

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: *Date.*

# External Evaluation Report

## (E-learning program of study)

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

**In Greek:**

Λογιστική και Χρηματοοικονομικά (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη,  
 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο, Εξ αποστάσεως)

**In English:**

Accounting and Finance (4 academic years, 240 ECTS,  
 Bachelor, E- Learning)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Program's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

Following the invitation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has evaluated the Bachelor Accounting and Finance program (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor, E-Learning) from the Philips University (hereafter PU) in Nicosia (Cyprus). This is a 4-year Bachelor program, which has been operating as a conventional program (in-person teaching) for the last two years. The application is for the e-learning variant of the program and is evaluated here as a program in its own right.

The EEC consisted of four academics: Professor and Chair Georgios Panos (University of Glasgow, UK), the members Professor Hans van der Heijden (University of Sussex Business School, UK), Professor Dan Weiss (Coller School of Management, Tel Aviv University), Professor and Distance Learning Expert Christothea Herodotou (The Open University, UK) and the student member Mr. George Aristotelous (Cyprus University of Technology).

The evaluation for the program took place in person and on the premises of PU on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Prior to the visit, the EEC was supplied with a comprehensive internal evaluation report and other relevant documentation, as well as the Criteria and Quality Indicators for Distance Learning Programs of Study by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The agenda included several meetings with the senior management, teaching faculty, students, and administrative personnel.

During the online visit, the EEC met with the founder and president of the PU, the director, the senior management consisting of the Quality Assurance Committee, Head of the Program, a number of permanent and adjunct faculty and visiting professors, who are responsible for the delivery of the Bachelor program, a number of students from other undergraduate, postgraduate, and one current online program (since the program under evaluation is not currently operating), and the administrative personnel responsible for the IT Affairs, the Student Affairs and Admissions, and the Library.

In the morning session, the senior management team presented the University and the program under review. Later, the EEC met with the teaching staff, the students and, finally, with the administrative personnel. The discussion covered the program under review, its structure, academic issues related to the program, staff workload and organisation, assessments, and resources. Importantly, it covered the function of the distance education unit, which is pertinent to the E-learning program under review, as it is responsible for the distance learning, philosophy, methodology, and learning material.

During the session with students, the EEC met with students who shared their experiences at PU. The last sessions were the meetings with members of the administrative team as well as the concluding remarks with the senior management. After the presentations in each session, the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions and collect additional information. Specifically, the EEC asked questions related to the program (e.g., intended learning objectives (ILO), program's structure, delivery methods, assurance of learning (AoL), quality of learning (QoL), infrastructure and IT support, inter alia). Additional evidence was also provided (e.g., recruitment, research, training, staff, and student policies, exam papers, inter alia).

The EEC evaluation and the findings and recommendations of this report were based on the meetings conducted, the evidence provided, and the additional information requested by the EEC



prior to and during the visit. The report documents areas of strength and areas which could see further improvement in the future.

The EEC members found the discussions to be fruitful and informative. The EEC identified only a few specific areas of partial compliance and provides some constructive suggestions as to how the Philips University could address the points raised.

The EEC would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the online evaluation. The committee would also like to express its gratitude to Mrs. Emily Alexandridou, the CYQAA coordinator, for her efficient way of managing the process.

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

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Georgios Panos</b>	Professor	University of Glasgow
<b>Hans van der Heijden</b>	Professor	University of Sussex
<b>Dan Weiss</b>	Professor	Tel Aviv University
<b>Christothea Herodotou</b>	Professor	The Open University UK
<b>George Aristotelous</b>	Student	Cyprus University of Technology

### 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 program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the program of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

## 1. Study program and study program'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 program 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 program of study:*
  - *is designed with overall program 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 program 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 program 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 program*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

- *Regarding the program 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 program 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 programs*
  - *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 program and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study program'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 program remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study program are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the program correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study program 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 program?*
- *How does the study program 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 program (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 program analogous to other European programs 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 program (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the program 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 program 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 EEC was provided with information regarding the entry criteria, the programme's intended learning outcomes, the delivery of modules, and the assessment procedures, as demonstrated by the members of the PU. The programme spans 4 years and expects students to undertake and

successfully complete 240 ECTS, containing core and several electives. The proposed structure offers a reasonable balance between the number of modules and associated ECTS between the accounting and finance modules and those that fulfil the BA.

