

CASA COLLEGE



1997

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL (QAM)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CASA COLLEGE VISION & MISSION

Casa College is an experienced educational body providing quality higher education through modern teaching and learning methodologies at an affordable cost. Besides, its motto is that “education is everyone’s privilege”. What is more, the Institution strives to establish the Faculty of Hospitality as one of the best in Cyprus in the area of hospitality management (Hospitality Industry) regarding research, development and social contribution. Casa College’s vision is to be established as a recognised educational institution in the hospitality management sector, not only in Cyprus but also in Europe, in a modernised educational environment with advanced building facilities, which will evolve it into a Higher Hospitality Institute. In such an environment, the ultimate purpose is the formation of fulfilled individuals who are able to meet the demands of the modern, social and financial environment in the field of hospitality.

Specifically, the College’s aims are:

1. to attract students, as well as academic and administrative staff with high standards;
2. to promote diversity and intercultural dialogue based on participation, transparency and trust among the different groups;
3. to offer students (local and foreign) the necessary quality theoretical and practical training for their professional career and development in the hospitality industry;
4. to carry out and achieve high standards in research, aiming at the promotion and scientific redefinition of the hospitality field;
5. to create and maintain strong connections and collaborations with the local and international hospitality industry;
6. to provide the foundation for the promotion of lifelong learning to professionals of the hospitality industry; and
7. to contribute to the advancement of educational standards and the coverage of needs in matters relating to the hospitality sector.

1.2 CASA COLLEGE VALUES

In seeking to achieve its mission, the College promotes the following values:

- professionalism through hard work, commitment, accountability and transparency;
- integrity by displaying honesty and fairness;
- flexibility — willingness to learn, develop new skills, and take on new responsibilities;
- teamwork and tolerance through transparency, diversity, acceptance, openness to constructive criticism and ethical behaviour;
- creativity, innovation, imagination and originality; and
- communication — commitment to the effective exchange of information.

Learners’ First	Integrity	Empowerment	Respect	Teamwork
We have a deep commitment to our learners. The learner sits at the heart of everything we do. We seek and act on their feedback to enhance their experience.	We act with integrity and hold ourselves to the highest standards of fairness, honesty and transparency.	Our educational philosophy is to inspire and empower the individual through the creation of independent and creative thinking, the development of knowledge, know-how, skill and competence in a nurturing learning environment that promotes an ethos of lifelong learning.	We treat everyone with dignity and celebrate the global diversity of our learners.	Our staff work with learners, employers and academic partners as a team and we encourage an open participative culture.

Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Casa College Values

1.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Casa College operates according to a Strategic Plan agreed upon by the Board of Directors and which is designed based on certain strategic priorities (see Figure 2) as well as the *Internal Regulations* of the College. The Strategic Plan presents in detail the College's goals and objectives, and directs the College in the short and medium term. Performance indicators and other evidence provided enable the College staff, the Board of Directors and all other stakeholders to measure the College's performance with the ultimate goal for the College to continuously improve the quality of all its activities.





