Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 29/06/2021

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-faceprogramme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: Mesoyios College**

- **Town: Limassol**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

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

  In Greek:

  Διοίκηση Ξενοδοχείων, Καζίνων και Θέρετρων (4 έτη συν ένα προπαρασκευαστικό έτος, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

  In English:

  Hotel, Casino and Resort Management (4 years, plus an optional foundation year, 240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts).

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

- **Programme's status:** New

. **Concentrations (if any): n/a**

A. Introduction

The Accreditation began with the introduction of Mesoyios College by Mr Theofilos Antoniou, the College Principal. In particular, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) was shown a presentation in which some general facts, values and beliefs were introduced. Forecasts of future admissions were also showcased in the same presentation alongside some future financial provisions for the College's academic development. Mr Antoniou also presented information on the facilities, the student related services and the collaborations with hotels for students' internships, research and seminars. Mr Antoniou then introduced the quality control process in the College as well as its moderation process. After that, there was a discussion on the feasibility of the forecasts of the College and on whether the College has the capacity to accommodate the forecasted admissions. There was also a discussion on the possible need for the College to invest in casino-related simulator facilities.

Continuing the evaluation, Mrs Fani Efhtymiadou the programme's coordinator presented the programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the people involved in the programme's design and development. Then Mr Akis Ioannides, HR and Quality Assurance Manager, also filled the EEC in on some specifics on some more practical procedures.

Later, a meeting with several members of the teaching staff took place which allowed the EEC to touch upon matters regarding their qualifications and duties. On top of that, methodologies in their teaching had been discussed as well as learning outcomes and the contents of classes. Furthermore, daily problems in the classroom that had to be tackled were discussed. Another matter that was mentioned was the research-to-teaching balance and how research is used to inform the curriculum given that only a very limited number of lecturers are PhD holders or at least PhD candidates. There was also an exchange on staff and career development issues.

After the lunch break the evaluation proceeded with a meeting with some international students of other programmes in the College. Several topics were brought up like their experience in the hospitality and tourism sectors, their experience while taking courses and their relations with the academic and administrative staff of the College. Students also talked about their future aspirations and their alignment of their goals with attending Mesoyios College and how their studies will help their employment in the future. Lastly, their experiences with Erasmus exchange mobility in Poland were discussed.

The following meeting was with administrative staff i.e., Ms. Eleni Karafotia, the Registrar (who also acts as a lecturer in the College); Mrs. Iwona Georgiou, the Librarian/Admissions' Officer; Mrs. Chrysoula Nikolaou, the Students' Affairs Officer as well as Mr Akis Ioannidis. The topics that were discussed circled around admissions, the diversity in the student and staff demographics, scholarships and the mechanisms in place to deal with students facing learning, financial and/or other difficulties.

The external evaluation ended with a brief last meeting with the top management team of the College that provided a demonstration of the College's online learning platform and anti-plagiarism tools; any remaining/outstanding matters were also discussed.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Andreas Papatheodorou	Professor in Industrial and Spatial Economics with Emphasis on Tourism / Chairperson	University of the Aegean, Greece
Professor Dorina-Maria Buda	Professor of Marketing and Tourism / Member	Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom
Dr Wai Mun Lim	Associate Professor in Service Management / Member	Plymouth University, United Kingdom
Ms Natalia Sofokleous	Student / Member	Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus

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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:*

    <u>Findings</u>

    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.

    <u>Strengths</u>

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

    <u>Areas of improvement and recommendations</u>

    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.*

- *<u>The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.</u>*

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
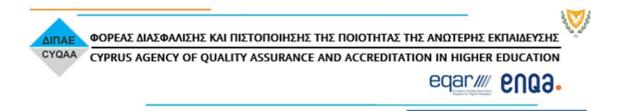

Findings

1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

The College has clear procedures for quality assurance, and these are laid out on the public-facing College website. Moreover, and in collaboration with QUALISYS CONSULTANTS LTD the College has developed, implemented and is in the final certification stages of a quality management system based on the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015. The regulations are appropriate and show what is required of staff and students in terms of behaviour and commitment. There is a clear organisational structure that supports quality assurance through Committees with specific remits and prescribed processes., e.g., the process to ensure assessment quality, from confirmation, by review, of exam questions through to ratification of marks achieved.

