Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Central Lancashire (UClan) Cyprus**

- **Town: Larnaca**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): School of Business and Enterprise**

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

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

  In Greek:

  BA (Hons) Διαχείριση Φιλοξενίας και Τουρισμού (4 χρόνια, 240 ECTS)

  In English:

  BA (Hons) Hospitality and Tourism Management (4 years, 240 ECTS)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

A. Introduction

The EEC online visit to the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Cyprus to evaluate the BA (Hons) Hospitality and Tourism Management (4 years, 240 ECTS) took place on the 28th of May 2021. This evaluation is based on the application document submitted by UCLan, Cyprus, and the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC) series of video conference meetings with the management team, a random group of teaching staff and students.

During the online visit the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions to the Directors, teaching and administrative staff and students. The meetings took place in a warm and fruitful atmosphere; all questions asked were effectively and kindly answered.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Carlos Costa	Full Professor	University of Aveiro
Nevenka Cavlek	Full Professor	University of Zagreb
Wai Mun Lim	Associate Professor	University of Plymouth, UK
Lito Zymaride	Student	University of Cyprus

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

Findings

Policy for quality assurance

The School has developed an objective Quality Assurance System. The School operates within quality objectives set up and reviewed internally annually. An annual evaluation of the programme takes into account the feedback from students via course feedback questionnaires issued on completion of each course, and from the faculty responsible for each course. An overall report of the feedback is provided to the Student Experience and Engagement Committee. The outcomes of the review are reported by using a standard format. The School also conducts annual surveys from its alumni in order to benchmark the programme effectiveness on student experience after graduation. The received feedback is considered by the Head of the School for further actions.

The Periodic Review enables the School to consider the medium-term development of their provision based on an analysis of their courses since the last periodic review. The School has implemented a clearly defined QA structure with procedures that enable continuous curriculum reform and a practice of consultation with faculty. To improve the periodic review, the School uses external examiners as third party reviewers.

The programme is scheduled to undergo a periodic review every 5 years for re-approval in order to ensure its currency, relevance and resources.

There is an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism. The School uses Turn-it-in software and makes sure that every student is informed about it. Reference to plagiarism is also made with the student and module handbooks.

Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The programme under review, BA (Hons) Hospitality and Tourism Management is delivered as a double award degree with the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK. It offers a broad spectrum of subject areas related to tourism and hospitality sector. It is delivered in conventional form and in the English language. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the School successfully switched to online programme delivery. The programme is concentrated on developing students' business and entrepreneurial skills, by balancing practical skills and theoretical knowledge with a global tourism perspective. The aim is to develop effective, responsible managers both in Cyprus and internationally. According to the statement in the Self-Assessment Report, the programme has been designed to deliver graduates who will be "purpose-made" and "job-ready" for the industry.

The programme fits well with the UCLan Cyprus internationalization strategy. The programme recruits students both domestically from its local market and internationally. There is a good balance of domestic and international students (47% and 53% accordingly) with no concentration of particular nationality.

The programme ILOs are well specified and are clear. Specific course ILOs are expressed in a well-structured and coherent manner. The programme offers 17 compulsory courses, 19 optional and two University electives (French and

Russian). The variety of courses offer students an excellent opportunity to specialize in different areas of tourism and hospitality according to their individual fields of interests and personal professional aspirations.

Improvement is always possible; the EEC panel recommends that the team examines the overlapping of courses within the programme. For example, the course *Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism Operations* and the course *Tourism Essentials* have the same content in several parts and both courses are compulsory. Additionally, the delivery of the course *Tourism Essentials* would definitely be more appropriate in the first year of study, and not as it is at present (in the second semester of the second year of study).

Harmonization of the contents of courses throughout curriculum is generally recommended. Namely, in several cases, as for example *International Hospitality Management,* overlapping occurs with the course *Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism Operations* as well as with the course *International Issues in Hospitality.* The same applies to some optional courses.

Another issue to be considered relates to the course *The Tourist: Experiences and Motivation.* The set course objectives relate to tourism sociology, anthropology and social psychology. However, the course coordinator has no formal education in these particular fields, neither has she published any related research in this field.

Taking into account the importance of tourism development and its sustainability not only for the Cyprus economy, one would expect that the course dealing with *Tourism Development and Sustainability* is an obligatory course in the offered programme. It is also surprising to find out that the learning outcomes of this course relate only to environmental sustainability and not to all three pillars of sustainable development, i.e People, Profit and Planet.