STRATEGIC PLAN

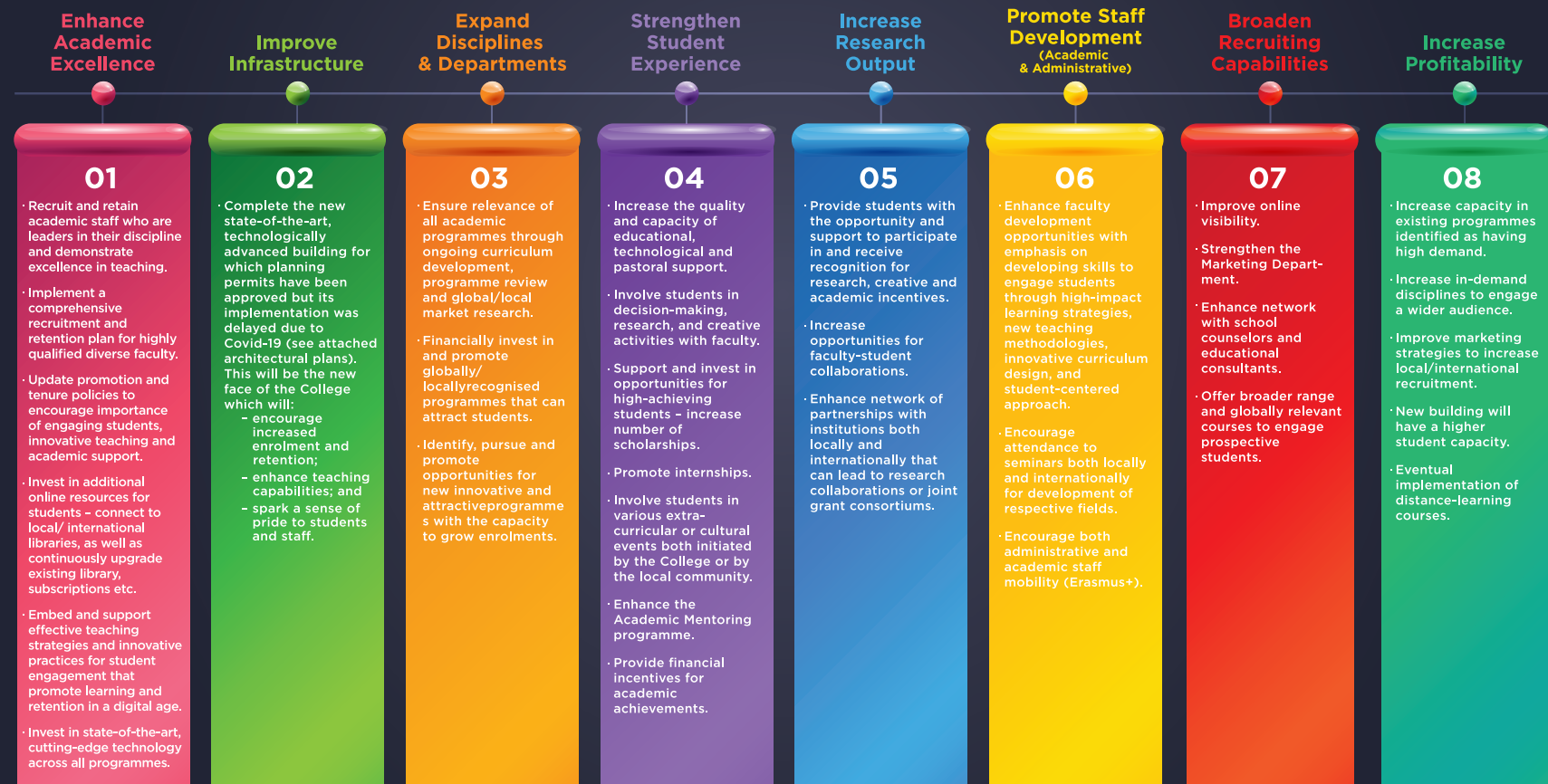


Figure 2. Strategic Priorities of Casa College

1.4 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

The Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) gives a detailed account of the quality assurance philosophy of the College, as well as its practical day-to-day implementation. The QAM:

- places emphasis on monitoring the quality of service provided to current and prospective students;
- recognises the importance of self-evaluation, action planning and constant improvement; and
- acknowledges that benchmarking with other institutions is an important tool in the monitoring and improvement of educational quality.

The QAM constitutes an official document of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). Its purpose is to provide assistance to the administrative bodies and all members of the academic community of the College for the implementation of the IQAS, so that all procedures are recorded and performed in the same way whenever required. It consists of tasks/processes which are internally evaluated both in terms of their own functionality and their effectiveness. The procedures include steps that must be followed in order to achieve the expected outcome. Evidence for the procedures is provided with the necessary documents and forms.