A disciplinary process is in place to cover a range of disciplinary offences, including plagiarism. The nature and forms of plagiarism are laid out clearly in the regulations, and the students seem to be aware of them (although interestingly none of the students that the EEC met seemed to know the word 'plagiarism' per se). Currently, plagiarism is detected manually by module leaders using Plagiarism Checker X software. Students are also encouraged to use free plagiarism detection software to check their work prior to submission. This process, however, may prove cumbersome and therefore the EEC suggests that the College should somehow integrate its plagiarism detecting tool into Edu4Schools, its online learning platform, that should be used by students to submit their assignments, among others.

1.2 Design, Approval, On-Going Monitoring and Review

The programme objectives align with the strategy of the College. Moreover, the programme has clearly articulated learning outcomes, at an appropriate level for the target qualification and in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The College has established relationships with industry partners (including the Melco Group that runs Cyprus Casinos) to provide work opportunities, industry visits and inputs from the external stakeholders into the programme. The programme learning outcomes are validly linked to the management of hotel, casinos, and resorts. The EEC noted that while the College infrastructure seems to be satisfactory, there is a lack of casino-related simulator facilities (e.g., gambling tables). The College responded that such facilities are not required as the programme has a focus on management and not on operations. The EEC does acknowledge this point but suggests that the College should further clarify this in the learning objectives of the programme; moreover, the College should ensure that its students will somehow get an exposure into a real casino environment via its partnership with Cyprus Casinos.

Student workloads are clear and allow students to work if they wish/need to. Requirements for progressions are clearly stated in public-facing regulations and there is a mechanism to recognize prior learning and/or work experience, which may prove of value added especially to mature students.

Based on the information provided for existing programmes in the College, it is evident that students are involved in College Committees, including those approving modifications to modules. The procedure for change is through a formal Committee, which is appropriate to ensure the integrity of the programme of study. Modules are reviewed annually in-light of student feedback and advances in the discipline.

Students can undertake an internship. This is not compulsory as for overseas students securing a placement can be difficult. Nonetheless, as the College aims at predominantly attracting Cypriot and EU students into this new programme, turning the internship compulsory at some stage may add to the credibility of the programme in the marketplace. The placement does include an assessment of performance.

The College is strongly encouraged to add an introductory module on Resorts and Casinos in Semester 1 or 2. Given that the words 'resort' and 'casino' appear in the title of the programme, waiting to be taught relevant topics until semester 7 and 8 respectively (as is currently the case) may disappoint some of the students. Likewise, the College is advised to add new modules such as Economics, Revenue Management, and Intercultural Communications appropriately contextualized. Existing modules may also have a service management orientation. Moreover, the College should consider extending the number of elective modules as the present structure is characterized by a very heavy imbalance between compulsory (228 ECTS) and elective (12 ECTS) modules. To accommodate all the above requirements, the College may consider merging some of the existing modules (such as Business Ethics in Semester 1 and Corporate Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry in Semester 4); or dropping some modules that can run as seminars instead (such as Business Computing or English for Academic Writing in Semester 2). More radically, perhaps, the College may rethink its policy of assigning ECTS into its modules based on the actual workload: at present all modules carry the same number of ECTS (i.e., six), although in practice the workload per module may differ across the curriculum.

1.3 Public Information

The College website provides comprehensive information about the programmes, admissions criteria, programme learning outcomes and aims. No information is provided, however, on this new programme as its accreditation is still pending. The management team of the College ensured the EEC that they have already prepared a detailed plan to advertise the programme and provide related information to the public as soon as the programme is accredited.

1.4 Information Management

The College is in the process of establishing Key Performance Indicators in accordance also with its ISO certification. The composition of the student population is well-known but is likely to change because of legal changes in Cyprus. This has been considered in marketing activities that are now targeting an increase in European students. Our impression is that many students are eager to go on exchange, and currently there

are several student mobility agreements, especially with Polish institutions. Success and progression rates in other programmes are known and monitored, and students complete an end of module questionnaire for each module taken. The information from this is used to inform changes to modules; moreover, students use informal routes of feedback throughout their modules. The College may like to think about an end-of-programme evaluation to determine overall satisfaction at a programme-level.

The College is currently considering the introduction of an Alumni Office, which, given the projected rise in student numbers, could be extended to become a Careers and Alumni Office.