The course entitled *Marketing and ICT for Visitor Economy Managers* has a very extensive content. The EEC is of the opinion that some content downsizing should be taken into account, thus enabling a more thorough concentration on the aspects of ICT for Visitor Economy Managers (which could be a separate course). For example, tourist behavior is extensively covered in a separate obligatory course *The Tourist: Behavior and Culture,* which is delivered in the same semester as the course on marketing, or service characteristics already covered in another course.

Furthermore, the EEC noticed that courses related to research methods are not mandatory. Therefore, it might happen that a student can complete the study programme without obtaining necessary research skills.

Internship is not made compulsory to students. However, the School has an excellent opportunity to position itself better on the market by establishing stronger ties with international and national tourism and hospitality companies in Cyprus and thus institutionalise compulsory internship for their students. A well organized and supervised obligatory internship would be a great asset to the programme and it would be much easier to market it in the very competitive environment, especially in the future. An internship should result in employment for many students which would again be beneficial for the School, the programme and the students. This would for sure enhance the quality of the programme and thus also its reputation domestically and internationally.

Delivery modes and assessment methods seem to be appropriate. Student performance is graded on the basis of a fitting mix of continuous assessment and formal exams. Pedagogy seems to be satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning materials are relevant for the programme and meet standards.

Public information

Public information regarding the study programme is up-to date and readily accessible. Selection criteria are clear and enrolment and induction processes are very good. Students are provided with Course Handbook and a Module Handbook via the Blackboard online learning environment once they register at the programme which contains necessary information regarding the programme curriculum, the educational procedures implemented and the services of the School.

Information management

The UCLan has a coherent and ambitious management. The School of Business and Management has a good profile of students and their progression rate is good. According to the staff, the drop-out rate is also satisfactory. Students' satisfaction is regularly monitored and they seem to be satisfied with the programme. There are plenty of learning resources and support services available to students.

Strengths

- Double award degree with the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK
- Very good offer of core and optional courses which gives students flexibility in tailoring their studies according to their personal professional preferences
- Interdisciplinary study approach
- Enthusiastic faculty members

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Revision of the content of all courses to avoid overlapping
- Employment of a faculty member with a background in sociology and/or anthropology to align the subject taught with the expected ILOs
- Introduction of a mandatory course on research methods
- Introduction of mandatory internship for all students

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)*

Findings

This evaluation is based on the application document and accompanying files submitted by the School of Business and Management, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) Cyprus and the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC) series of video conference meetings with the management team, a random group of teaching staff and students.

A number of academics teaching on the programme holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching, and one member of staff was shown to be an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Head of School claims that half of its staff are Associate Fellows of the HEA.

During the meeting with the programme's teaching staff, it is evident that the team is passionate about applying their expertise and interest areas to their module delivery in the context of hospitality and tourism. While a number of academics may not necessarily have the specific tourism and hospitality PhD qualifications, most spoke about their experience in the industry and/or as consultants, allowing them to deliver relevant examples and cases to their students.

It is evident to the panel that intended learning outcomes and content of most course (module) title appears to mirror that of UCLAN, UK's BA (Hons) International Hospitality Management and BA (Hons) International Tourism Management. The panel notes the additional detail of Assessment types, weighting and size were included in each course description. While most of the assessment modes were typically presentations, proposals, reports and essays, there were a few modules that incorporated self-reflection and others that appeared innovative, for example an assessed 45 minutes group discussion followed by a report (TL2011).

The 3 students (1 other student had connection problems and left mid-way) present at the meeting with the EEC panel were complementary of their experience on the programme. It was highlighted that professional internships are not mandatory for the completion of the programme, although the opportunity is offered as an option. The panel further observed that both the Research Project (TL3525, 10ECTS) and Dissertation (TL3923, 20ECTS) are not mandatory. Both the modules are only offered in Semester A of Year 4. Based on the course description, there is little difference in the two courses apart from the fact that the Dissertation, TL3923 is weighted at 20ECTS and has a combined assessed word count of 10,000. Both would require the student to take a pro-active role in their learning, but yet there were no courses offered earlier in the programme structure that could have prepared a student for the extent of self-directed learning, should they opt for a research course.

Furthermore, the EEC was unable to verify that all students on the programme are engaged with research, as the above indicative modules are not mandatory. According to the guidelines of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA), the Bachelor's level qualifications are awarded to students who 'have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues'. The programme team is therefore strongly encouraged to ensure that this proficiency is distinctly delivered in its programme curriculum.

