

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 15-04-2021

External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
European University Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Business Administration
- **Department/ Sector:** Management and Marketing
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (4 Έτη/240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)» Εξ' Αποστάσεως

In English:

Business Studies (4 Years, 240 ECTS, BBA)

- **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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following the invitation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) had the opportunity to evaluate the BBA distance learning programme in Business Administration at European University Cyprus (EUC). The meeting was organized online and coordinated by Mr. Avramis Despotis and took place on April 5, 2021. The committee would like to thank the CYQAA coordinator for a well-organized online visit and the EUC faculty, administration and school leadership for their cooperation and support.

The committee had the opportunity to meet with the senior management, the academic faculty, support staff and students of the EUC. During the meetings, the committee attended presentations related to the university and the programme. The EEC had the opportunity to ask questions related to the programme, faculty, and the institution more broadly and ask additional evidence when it was required. At the committee's request, EUC generously provided additional information after the virtual meetings. These included the PowerPoint presentations of the EUC and the programme, samples of course notes, samples of exams and additional information on the distance learning infrastructure and environment.

Comprehensive video presentations of the EUC campus facilities were provided prior to the visit. However, these facilities are not necessarily relevant for online programmes. The external committee recommends that future external evaluation committees receive prior to the visit more information regarding the distance learning infrastructure and environment as this is critical for distance learning education.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Ernst Verwaal (chair)	Full Professor	University of Leuven
Pernille Eskerod	Full Professor	Webster Private University Vienna
Christos Kolympiris	Associate Professor	University of Warwick
Rob Koper	Distinguished University Professor	Open University of the Netherlands
Lito Zymaride	Student representative	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

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

The Distance learning Business Studies programme is a flexible programme that allows students to choose from a broad range of courses. The programme is consistent with developments in

society and in general, the curriculum of the Business Studies reflects the subject areas that are relevant for a 4 years/240 ECTS BBA distance learning programme. That being said, the curriculum has a traditional modular design and should according to the committee include more modern approaches focused on competence building. The discussions with teaching staff and students reinforced this assessment. The panel strongly recommends explaining in detail how each module contributes to the competences that the programme aims to develop, how distance learning techniques assist in this development and how each module builds on the knowledge of previous courses.

Furthermore, research orientation is essential for building dynamic management skills in modern academic business education and practice. It is not enough to transfer best practices. In a dynamic and global business environment, business professionals are expected to have the capacity to integrate new knowledge and adapt to change in the business environment. This requires the students to develop the competence to integrate recent research findings from high quality scholarly sources in managerial decisions and routines. The development of this dynamic competence requires teaching staff to be active researchers and to integrate recent research articles in the curriculum. In this area, the programme can significantly benefit from improvement.

Finally, student-staff interaction is an important part of high-quality business education. Students are not required to attend the online classes, which raises concerns regarding the level of student-staff interaction. The number of foreign staff and students is small, which limits the essential intercultural competence building for students in the programme.

Strengths

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

The programme is offered with a high level of flexibility to the students. Lectures are recorded and can be reviewed by the students. Students can combine a broad range of courses, which gives students a wider range of employability.

The programme has a high success rate and student satisfaction. Learning resources and student support are sufficiently available.

The EUC has high standards of quality assurance and is compliant with European standards and guidelines. The programme has an ongoing evaluation review process that ensures a continuous improvement of the student experience.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Core fields of business studies are not listed under core requirements. For example, operations and management science (MGT325) is a core field in business studies but not a required module for the BBA students. A course in business logistics or supply chain management is not offered as part of the curriculum. The “major fields of study” are dominated by marketing courses. The students would benefit from a broader range of topics in the curriculum.

The EUC needs to explain the contribution of distance learning technology and resources to the intended learning outcomes of the modules.

The committee acknowledges that the flexibility provided by the recording of online sessions. However, this may also lead to low student-staff interaction. The committee recommends that minimum level of participation in the online sessions is a component of the student assessment.