Strengths
- Clearly presented public-facing website containing all information needed by prospective and current students;
- Clearly articulated quality assurance procedures involving ISO certification;
- Involvement of students in key committees;
- Exchange/mobility programs are already directed towards Europe which aligns with the new recruitment strategy;
- Established collaborations with industry and academic partners; and
- Industry experience of staff bringing context to learning.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- Instigation of a programme-level assessment of satisfaction;
- Completion of development and implementation of KPIs;
- Integration of the plagiarism detection software into the leaning platform that should be used by students to submit their assignments;
- Modest restructuring of the curriculum to add new modules and merge or eliminate others;
- Rethinking of ECTS allocation based on actual workload in practice; and
- Better highlighting of the job prospects that students can realistically expect.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	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**

Findings

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

Mesoyios College facilitates a student-centred learning environment via the provision of support to learners through various means and support services. This includes an academic adviser who is allocated to each student. The College's Registrar confirmed during a meeting with the EEC that each academic adviser is encouraged to meet with their student advisees twice a semester. While this is not mandatory, the measure would help to ensure that issues ranging from welfare to academics are picked up and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

It was also reiterated by the administrative team during their meeting with the EEC that, while complaints are few and far between, there are processes in place to ensure that these are documented and resolved in a timely fashion. It is also evident that a number of academic staff has relevant experience in their fields of delivery, and some are pursuing a doctorate in the field of tourism and hospitality. This allows the synthesis of theory and practice critical to a vocational and context specific programme.

Course outlines are mostly structured to be generic, indicating teaching and learning methods and concise assessment modes. During the EEC's meeting with teaching staff, it was evident that teaching sessions were interactive and student-centred, encouraging students to engage. At the EEC's meeting with students, the latter were expressly complementary of academic staff whom they felt were attentive and ever ready to help and advice.

The College provided the EEC with a short demonstration of the Edu4schools web platform. It was reiterated by the College that the platform was launched in October 2020 to enhance the students' learning, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; nonetheless, the five students whom the evaluation panel spoke to were not cognisant of the platform. It would appear that Edu4schools is more of a platform for the effective management of the College, from student attendance to communication with parents or teachers' productivity and has little to do with truly enabling e-learning and facilitating interaction with students online. The college further indicated that online classes were conducted via MS Teams. This was confirmed by the students.

It was noted by the EEC that the module outline for Research Methods module (RSH300) submitted for evaluation, indicated that the 'course content' includes 'the basics of Educational Research' and the required textbook is about 'Research in Education' (ECTS is indicated erroneously as 5 on the course document). The EEC further feels that the module content is overly ambitious as it contains the entire nine parts of the required textbook. Upon inquiring during the panel discussion, the module leader indicated that the course module submitted is outdated, and the new outline (which the evaluation panel do not have sight of) accurately reflects the content of the research methods module.

Similar issues in course content, learning outcomes and assessment were found in Final year project 1 (FYP490) and Final year project 2 (FYP491). An example of one of many misalignments is the required word count for FYP490, 6 ECTS is 3000 words, while FYP491, 6 ECTS is a 20,000-word count requirement (see also earlier comments on ECTS allocation in Section 1 of this report). While the EEC acknowledges that the College may have a process in place for monitoring teaching and assessment methods based on objectives and intended learning outcomes, the EEC would strongly recommend that the College carefully re-examines their course content and assessment weighting in line with the number of credits and the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

2.2 Practical Training

A number of academic staff with industry experience indicated how they incorporate practice into theory for the students. Students also have access to practical labs for rooms division and food and beverage management.

It was revealed to the EEC that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed with a casino hotel which would enable their students to visit and experience the operations of a casino first-hand. This is paramount to the students' learning experience as the programme's only 'Casino Management' course does not include the introductory and operational aspects of a casino, such as slot operations, table games, race and sports book operations, casino cage operations, surveillance and internal controls (see also related comments in section 1 of this report).

2.3 Student Assessment

Assessments for each module are approved by an internal review prior to use. Students are encouraged to prepare their assessments well in advance of deadlines. They are also aware of assessment requirements prior to submission. Assessment criteria and its requirements are therefore transparent. Students are able to seek formative feedback throughout their programme, via in-class exercises and homework. According to the students, coursework is returned with marks but not written feedback – the College may like to consider the introduction of written feedback on a standardised feedback sheet that includes marks against marking criteria, what the student did well, and how the student can improve in the future. Students were able to contact staff to discuss marks and informal feedback, including of presentations, coursework and exams.