The QAM is updated every two years through changes or additions, approved in the minutes of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee of the College. Periodically, the procedures contained in this manual are reviewed, expanded upon and perfected so that they fully meet the needs of the College and all its stakeholders.



2. POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AT CASA COLLEGE

Casa College is committed to ensure and continuously improve the quality of its educational work for the effective operation and efficacy of its services, in accordance with the international practices — especially those of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) — and the principles and directions of The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA).

The main pertinent body for managing the College's Internal Quality Assurance System is the Internal Quality Committee in collaboration with the Board of Directors. They are responsible for: the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the system; the implementation and coordination of the internal evaluation procedures of the academic and service units; as well as the support of the external evaluation and accreditation procedures according to CYQAA's standards, directions and guidelines.

2.1 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (IQAS): AIM & SCOPE

Effective planning and careful implementation of plans are essential in the creation of a superior institution, as well as the processes of monitoring and review. However, the commitment of each member of staff to understand the Institution's purpose and future ambitions, to see his/her role in relation to the Institution's goals and to do his/her job well and with enthusiasm is equally important. Quality must be the responsibility of everyone who works in the College. Thus, the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) promotes a quality culture at the College.

As a result of the quality policy, the Strategic Planning, the academic goals, the College's mission, but also the procedures for the quality assurance, the IQAS constitutes a key tool for the College's progress. The IQAS has been developed in a way that is in line with the current legislation, the European directives and the guidelines of CYQAA. The aim of the IQAS is to achieve high quality in the operation of the Institution and continuous improvement of its educational and research work, as well as the efficient operation and performance of its services, according to international practices — especially those of the European Higher Education Area — and the principles of CYQAA, by selecting appropriate resources, people, procedures and methodologies.

The scope of application of the IQAS is the quality assurance in the academic unit, administrative services and human resources, as well as the adherence to the procedures for the accreditation of the College programmes and the accreditation of the system itself. The main means of improving the quality of the Institution is the systematic evaluation of all the services offered to the students, faculty, administrative staff and society, in general. This is achieved at Casa College through the use of specific forms, questionnaires and handbooks (see Appendices I, II and III).

The IQAS is specifically based on the Institution's policy and strategy for the quality assurance processes, and it is structured around the following pillars:

- design, approval, monitoring and reviewing of the programmes of study;
- teaching/learning and assessment;
- staff recruitment and development;
- student admission, progression, recognition and certification;
- learning resources and student support; and
- information management and publication.

The processes followed by the College regarding these pillars to comply with the European Standards and Guidelines are analysed in sections 3-7.