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 Compliance
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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
 - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- **Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?**
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- **Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?**
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

The available teaching and learning resources must fit the teaching and learning model of the university. Shortly described they are as follows. The EUC:

- provides a 240 ECTS distance teaching BBA programme to international and national students in a semester system through the Distance Education Unit.
- derived the distance teaching programme from the existing residential variant that is offered by the university,
- uses a mix of blackboard, MS teams/BB Collaborate, office 365 and an online proctoring tool to provide the synchronous and asynchronous interaction between students, teachers and

learning resources. Moodle is used for staff development and resource sharing among staff members.

- The pedagogical model for DL is originally derived and adapted from the UOC Barcelona. The adaptations are partly due to differences in culture and legislation. The model provides three fundamental pillars for DL: learning resources, collaboration and guidance from instructors.
- The pedagogical planning, teacher training, etc. is supported by the Team of Pedagogical Planning, consisting of scholars from the different faculties and chaired by the director of the Distance Education Unit.

Assessment

We found that assessment is consistently applied to all students. The criteria for the method of assessment are published well in advance. Students are given feedback but carried out by one examiner. A formal appeal procedure is in place that allows students to challenge the grade. The assessment methods include group and individual assignments and a formal exam. No minimum grades apply to the subcategories of the assessment.

Strengths

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

The student's development of digital skills supported in educational activities.

The teaching staff is using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective.

Student feedback is very positive on the content and arrangement of practical training.

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 programme is not well adapted to distance learning (see also Section 5).

The programme does not safeguard sufficient student-staff interaction.

The research development of the staff does not guarantee sufficient input from theory and research into the programme.

Although EUC has appropriate assessment methods. It could consider that assessment is carried out by more than one examiner. To ensure the quality of the exams, the committee recommends the inspection of the exams by a second expert, preferably from another institute.

Currently, the EUC does not apply minimum scores for the subcomponents of the assessment. The committee recommends applying at least a minimum score for each of the components to ensure that students have a sufficiently broad competence level.

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	Partially Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

The EUC has a competent teaching staff and a clear process for the recruitment and development. However, not all staff members hold the PHD level. This may be acceptable for vocational programmes that are only focused on the transfer of best practices from the industry to students or in executive programs where the students already have developed their academic skills. However, students in a BBA programme still need to develop their core academic skills and therefore these skills should be adequately addressed in the programme. The development of academic skills should primarily be the responsibility of research active staff with a PHD qualification.

The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and e-teaching-skills training. Promotion of teaching staff takes into account the quality of teaching and research. The committee has, however, concerns regarding the evaluation of research which is based on quantity rather than quality standards.

The teaching/administrative workload for the staff is relatively high, which may be a barrier to their professional development. Finally, the number of foreign staff is limited which limits the intercultural student-staff interaction.

Strengths

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

Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff.

Innovation in teaching methods is encouraged and supported.

Extensive student evaluation is conducted on the teaching staff and the results are adequately taken into account.

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.

Evaluation of research should be based on quality academic journal lists such as the journal list of the Association of Business Schools.

The programme would benefit from attracting more foreign staff.

Staff needs more time and resources to develop their research ambitions.

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	Partially 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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

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

The evaluation committee has extensive discussion with the students about their experience at EUC. The students expressed great satisfaction with their learning experience. The admission requirements for the study are appropriate, however, the level of international students is very limited. The students expressed that they consider interaction with foreign students as an important area of improvement for the programme.

Strengths

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

The EUC has pre-defined regulations and processes regarding student progression.

Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure coherent recognition in line with European and international standards.

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.

Increase the number of foreign students to enhance intercultural skills of the students.

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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
 - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
 - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
 - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*

- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

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

Teaching and Learning resources

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*

Instruction is provided per course, using a variety of learning activities. The kind of interaction is not described, this is up to the individual professors to decide, although the required activities are roughly categorized into four areas: questioning techniques, sharing of ideas and perspectives, discussion and instructor guidance and feedback.

- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
The distance learning variant of the course is supported by the Distance Education Unit and the Pedagogical Planning Team.
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).* The facilities are redundant, so adequate for changes in e.g. student numbers.
- *All resources are fit for purpose.* This seems to be the case.
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.* Students have flexibility in time and tempo, within certain boundaries and the programme is able to cope with the planning issues derived from this flexibility.

Standards: Physical resources

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
The descriptions of annex 4 and 5 are not specifically focused on the distance teaching infrastructure. The information we have, and the additional documents requested, provide little information. However, from its contents it can be derived that the university has the tools to operate distance teaching, however, it is questioned how integrated these are within a uniform learning environment which enables seamless integrated work and monitoring of student activities/learning analytics based on activities in all platforms.
Also the information about the library is focused more on campus students than distance learners. However, given that all library resources are mainly digital, we can expect that all scientific sources can be accessed online at home/work by every DL student.

Standards: Human support resources

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

The human support resources that are available at the university for this programme are adequate and can be adapted to changing needs of the programme.

Standards: Student support

- *Students well supported, given their different backgrounds.*

The university has a well-developed system of student support, also here most of the description makes it unclear whether this is all available for distance teaching students in the same way as residential students.

Strengths

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

The EUC has a campus that offers the students adequate online resources for distance learning teaching. Students have easily access courses and rich online resources and databases.

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.

- In the discussion with the Head of IT it was asked whether the university is actively guarding its infrastructure for hacking (e.g. ransomware as happened to the University Maastricht and is still *not* solved by them today). The director answered that this would never happen to us, which is a sign of underestimating the threat. This is not acceptable for a serious online university offering.
- The pedagogical model for DL that is provided is still underdeveloped, it does not give any guidance in its current form to course developers how to use digital means to attain certain categories of learning outcomes for specific learners/groups. The advice would be to put an effort in developing this into much more detail and use it as the base for teacher training and course development/test and evaluation.
- The learning platform for online teaching is not yet integrated enough. From the very limited descriptions provided it seems to be a set of different tools/platforms, that are not heavily integrated. Also, we learned from students that teachers prefer email for assignments and feedback, making this communication completely out of control for the institute. Particularly worrying is that the plagiarism checks can be omitted in this way.
- In the presentation we saw a system that was set to English, but still provided Greek information in the user interface. The explanation was that this was due to a 'last minute change'. In a professional environment this should not happen, and it is questioned whether the governance and testing of the learning environments is sufficiently organised.

The EUC has no clear privacy/safety policy for the online environment. This is particularly a concern for an online programme. The committee recommends that the EUC develops a privacy and security protocol that adequately secures the information and the privacy of the students.

The overall impression is that the DL variant of the BBA programme has been derived to directly from the existing programme without sufficient effort to adapt and support it as a real distance teaching programme that offers all the advantages of online learning, while preventing its disadvantages.

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	Not Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks


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

The committee thanks the EUC senior management, the academic faculty, support staff and students for their effort to inform the committee during the online visit. We also appreciate that the EEC had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions related to the programme. Faculty and the institution more broadly provided a constructive response when it was requested by the committee.

The EUC is a quality-driven institution that applies adequate internal quality control and monitoring procedures. Students appreciate the learning experience at EUC. However, the committee has the impression that the distance learning component has been insufficiently developed. Critical requirements of distance learning education are not met. Furthermore, in the areas of building synergies between research and teaching, increased cross-cultural competence building, external checks on assessment of quality and a clear vision on how individual modules contribute to the students' competence building in a distance learning environment are missing.

In the committee's assessment, these issues require substantial improvements that need to be addressed before the programme can be accredited as a distance learning BBA in Business Studies.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Ernst Verwaal (Chair)	
Pernille Eskerod	
Christos Kolympiris	
Rob Koper	
Lito Zymaride	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 15-04-2021