The Academic Regulations (with Assessment policies and principles) are clearly documented for UCLAN, UK. While the EEC panel is confident that UCLAN, Cyprus would adhere closely to the guidelines stipulated, it is recommended that the UCLAN, Cyprus team condense the document to reflect the operations in Cyprus, particularly in its terminology used, for example module vs. course.

During the EEC panel's meeting with the administrative staff, it was verified that students are able to declare their special needs and learning difficulties. Psychological and well-being centre are also staffed by professionals. The service is available via self-referral or through an academic advisor, where the first point of contact is the student support services. It is further reiterated that confidentiality is assured.

Finally, it was confirmed by a senior manager that students' progress are tracked by the programme monitoring reports and staff uses these data to find out which students require more support. Student representatives meet with programme co-ordinators during programme committee meeting held in the year.

Strengths
- Continue to offer opportunities for academic staff to apply for Fellowship with the Advanced Higher Education (UK) to ensure continuation of learning and teaching development
- Adapting the regulations and policies documentation by UCLAN, UK to the context of the UCLAN, Cyprus operation for implementation. However, this good practice leads to an area of improvement as indicated below.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- None of the research based courses are mandatory, therefore it is unclear if graduates of the programme are indeed able to 'gather and interpret relevant data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues' as recommended by the FQEHEA. The panel strongly recommends that the programme team considers incorporating a mandatory module that clearly delivers the proficiency advised.
- The UCLAN, Cyprus team are encouraged to condense the regulations and policies document to better (more accurately) reflect the operations in Cyprus, particularly in its terminology used, for example module vs. courses.

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)*

Findings

The number of faculty members for the programme in Hospitality and Tourism Management of UClan is satisfactory. Their academic qualifications are suitable since the majority of them did their degrees abroad at reputed universities. The vast majority of them also hold PhD or at least a Masters.

The programme in Hospitality and Tourism Management is awarded both by UClan UK and UClan Cyprus, which favors the participation of UK academics in the teaching programme at Cyprus. Nevertheless, the modules at UClan Cyprus are operated by their own staff, and thus the ratio between the staff from outside and resident is not an issue.

On account of the pandemic, the teaching staff had to shift to online sessions. The innovative methodologies used by them follow the standards observed at other institutions. The need to provide materials and motivate students away from the classroom has contributed to stimulate the utilization of a wide diversity of teaching methods and the use of electronic platforms. The teaching has become predominately online, and thus the digitation of the Programme has taken steps in the right direction.

Faculty members have published satisfactorily in tourism and hospitality, and many of them work or have contacts with the industry, which allows them to establish a good relationship between theory and practice. It is also noticed that the institution welcomes and encourages the establishment of links between research and the industry.

Most faculty members do not have academic qualifications in tourism, and others do not have publications in tourism and hospitality, which may be viewed has a shortcoming of the programme. This is an area which has to be improved in the future.

Strengths
- Academic qualifications
- Degrees from reputed universities
- Close relationships with the 'mother' university in the UK
- Professionalism and dedication of the faculty members

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- In the future UCLan, Cyprus should recruit academics with a background in tourism
- Initiatives should be taken in order to improve the theoretical background in tourism and hospitality of the existing faculty members
- The links with the industry should be supported on a better association between tourism and hospitality theory and practice
- The faculty members should be involved in more research and applied projects

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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	Partially compliant

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

Findings

The regulations regarding student admission are pre-defined and published. The whole process, guidelines and policy statements for admission to the program are available online and candidates can find the requirements needed (https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/study/admissions/entry-requirements/). The program accepts students that fulfil the criteria of an Apolytirion or High School leaving Certificate or other equivalent and knowledge of English Language. More specifically for entry to year 1 of the programme, the normal requirement is a score of 16.5 or above in the Apolytirion or High School Certificate grade of at least 82.5% or 96 A level points in relevant subjects; or another international equivalent. For the English language is required a grade C or above in GCSE English or a minimum 5.5 IELTS (or equivalent) for entry into the degree. Applications from individuals with non-standard qualifications, relevant work or life experience, and from those who can demonstrate the ability to cope with, and benefit from, degree level studies are welcome to apply and will be considered on an individual basis. The administration of the program is also available to support the applicants with the whole process. There is an induction week were students get all the necessary information for their smooth transition to the program.