A sample of assessed work is moderated or second marked internally to ensure consistency and fairness. If students feel their mark is unfair, they can contact the course leader to discuss and verify. The evaluation panel recommends that the College considers the moderating a definitive number of assessed work, for example a minimum of 6 for smaller class sized and 20% for the rest.

Strengths

o   Moderation procedures in place to ensure consistency and fairness of marks

o   Access to Erasmus placements

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Area for improvement:

1. The EEC strongly recommends that the College carefully re-examines their course content and assessment weighting in line with the number of credits and the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Specific courses to note are (i) Research Methods – RSH300, (ii) Final Year Project 1-FYP490, (iii) Final Year Project 2 – FYP491.

Recommendations:

1. To consider acquiring an online learning platform for the primary purpose of enabling student e-learning and facilitating streamlined engagement with students.
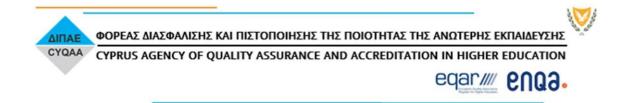
2. To consider developing a separate 'Casino Operations' course (or at least to incorporate related contents in the introductory module suggested in section 1 of this report) that is run alongside visits to casino properties with whom the college has established a memorandum of understanding (MOU). As reiterated in the findings, having a course on 'Casino Management' where the students have little or no understanding of slot operations, table games, race and sports book operations, casino cage operations, surveillance and internal controls, is not fit for purpose.

3. To ensure that assessment feedback, in particular reports and essays, should have written feedback accompanying the students' marks.

4. To consider moderating a definitive number of assessed work. For example, a minimum of 6 (for smaller classes) and 20% for bigger classes.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

Findings

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development.

For development of teaching staff the College supports with attending conferences, membership in professional bodies and travel expenses for fieldwork with 2% of academic revenues to be spent annually for such staff development activities. From discussion with teaching staff it has emerged that the College is supportive of those undertaking doctoral degrees, and teaching and administrative tasks are usually planned around the PhD commitments. It is the EEC's impression that student evaluations do not have a very significant impact on the staff member's promotion, remuneration and such. To incentivise members of staff the College operates a 2% increase on direct payroll.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

The college employs 15 full time and 4 part time academic and faculty staff, out of which 17 hold a Masters' degree, 4 are PhD candidates and 3 are also PhD holders. Nonetheless, two full-time members of staff involved in the teaching of the English language hold only a bachelor's degree, which is an area of concern. The College has recently advertised a lecturer position with the requirement of a PhD degree, but its top management team claimed (in their discussion with the EEC) that the College has not received any interest. The EEC strongly advises that the College should undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree.

3.3. Synergies between research and teaching

The College invests an amount of €24,500 with an annual increase of 30% from other funds to be obtained through EU/Cyprus Government and other research funding sources. So far, the College has been able to attract some visiting faculty from other schools and countries such Poland, India and Switzerland. There is a Research Committee in place, but it is the impression of this EEC that this Committee might not be too active or with a set of well-defined portfolio.
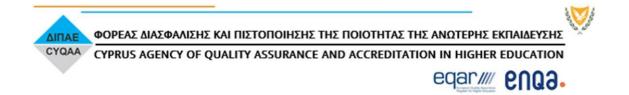
Strengths
- The College is forward facing looking for development in the future and for international collaborations. Particularly, the collaboration with the Swiss Hotel Management School (SHMS) part of the Swiss Education Group (SEG) plays an important role in their current activities of linking students withinstitutions abroad where they can continue their vocational courses with Bachelor and Masters degrees.