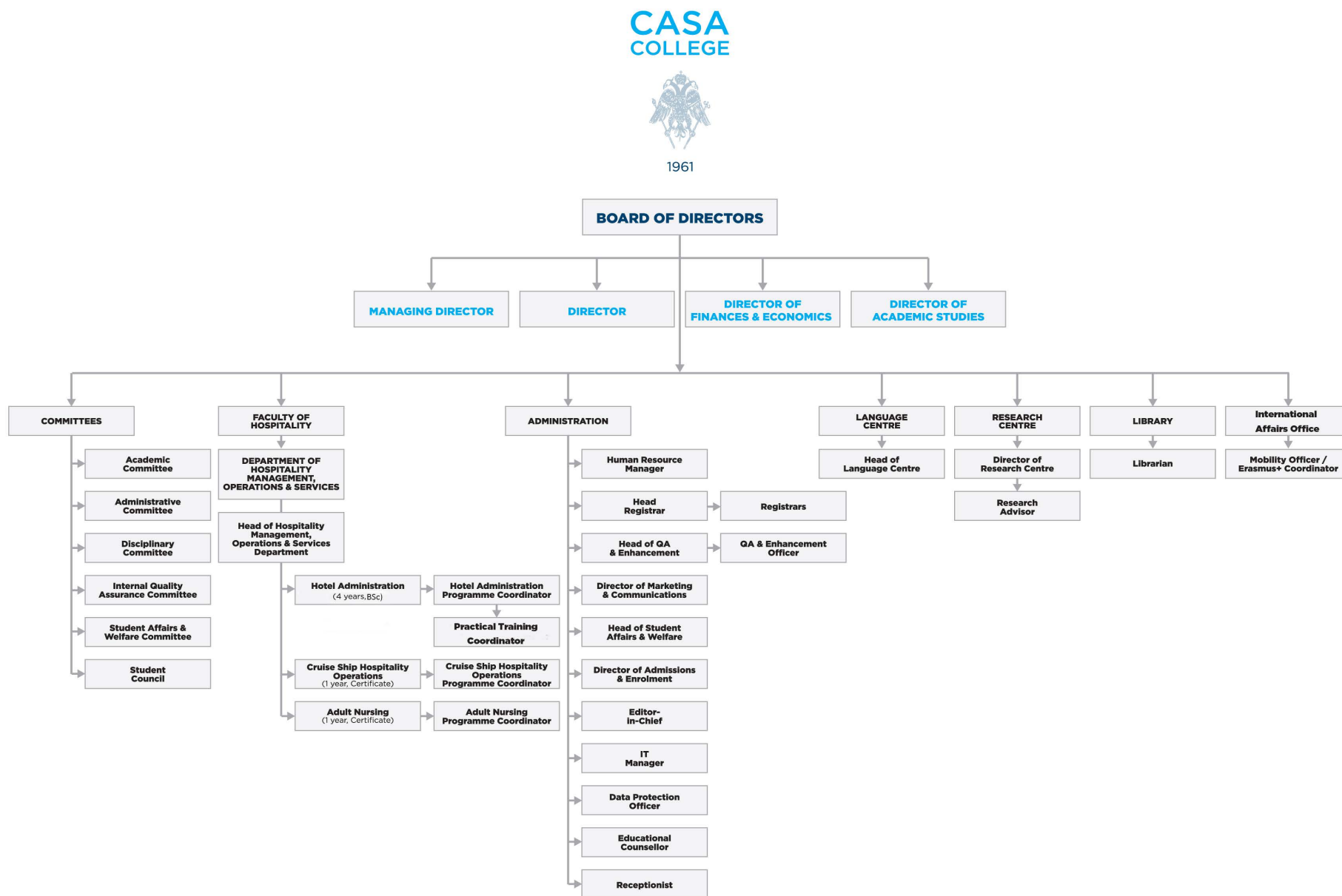


Figure 3. College Structure

2.2.1 THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The effective implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System presupposes a clear commitment of the College's Board of Directors to quality. The Board is responsible for shaping the College's strategy and its dissemination at all levels; for setting goals and respective expectations for efficacy; for creating an academic environment that promotes integrity, meritocracy and equality; for promoting good practices and innovation; and, for fostering a culture of self-evaluation and continuous self-improvement. More specifically, the Board ought to contribute to:

- the setting-up of various committees;
- the monitoring of the implementation of the quality objectives and the overall operation of the IQAS;
- the harmonisation of the quality policy with the general strategic objectives of the College regarding academic and administrative functions;
- the communication of the quality policy to all staff (academic and administrative), the exchange of views on issues related to the IQAS, the discussion of possible improvements or techniques used, etc.;
- the securing of resources for the implementation of the quality policy and the operation of the IQAS; and
- the decision-making for the continuous improvement of the College's educational, research and administrative work during the review of the IQAS.

