning materials, e.g. images).

Core materials in both English and Greek are identified. The library resources seem adequate and up-to-date. However, some of the materials in the syllabi are not fully up-to-date.

Application of theory on real life cases through the case study teaching methods in some of the courses as well as in a final thesis can be perceived as a means for practical training. Further, a high number of research methodology related courses ensure that the students obtain an analytical and academic mindset.

A variety of assessment types are offered. The overall assessment of each course consists of more assessments, e.g. class participation, assignments, intermediate and final exams.

Students are given feedback on their performance during the courses, so that they have a clear

understanding of their progress.

Formal and well-described procedures for student complaints and suggestions for improvements are in place.

The College offers opportunities for study abroad, e.g. through the ERASMUS+ programme.

Strengths

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

The content of the programme is detailed and well-described.

The programme provides a solid foundation for a non-specialized business and management career.

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.

Some of the syllabi would benefit from being revised with up-to-date material, e.g. newest editions of textbooks.

The extent to which the students are ensured to engage with practitioners, e.g. through guest lectures and company visits, could be more explicitly described.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

The number of full time and part time staff is deemed sufficient for the revised programme.

New members of staff are recruited through a 3-stage process that considers the academic qualifications and past experiences and features a demo teaching session. New members of staff are provided with the course outline and are asked to develop the materials as per necessary.

Staff appear to be engaged with their roles and the Institution.

Staff had qualifications that were above the one delivered. Many members of the teaching team had doctorates in relevant disciplines and produced research outputs.

Staff evaluation takes place annually. Teaching staff receive feedback from the teaching support officer, the programme coordinator as well as students (through evaluation surveys). In turn where necessary supportive actions/plans are put in place.

Typically, staff may teach about 12 hours per week during term time, subject to their course allocations. Research and developmental activities are undertaken in-between terms (e.g. during the summer period).

Strengths

The EEC notes the friendly and collegiate environment within which the programme takes place. This is reflected on many aspects of the programme's operations.

There is a call by the KES Research Centre that offers funding in a competitive manner. Such funding can provide the necessary means for collaborative research projects. There is also a budget for attending conferences.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC was provided with an outline of a workload policy that only outlines teaching duties and leaves much to interpretation. Instead, a more comprehensive approach was necessary. This would have ensured that there is a fair and transparent sharing of workload that is conducive to individual development. Such a workload policy could also be a useful support mechanism for realising the research aspiration of the institutions. The workload policy could be integrated in the staff handbook that appears to be sufficiently comprehensive.

It was positive to see that there are regular meetings about teaching matters and practice with the educational officer. Still, it would be useful if such processes involved more direct engagement among teaching staff and not through a proxy (e.g. through peer observation).

Students could potentially be more actively involved in the KES Research Centre (e.g. through their thesis) which can help provide further support for research active staff, enhance the student experience and scale up the number of outputs.

The EEC notes that during the pandemic engagement with practice and practitioners may have been more a challenging proposition. Still such engagement (e.g. through guest talks, visits, student projects) could help enhance the programme and become a distinctive feature. Similarly, student research could become a conduit for engaging with practice.

Potentially the student team could introduce a course such as “consultancy project” that aims to put theory into a practice by tackling a real-world problem.

The EEC understands that there are opportunities for staff development through internal seminar series. External opportunities for staff development could also be explored.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

Findings

The EEC had the opportunity to discuss with five students their experience with the University. The students expressed their satisfaction with their programmes and the support received by the College. A few of them had prior experience of studying at the College and decided to continue by studying for a BA. The EEC notes this as evidence of overall satisfaction with the quality of the programmes on offer.

The students mentioned that the last two years were challenging due to the pandemic. All teaching was undertaken online. Students would welcome more engagement with practitioners but acknowledge that the pandemic may have had an impact on this front.

They found members of the teaching faculty friendly, supportive and responsive.

Students confirmed that they provided evaluations of the courses undertaken.

Students went through an orientation day that provided them with all the background information needed about relevant policies.

Students find the academic and professional services provided to their satisfaction (especially the online access to services during the pandemic).

The College provides students with links to job opportunities.

Strengths

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

As pandemic restrictions are eased more opportunities to engage with practice and practitioners to help enhance the employability prospects of students should be encouraged.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

Findings

The EEC was provided with a video before the evaluation showing the KES College's infrastructure. Coupled with the information gathered during the meeting from both staff and students the EEC concludes that the College offers sufficient resources including access to library material, IT infrastructure and administrative support.

The College's physical resources include modern, attractive premises. In addition to a physical library, there is also access to an electronic library. In addition, it has the Noodle system through which learning materials are readily accessible by students.

The rapid adjustment by the College to the circumstances of the pandemic demonstrates that resources are flexible for changing circumstances.

There is a strong emphasis and commitment to student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching.

In terms of human resource resources, there is an effective system of student advising in place with members of the teaching staff serving as advisors to students. The students we met seem happy with the support available to them and are well informed in relation to the resources and support provided.

Strengths

The College's ability to pivot rapidly to online delivery demonstrated a strong organizational agility.

There is a highly supportive environment for students in the College with all staff very dedicated to them.

The availability of learning materials from both physical and electronic sources enhances students' learning capacity.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Currently the student numbers in the programme are small. Some additional investment in Sales and Marketing to recruit a larger student cohort needs to be considered. At the same time, the College needs to have regard to resource implications of scaling its enrollment so that resources continue to be adequate and appropriate. This is also the case if it proceeds with having both an English language and Greek language version of the programme.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Findings

N/A

Strengths

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

As stated in the report, the EEC believes that most of the standards of CYQAA are met by the revised BA Business Management and that a few of the standards are partially met. This reports details and justifies the grounds of such an assessment. The report also provides a number of suggestions as to how improvements can be potentially implemented.

If the CYQAA has any queries about the feedback provided and the recommendations made, the EEC will be more than happy to be of assistance.

E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Savvas Papagiannidis	
Pernille Eskerod	
Louis Brennan	
Artemis Stivaktaki	

Date: 29/07/2022