- The College is currently pursuing further such collaborations with Glion Institute of Higher Education and Les Roches Global Hospitality Education (members of SOMMET Education Group, Switzerland). Both these institutes recognize all courses of the College's hospitality and business programmes of study and their graduates can transfer credits and continue their studies in Switzerland to obtain a Bachelor's degree in their relevant programs of study, either hospitality or business (1 year + 4-6 months internship). This can be further pursued for the Hotel Casino and Resort Management certificate in due course.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The EEC strongly advises that the College should undertake every possible effort to help existing members of staff to enrol into PhD programmes as well as to employ new academics who hold a doctoral degree. In this context, the EEC would welcome an increased visibility of advertised positions in academic for a such as Trinet tourism and hospitality community https://tim.hawaii.edu/about-values-vision-mission-accreditation/trinet/, or internationally or academic job fora such as www.jobs.ac.uk, www.timeshighereducations.com, www.akadeus.com.
- Increased attention to Affirmative Action policies in staff recruitment and development.
- Setting up a small research centre to co-ordinate research activities.
- Make use of a Conference Application form to further encourage staff to attend conference, and to streamline the process. An example of such a form can be found below:

Request for Conference Attendance

Sections 1-5 to be completed by the applicant initially. From to be updated, via the completion of sections 6 & 7, once the outcome of journal submission is known

1. Basic Information

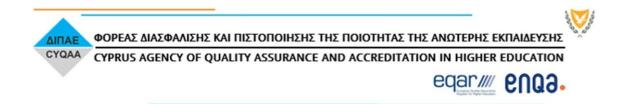|	
Name of Applicant:	
Conference Title, Date, Place, Web-URL (attach call, if not available)	
Conference Organiser	
How significant is this conference to your research discipline? (1= not very significant, 5= very significant)	
Is this conference linked to a journal? If so, please list here	
Estimated costs in £:	
- Conference fee	
- Estimated travel costs	
- Estimated hotel costs	
- Subsistence	
- Additional costs	
Total estimated costs	

2. Impact on Other Duties
(*Please tick on of the boxes & add other details as appropriate*)

	Please tick
I have no other duties for the dates mentioned above	
I have other duties for the dates mentioned above and detail the cover arrangements below	
I have other duties for the dates mentioned above but have no cover arrangements in place	
Other details (e.g. agreed cover arrangements)	

3. Contribution of Attendee
(*Please complete as relevant*)

Presentation of **Abstract/ Paper** (s)? (Insert Title and Author(s))	
Has this Abstract/ Paper been presented before? If so, where?	
Presentation of **Invited Paper** (s)? (Insert Title and Author(s))	
Session Chair/ Moderator? (Please specify)	
Attendance only (Please tick)	
Other contribution? (e.g. chair, please specify)	

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4. Expected Outcomes/ Contribution

(*Please select all that are relevant*)

Please note that the School policy is that conference attendance should involve the presentation of a paper (one per each person attending) and this paper should then be submitted to a journal

I intend to develop the paper and target it at a recognised journal *(Please state which journal you intend to target and when)*	
The paper will be eligible for submission to a special issue associated with the conference *(Please specify journal and give an indication of publication date)*	
I am attending the conference to look for research collaborators *(Please specify)*	
I am working with other researchers attending the conference *(Please specify)*	
I expect to establish or maintain contacts with my research network *(Please specify)*	
I intend to benefit in other ways from attending the conference *(Please specify)*	

5. Previous Conference Attendance – Paper Details

Conference (last three years)	Dates	Outcome of Paper*

* - please detail what happened to the paper e.g. published in journal [name], submitted to journal(s) [name(s)] plus outcome (if known), not submitted to journal but plan to submit to [name], paper not taken any further
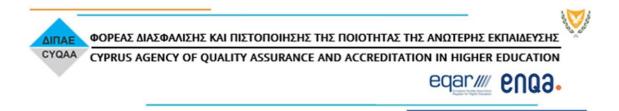
6. Signature

(*to cover sections 1-5*)

Name	
Signature	
Date	

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

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

Findings

4.1 Student Admission, Processes, and Criteria

The College follows a non-discrimination student admission policy whilst evaluating each candidate regardless of their race, religion, sex, disability, or nationality. This is a great way to introduce a varied range of academic backgrounds and experiences which potential students can share with each other and promote a cultural heritage development in the student community of the College. Related processes are carried out and implemented in a transparent manner and based on students' previous records and high school grades.

In terms of regulations and admission criteria, the College's policies are identical to those of other tertiary education establishments in Cyprus; these include a Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate and Proficiency in English language. For non-Higher-Secondary-Certificate holders, candidates may submit an equivalent qualification of Higher Secondary Education from their country of origin which can be evaluated accordingly.