2.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE STATUTORY COMMITTEES

In order to improve the quality of the College's operation, the following Committees have been established, which are composed of members of the administrative staff, members of the faculty, as well as students:

- The Administrative Committee
- The Academic Committee
- The Internal Quality Assurance Committee
- The Disciplinary Committee
- The Student Affairs & Welfare Committee
- The Student Council

The committees meet occasionally as they are responsible for monitoring the development plan of the College and are accountable to the Board of Directors in order for the relevant developments to be effectively monitored. With regard to the organisation and planning of the committee's meetings, the procedure is as follows:

1. According to the duties assigned to each committee and the College operations carried out within a specific timeframe, the chairperson of each committee, in collaboration with the Head Registrar, determines the frequency of the committee's meetings.
2. The Head Registrar of the College prepares the schedule of the committees' meetings for each academic year and sends it electronically to all the members involved. As long as there is agreement on the dates set for the meetings, the schedule is finalised. Quorum exists when the number of participants is higher than the number of absentees.
3. Each member of every committee submits matters for discussion which are given in writing to the Head Registrar in order to determine the agenda of each meeting.
4. The meeting is held, and minutes are taken and signed by all the participants.
5. The decisions taken are publicised within the academic community.

It is noted that in terms of calling for a Disciplinary Committee's meeting, no schedule is set as it is called for only when deemed necessary since it examines all matters that constitute or concern a violation of the College's rules and regulations when occurred. Finally, the Student Council acts as a means of communication between the College and its students. It is an autonomous council and appoints its meetings as deemed necessary.

The Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee deals with matters relating to the management and implementation of College administrative policies and defines their development. It also evaluates and contributes actively to the progress of the educational system by applying or rejecting various processes pertaining to the management of all their aspects, aiming at the orderly operation of the College. The Administrative Committee consists of the College Director, the Managing Director, the Director of Academic Studies, the Director of Finances & Economics, the Director of Admissions & Enrolment, and the Head Registrar.

More specifically, the Administrative Committee is responsible for:

- managing effectively the College resources for the processing of administrative matters;
- dealing with any matter relating to the orderly operation of the College;
- applying and observing the administrative policy as approved by the Board of Directors, and examining the reports submitted by the members or other administrative staff or committees pertaining to the administrative policy or other matters;
- developing, implementing and observing the administrative policy on various matters;
- developing policies pertaining to the development of the human resource of the College;
- coordinating the efforts made for the provision of better services, the availability of facilities, equipment and materials, etc.;
- examining the aims of various programmes in accordance with the required budget and defining the guidelines for their processing; and
- encouraging the bonds with the community, industry, academic institutions and professional bodies which will enrich the student's learning experience and the continuous development and improvement of the College.

The Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is the highest body after the Board of Directors. It consists of the College Director, the Director of Academic Studies, the Head Registrar, the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement, the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer, a faculty representative and a student representative. The Academic Committee deals with every matter related to the general College policy which affects the College life and contributes to its improvement, such as the academic standards, the teaching methodology followed to meet them, and students' criteria for promotion and graduation. The Committee meets twice per semester and regulates matters pertaining to the educational work, the faculty and the students. During the meetings, the Academic Committee is informed and discusses about the subjects' progress and the possible weaknesses or problems that appear in each programme of study, the capabilities of the teaching staff and their contribution, as well as their academic development. The Director of Academic Studies gives instructions and advice for the solution of various problems and transfers the ones that (s)he is not accountable for to the College management.

More specifically, the Academic Committee is responsible for:

- approving the content of the subjects and the teaching methods employed, especially before the beginning of the academic year and whenever it is needed;
- approving the award of academic degrees and certificates;
- introducing and establishing regulations for specific purposes whenever a student must withdraw or be suspended for disciplinary reasons or (s)he wishes to temporarily or permanently cease his/her studies for personal reasons;
- defining, transferring or suspending exam invigilators when it is necessary;
- approving or rejecting issues related to the administrative or academic strategy of the College;
- reviewing and making suggestions on the academic and advisory support offered to the students;
- reviewing the students' final grade when there is a serious reason (e.g. health), and defining alternative assessment methods — orally, in writing, electronically or in any other way which is considered right;
- forming new sub-committees and groups in the College with special responsibilities and operations when necessary; and
- creating the appropriate conditions for conducting research, as well as promoting and encouraging the faculty to undertake research in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee.