The language is Greek. The intended learning outcomes are in line with expectations for such a programme, aiming to cover both the knowledge and skills that graduates should possess, to support employability upon completion of the course. The PU has provided evidence of international collaborations with Greek universities, which can provide significant contributions to the quality of the programme. Finally, the PU showed evidence about its close links with local society and local educational school system.

### Strengths

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

The EEC believes that the proposed program is satisfactory and has some important strengths:

1. It offers a wide range of modules that cover the expected areas sufficiently. These provide the necessary background knowledge and skills students will require, in order to secure jobs in related fields and professions to accounting and finance.
2. The faculty members teaching on this program are qualified individuals with relevant academic and professional expertise, as well as sufficient years of teaching experience in line with the expectations of the program.
3. There are several qualified visiting and adjunct professors.
4. A quality assurance system is in place.
5. There are strong ties with the local society, the related professions, and the business sector.
6. A scholarship system has been set up, according to the strategy of the PU with aims for a comprehensive review of the structure of annual fees entailing discounts for students.
7. The program aims to meet the subject benchmark requirements for a variety of internationally recognised accounting accreditations, i.e., the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and the Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) association in Australia. Upon initiation of the proposed Bachelors, graduates applying for a qualification at one of these professional accounting bodies will be eligible to gain exemptions from relevant exams at foundation level.

### 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 believes that the PU management team alongside with the teaching staff should consider ways with which the program's design, structure, and delivery can be improved. The suggestions below can inform this process, resulting in a clearer learning offering and hopefully a sustainable program when it comes to student recruitment.

- 1) The following two elective courses should be added to the program: Data Analytics and Sustainability in Accounting and Finance, so that the program is consistent with developments in the technological business environment.
- 2) The curriculum should be revisited on a predetermined systematic periodical basis, in terms of the content of core and elective modules, so that it meets innovative developments in related fields.

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>1.1</b>	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
<b>1.2</b>	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
<b>1.3</b>	Public information	Compliant
<b>1.4</b>	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 program 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 program, 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 program according to the EQF.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Is the nature of the program compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the program, 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 program? 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 provided recommendations are based on the study guides from the program under evaluation, and the Moodle pages that were provided to us from a course unit of another program, the MSc in Counselling and Addiction.

An online platform (Moodle) is used to deliver teaching and learning, supported by tools such as Teams and Turnitin. There is provision for the delivery of synchronous (live) meetings between students and lecturers/tutors. For the remainder of the time, the students are expected to self-study, by mainly engaging with one or more readings per week. In some study guides, there were links to videos and other online material in certain weeks. Each course unit has its own study guide, with details such as intended learning objectives, material, and activities. During the meeting, the staff

explained that there are resources in place to provide students and tutors with training about E-learning methods and means. However, in most study guides and provided examples, the EEC found there to be insufficient opportunities for interactive activities, e.g., involving the usage of simulations/modelling apps, the purposive use of forums, the use of online quizzes.

There are clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final exam (typically 80% exam – 20% assignment, or 70%-30%). These do not, however, in the view of the EEC, fully abide with E-learning methodology, in terms of tutorial attendance and the weekly interactive activities not being weighted in the assessment.

### Strengths

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

An online platform (Moodle) is used to deliver teaching and learning, supported by tools such as Teams and Turnitin. In some study guides, there were links to videos and other online material in certain weeks.

Each module has its own study guide, with details such as intended learning objectives, material, and activities.

During the meeting, the staff explained that there are resources in place to provide students and tutors with training about E-learning methods and means.

### 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.*

There is provision for the delivery of synchronous (live) meetings between students and lecturers/tutors. The rest of the time the students are expected to self-study, by mainly engaging with one or more readings per week. The EEC evaluated that in most study guides and provided examples, there are insufficient opportunities for interactive activities. There are clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final exam (typically 80% exam – 20% assignment, or 70%-30%). It is, however, not entirely clear to the EEC how the proposed assessment framework abides with E-learning methodology, in terms of tutorial attendance and the weekly interactive activities not being weighted in the assessment.

We therefore recommend that course units specifically define weekly interactive activities in their study guides and Moodle pages.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant

2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially 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 program, 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 program.*

#### 3.2 Teaching staff number and status

##### Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the program of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality program 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 program'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 program 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 EEC noted that the program is supported by well qualified faculty. The EEC also observed that members of staff have many years of teaching and research experience. Overall, there is good alignment between the staff qualifications and expertise and the courses they are expected to teach.