Regarding student's progression, there are mechanisms and tools that monitor students' performance. The program through platforms such as Blackboard, communicates with the students, gives grades/feedback and track down the progress of them. The lecturers provide comprehensive and constructive feedback to students on course tasks, activities and coursework in a structured way so that students can better understand the assessment and relevant requirements. During their assignments submission the system uses the Turnitin plagiarism checker.

Furthermore, students' performance or absences of each student are analysed, and the program tries to identify students that are not progressing as they should (poor performance or lack of participation). In such cases, the

program contacts the students directly to identify the reason and to find a collective supporting approach for the solution of the problem.

The progress of students is continually measured during the semester, using different methods and techniques such as face-to-face evaluations, assessments, quizzes, tests, projects, case studies and forum discussions, all structured based on the learning outcomes and goals of the course. Students therefore receive feedback on their results during the semester and can contact their lecturers with any questions. Students overall feel comfortable to discuss with their lecturers and academic supervisors any issues or concerns (good communication, approachable professors and constant support offered). The program uses evaluation forms for student's feedback collection after the completion of each module.

Students with special needs have a special treatment. Students are assessed and treated according to their skills and abilities and will be given equal opportunities to function successfully within the program (counselling Centre).

The regulations regarding student recognition are pre-defined, published and seem to be fair. Furthermore, the program offers the opportunity to have an internship in order to gain experience through an elective course. In addition to that, the university promotes mobility by being part of the mobility program ERASMUS plus. The university tries to enhance the variety of partners on a corporate, industry and international level. The program efforts to link theory with practice through field trips.

The regulations in the Academic Policies of the University explain which requirements the students must meet to obtain an Academic Award. A bachelor's degree requires a completion of at least 240 ECTS. Thus, regulations regarding student certification are pre-defined and published.

The students highlighted that the University is accommodating when it needs to be, that they are satisfied with the modules and with the infrastructure of the university.

Strengths
- Academic advisors supervise the student progression and may intervene in case of lower performance. Students feel comfortable to provide feedback and address any issues or concerns to their professors. According to students' feedback their professors are very approachable and responsive.
- Double awarded degree (UCLan UK & UCLan Cyprus)
- Students welfare services (1-2-1 Sessions, Counselling Service, Students with special educational needs, Language support for students (WISER))
- Some of the students expressed that they feel confident for their future job opportunity. There is satisfaction with the knowledge acquired
- The University offers scholarships. This helps the University to attract top students and fulfil its role as an academic institution.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- More practice-oriented modules. Some students somewhat highlighted that they would like more activities for linking theory with practice such as roles play and simulation exercises.
- Encouragement of students to take advantage of Erasmus plus opportunities and practical internships by the program. To that end, the Department could form more activities to strengthen that part such as open days, invite professionals, and/or connect through institutional processes past graduates with current students (alumni).

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

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

Findings

The report made available by UCLan allows the panel to conclude that, overall, the university provide students and staff with an infrastructure and facilities suitable to the functioning of the programme.

The methods of teaching follow international standards. However, it should be highlighted that in the future, there should be the use of more student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching. In todays' world, and bearing in mind an increasing volatile and changing society, such methods may prepare students better for the future. A tendency brought about by the pandemic is the more regular use of online sessions, which, in the future, will boost student-centric learning methods.

The information available allow the panel to conclude that the premises and the IT infrastructure are adjusted to run the programme efficiently.

The library is also adequate. However, it is recommended that more books on tourism and hospitality should be acquired. Also, databases where students may find indexed publications (e.g. SCOPUS and Web of Science), and tourism documents (UNWTO database) should also be acquired, namely due to the increasing importance of the digitalisation of the teaching programmes. This information will also be important in the future, so as to improve the quality of the research conducted both by the teaching staff and students.

The number, qualifications and workload organization of the administrative staff is appropriate to the needs of the programme. The relevant staff performs both academic and integration functions, which are critical for overseas students to adjust to the island.

UCLan, Cyprus offers students' welcome sessions that allow them to gain knowledge about the services available and the way they can be accommodated outside the school.

Strengths

- Appropriate infrastructure and IT
- Induction courses for students are offered upon their arrival at the university
- The administrative staff is professional and devoted

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, should be more frequently used in the future in particular due to the new circumstances created by the pandemic
- The library can be improved with more books and journals in tourism and hospitality

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

Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Carlos Costa	
Nevenka Cavlek	
Wai Mun Lim	
Lito Zymaride	

Date: 2021.06.11