Moreover, potential students are given the opportunity to apply for admission at any time, from the beginning of fall semester to the beginning of spring semester. This is very important for students who may not be able to enroll at the beginning of the academic year which is in fall semester and are instead given the opportunity to be admitted in the spring semester without missing out the whole academic year.

4.2 Student Progression

There is adequate monitoring of the students' progress during their studies, and more specifically their participation in the educational process through daily observation of class attendance. In addition, different forms of evaluations are being carried out throughout the semester to determine student progression in a continuous manner. Teaching staff are always in disposal when it comes to inquiries and are ready to answer any questions in advance as well as provide feedback; this is recognized and appreciated by students as discussed in their meeting with the EEC.

As discussed previously in this report, student services and support teams are provided and include academic advising, student's affairs office, student welfare, career support, personal support, counselling services, mobility office. The Student Affairs Office is dedicated to assisting students in their personal and academic development as well as progression. Moreover, students are also appointed an academic advisor who is following an open-door policy for students, meaning he or she is to be always available at any time.

As stated in the official website, the Academic Advisor meets each student twice every semester to review and discuss the student's academic performance and progression.

A Grading Revision Procedure may also take place in case students believe that they may have been unfairly treated. The lecturer then fills out the necessary form of ''Change of Grades'' which would explain the reason for changing the grade.

Furthermore, Erasmus+ is also implemented and aims to give students a lifetime experience of what is like to be working or studying abroad. Erasmus is designed especially for academic institutions and students and provides beneficial support to all of them.

4.3 Student recognition

An assessment of evaluation is carried out regarding ECTS credits where students arriving at the College with prior qualifications may be exempted from attending certain modules. This a task undertaken by the Academic Committee and the Module Leader who are responsible in evaluating and ensuring comparability. The recognition process is always performed in transparency by examining and comparing the module in regards with ECTS, content and level.

Academic credits that have been earned in one programme may be possibly transferred into another programme in the same or another College. This transfer is only possible if credits from other sources are acknowledged and the process follows the accumulation of ECTS Key Documents which include course catalogue, student application form, learning agreement and transcript of records.

In addition, potential students may earn credits from life or work experience, business or industrial training programs and other achievements. This is conducted with a submission of a portfolio documenting the learning outcomes achieved outside the formal university courses. Hence, the learning or accomplishments that result from work experience are therefore credited.

4.4 Student certification

The criteria that must be met upon graduation include the completion of the programme requirements as indicated in the study guide, completion of all credits in each programme as specified in the study guide, a CPA of > 2.0 and a settlement of all financial obligations to the College. Then, the application for the issuance is laid out at the Office of the Registrar.

The process of final grading is thoroughly and carefully assessed through moderation by the relevant department and the Academic Committee as well. Marks are then authorized and approved by the Registrar with complete transparency.

Strengths
- All incoming students are given an English placement test upon their entry. This is very important for candidates to identify any weakness regarding their proficiency level as English is the main language of the course. In this way, the College can keep a track of each students' level and therefore recommend

appropriate English language courses. For certificate holders of IELTS and IGCSE the test may not be mandatory, and candidates will be able to follow normal program requirements.

- All regulations and policies are in place and carried out in a transparent manner. Several opportunities are also given to candidates regarding the entry criteria as well as the beginning of the academic year individually.

- Fifteen total admissions are expected in 2021 when the course is to officially be introduced. This is a good number to provide each student with a personalized level of care in an efficient and effective manner.

- Student services are important regarding individual progression as students are given the opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with their personal academic advisor and discuss all kinds of matters. Adequate forms of evaluation such as questionnaires, tests and quizzes are also very helpful for students to monitor their progress continuously and determine any weakness that should be rectified.

- Erasmus internships and exchange programs are vital to students' progression as they get to experience the outside world and expand their career opportunities.

- The College is flexible with the grading system and students can claim a re-evaluation and change of grade in case a mistake has been made. They may also appeal for permission to retake part of a module assessment requirement to improve a grade.

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition and ECTS crediting are in place. Mobility is well promoted and all essential components in student recognition are performed in accordance with the official regulations and principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

- The College is in partnership with other academic institutions enabling students to continue their studies in another institution of their choice. The process is carried out with caution and is based on a transfer evaluation by the relevant programme coordinator and follows the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Culture. All aspects of recognizing and crediting a module are examined and carried out in transparency. This is a great opportunity for students who wish to be admitted into another institution with prior qualifications and ECTS credits earned in another accredited programme of study. Whether that is another college of university, the transfer of ECTS credits is essential and important for students who want to go further with their studies and ensure progress as well.