### Strengths

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

Members of staff have many years of teaching and research experience. The EEC notes that many members of staff have online teaching experience in Open Universities in Cyprus and Greece.

### 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.*

Although there is an existing training plan in standard E-learning methods, it is mostly focused on the means of delivery (i.e., Teams, and basic features of Moodle such as digital repositories). The EEC believes that the program can benefit from additional staff training regarding online interactive elements (i.e., Moodle add-ons such as H5P) and theories supporting online education (i.e., self-regulated learning, conversational framework). There needs to be a clear strategy and plan regarding staff training by the PU.

The EEC noted that the current teaching team does not exhibit reasonable gender diversity as it is almost exclusively male dominated. The EEC also believes that the teaching staff can benefit from hiring faculty at earlier stages in their career, again to improve diversity of the teaching team and add fresh perspectives. The EEC recommends amending recruitment priorities accordingly.

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

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

There are clear regulations regarding student admission, access policies, admission processes and criteria. Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on students' progression are adequate.

### Strengths

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

The EEC met with four students from other programs in the PU, including one existing online program. The students were positive about their studies and the received support.

The EEC understands from feedback received during our visit that student progression in the corresponding in-person program is highly satisfactory.

The EEC discussed the student's experiences with online teaching at PU at some length, and discussed, among other things, online meeting etiquette and social norms in online engagement between teacher and student.

### 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.*

Admission – The program allows admission based on up to 50% recognition of prior learning. This admission criteria are relatively uncommon and slightly outsized relative to similar institutions/programs. The EEC recommends revisiting this particular admission criteria.

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 program.*
- *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 program.*
- *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 program 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 program, 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.*

The EEC focused on online learnings resources. There is a Distance Education Unit (DEU), responsible for the IT infrastructure, but not in the main tasked with responsibilities such as designing e-learning interactive teaching activities (such as simulations, interactive games, multimodal weekly activities, and associated assessment practices).

The key elements of the presented module included a set of written documents (PDFs), and assignments to be submitted online. These elements utilize the platform only as a repository of material, and it is clear to the EEC that the Moodle platform can be leveraged further.

### Strengths

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

Basic function of the Moodle and Teams platforms are appropriately used.

There is access to electronic journals and books by the library. There are provisions for inter-library loans and access to libraries in Cyprus and abroad (by VPN connection to the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).

### 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 noted that currently a consistent e-learning template was not available to be used by all course units in the program, and believes this is necessary to create a common, professional online experience for the students in the online program.

Such a template should include features of Moodle enabling (i) peer-to-peer interactions, (ii) peer-to-tutor ongoing communications, (iii) embedding material into the structure of Moodle, and (iv) learning analytics (which are not currently utilized). These features are necessary for conducting E-learning interactions.

The way the material is presented on Moodle should also abide with web-based accessibility criteria, essential for students with special needs, and the EEC believes a greater awareness of these criteria would be welcome, despite much of the external software, including Moodle, generally being accessibility-compliant.

The EEC strongly recommends providing human support to instructors in designing and maintaining online interactive activities embedded in all courses throughout the program, which will potentially support students as well. The human support is expected to have both pedagogical and technology-enhanced learning expertise. Such human support is typically denoted as a 'learning technologist'.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>5.1</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Compliant
<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	Student support	Partially 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 program of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

The EEC recommends approval of the program.

In summary, the EEC identified the following issues:

1. The EEC noted that a consistent E-learning template was not currently available to be used by all course units in the program, underutilizing technological features and inducing accessibility constraints. Accordingly, the EEC strongly recommends providing human support to instructors in designing and maintaining online interactive activities embedded in all courses throughout the program, who will potentially support students as well. The human support is expected to have both pedagogical and technology-enhanced learning expertise.
2. The EEC expects the content of the program to be better aligned with technological and environmental trends. The following elective courses should be added to the program: Data Analytics, and Sustainability in Accounting and Finance, so that the program is consistent with developments in the technological business environment.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Georgios Panos</b>	
<b>Hans van der Heijden</b>	
<b>Dan Weiss</b>	
<b>Christothea Herodotou</b>	
<b>George Aristotelous</b>	

**Date:** 20/12/2022