- Crediting work experience is also very important and a great way to reward students for their extracurricular work and therefore enhance motivation within personal capabilities.

- The College acknowledges academic merit by rewarding students with academic excellence. This is a great way to motivate students and improve their performance through their studies and therefore graduate with a CPA that showcases their capabilities, qualifications and learning outcomes that have been achieved.

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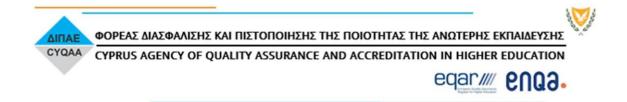
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- Pre-defined and published regulations in the official website regarding student certification are in place. The certification is accompanied by a diploma supplement which is in line with the European and International standards as well. The certification showcases all the qualifications gained throughout the 4-year bachelor's degree including achieved learning outcomes and context that were successfully completed. These processes are laid out in the regulations which are publicly available on the Institute's website.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- For candidates who may lack of Proficiency in English language, a summer course language programme may be implemented prior to the start of the academic year and admission into the formal College programme. This will help candidates bring their skills up to date, improve their communication skills and engage successfully in the programme as well.

- Whether a career placement is to be mandatory throughout the 4-year bachelor's degree and take form of a semester instead of offering classes, internships offer students the opportunity to acquire direct working experience in a business organization. The implementation of a 6-month or a summer internship should be considered as students owe to get a full orientation of both theoretical, practical but working classes as well.

- Regarding absences, it is important that a monitoring plan be performed to keep a track record of absences as well as justify why those absences and non-engagement occur and therefore aim to eliminate them.

- A suggestion may be whether it should be mandatory for students to participate in obligatory training schemes that may take place during summer. If these training schemes are credited upon completion, then the students will be more motivated to work, gain experience and improve their interpersonal skills as well. The industry is in great need of graduates who can demonstrate a balance between both theory and practice and the best way to achieve this is within work experience which should be gained alongside the 4-year bachelor's degree.

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

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

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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

Findings

5.1 Teaching and Learning Resources
Based on the video tour of the College premises, the teaching and learning environment appears to be adequate and readily accessible for students. While the mock-up of guest rooms and a dining facility are adequate to support the achievement of the programme's objectives, the evaluation panel encouraged the College to consider the use of relevant online simulation software to augment the teaching of contemporary management issues specific to hotel and resort management, for example 'Revenue Management' (see also related comment in Section 1 of this report).

The College provides students and staff with infrastructure and facilities suitably adjusted to the functioning of the programme. The College relies on the Microsoft Teams platform to deal with both asynchronous and synchronous learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The College also remained open during the pandemic enabling students to use its IT facilities and library. As discussed in section 2 of this report, the College should consider investing in another online learning platform for the students. While Edu4schools may serve as an effective education management platform for running the school, it does not appear to augment the students' learning experience.

The College claims to subscribe to Plagarism CheckerX, although the free version was presented to the EEC. The EEC would strongly encourage the College to consider acquiring a plagiarism software that provides the marker/academic with an efficient measure of plagiarism detection. This software should ideally be integrated to the students' online learning platform, so as to enable the students' to check their work for plagiarism prior to submission (see also related comment in Section 1 of this report).

The college subscription to EBSCOhost was terminated, but the management team reassured the EEC that the subscription will be reinstated for 2021/2022.

5.2 Physical Resources
Based on the video tour of the college premises, the physical resources, i,e, premises, library, classrooms, study facilities and availability of computers appear to be adequate in the support of the study programme.

Available resources appear to be fit for purpose and students are aware of the services available.

5.3 Human Support Resources
The College operates a mentoring system where each student is allocated an academic member of staff as an academic advisor. The EEC observed that the administrative staff are enthusiastic and motivated, as

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they regaled the panel with examples of how they ensure that students receive the support required. These include counselling services that are outsourced to a professional external provider. The College also assured the EEC that provisions are in place for students with learning needs. In accordance to CYQAA regulations, the College has also ensured compliance in accommodating students with physical disabilities. Students appear to be aware of the range of services provided and provided.

5.4 Student Support
The College has a process for the Recognition of Prior Learning enabling student mobility across different tertiary education institutions. The five (5) international students who met with the EEC confirmed that the College provided highly satisfactory student support services.
The College operates a Student Affairs office with a dedicated student affairs officer. The following services are provided by the student affairs office:
- Personal development
- Student welfare services
- Erasmus+ advice
- Academic/ personal counselling services
- Career placement

The College has established articulation arrangements with various overseas institutions. Students expressed their satisfaction from their internship experience in Poland, which was arranged by the College. Students who had financial difficulties were permitted to pay their tuition fees over a number of instalments. Scholarships are also offered based on academic merit. Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.
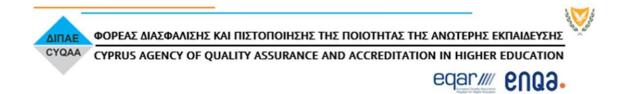
Strengths

1. A structured support system appears to be in place for international students
2. Availability of professional counselling services for student.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Recommendations:

1. To consider acquiring a plagiarism software that provides the marker/academic with an efficient measure of plagiarism detection. This software should ideally be integrated to the students' online learning platform, so as to enable the students' to check their work for plagiarism prior to submission (see related comment in section 1 of this report).

2. To consider acquiring suitable online simulation software to augment the teaching of contemporary issues specific to hotel and resort management, for example 'Revenue Management'.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

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		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

There is clear enthusiasm, appetite, and determination to make this proposed programme in Hotel Casino and Resort Management work, and with it to grow the educational provisions of Mesoyios College. There is a clear organisational structure that supports proper provision of courses and the development of their provision through several committees on quality assurance, academic matters, disciplinary procedures, student affairs, as well as health and safety.

The College has demonstrated their clear procedures for quality assurance in the material presented to the EEC and also a on the public-facing College website. Moreover, and in collaboration with QUALISYS CONSULTANTS LTD the College has developed, implemented and is in the final certification stages of a quality management system based on the requirements of the ISO 9001:2015. The regulations are appropriate and show what is required of staff and students in terms of behaviour and commitment.
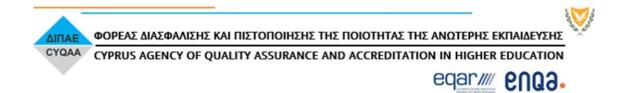
The titles, outlines and approaches in some courses could be further refined so as to make clear links with hotel casino and resort management topic. The EEC encourages the College to add an introductory module on Resorts and Casinos in Semester 1 or 2. Given that the words 'resort' and 'casino' appear in the title of the programme, waiting to be taught relevant topics until semester 7 and 8 respectively (as is currently the case) may disappoint some of the students. Likewise, the College is advised to add new modules such as Economics, Revenue Management, and Intercultural Communications appropriately contextualized. Existing modules may also have a service management orientation.

For this planned programme the College plans to increase the number of students to 45 in 2022, and 80 in 2023 targeting mostly international students. Given that the programme is taught in English, all incoming students are given an English placement test upon their entry which is crucial in identifying any English language weakness, regarding their proficiency level. For IELTS and IGCSE certificate holders the test may not be mandatory, and candidates will be able to follow the usual program requirements.

To ensure quality control among students' submitted work, the College uses Plagiarism CheckerX, but only a free version, rather than a subscription, was presented to the EEC. The EEC would strongly encourage the College to consider acquiring a plagiarism software which should be integrated into the students' online learning platform, so as to enable the students to check their own work for plagiarism prior to submission. There could be provisions for delivery of Library workshop around plagiarism and correct referencing.

The college subscription to EBSCOhost was terminated, but the management team reassured the EEC that the subscription will be reinstated for 2021/2022.

Regarding teaching personnel. the College actively supports development of staff with attending conferences, membership in professional bodies and travel expenses for fieldwork, and has committed 2% of academic revenues to be spent annually for such staff development activities. It is the EEC's impression that student evaluations do not have a very significant impact on the staff member's promotion, remuneration and such. To incentivise members of staff the College operates a 2% increase on direct payroll.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Andreas Papatheodorou	
Professor Dorina – Maria Buda	
Dr Wai Mun Lim	
Ms Natalia Sofokleous	

Date: 29/06/2021