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee

The main College institutional body that aims at formulating and implementing the quality assurance policy is the Internal Quality Assurance Committee. The Committee consists of the Managing Director, the Director of Academic Studies, the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement, the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer, three faculty representatives, and a student representative. Its purpose is to coordinate, analyse, record and evaluate all the issues related to the assurance of the quality of teaching and administrative work, the programmes, other operations and services of the Institution, as well as its infrastructure. It is responsible for preparing and publishing the special self-evaluation reports in relation to the External Evaluations regarding the Institution, according to the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education. These are determined and published by the CYQAA based on the criteria and the quality indicators, provided by the provisions of Article 6 and according to the provisions of Law 136 (I) 2015. It also supervises all the evaluation procedures, assuring that the typical mechanisms operate properly (e.g. use of tools — questionnaires, forms, documents, etc.).

What is more, the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee systematically inform all the stakeholders about the importance of an evaluation and the progress of the procedures. At the same time, emphasis is drawn on the timely and clear planning, and the effective standardisation of forms and procedures. Additionally, promoting proper and efficient collaboration and teamwork is a main concern of the Committee and an essential element of the quality assurance policy. It is important to note that regular meetings of the Committee are held for the establishment of the functions and procedures of an evaluation. The exchange of opinions, the resourceful dialogue and the creative compilation of different assessments further contribute to the promotion of collective decision-making.

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee is specifically responsible for:

- being committed to cultivate notions and behaviours regarding the importance of quality and its assurance at the College;
- applying relevant procedures for the assurance of quality in the programmes' curriculum;
- operating typical mechanisms (use of several tools — questionnaires, forms, documents, etc.) for the approval, supervision and periodical re-evaluation or review of the programmes offered and the degrees awarded when necessary;
- taking care of the students' assessment procedures at the College based on published criteria, regulations and procedures that are applied consistently;
- confirming that the faculty members obtain the required qualifications and skills according to the work load they are expected to carry, as well as the evidence/skills that support the adequacy of the number of faculty members at the College;
- controlling the adequacy and appropriateness of the learning resources for every programme in order to qualitatively contribute to the learning process;
- collecting, analysing and using all the data relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes and the other educational activities;
- cooperating with the Research Centre of the College for the liable elicitation of results regarding the evaluation of the students, the faculty and the educational work in general; and
- cooperating with the Board of Directors when necessary.

The Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee examines all issues that constitute or are in violation of the student rules and regulations of the College. The Committee explores the actions and irregularities that may occur in the College. The Disciplinary Committee consists of the Managing Director, the Director of Academic Studies, the Head of Student Affairs & Welfare, and a student representative.

The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for:

- deciding on recommendations and/or sanctions;
- overseeing the standards relating to discipline and maintaining disciplinary integrity in the academic community; and
- meeting when it is considered necessary in cases of student misconduct.

The Student Affairs & Welfare Committee

The main tasks of the Student Affairs & Welfare Committee are the organisation of student life, and the protection of the students' rights and wellbeing. To this end, the Committee acts as a link between students and lecturers on the one hand, and the lecturers, Programme Coordinators, the Director of Academic Studies and the College Director, on the other hand. This Committee is also responsible for the organisation of entertainment events with cultural or educational content. In order to achieve its goals, the Committee interacts with the faculty, Programme Coordinators, the Director of Academic Studies, and the College Director. The Committee works closely with all the other committees in which it is represented by a member when needed. The Student Affairs & Welfare Committee consists of the Director of Academic Studies, the Head of Student Affairs & Welfare, the Head Registrar, a faculty representative and a student representative.

The Student Council

The Student Council acts as a means of communication between the College and the students. It is an autonomous council and its actions support the educational mission. The Student Council consists of three members: the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary. The Student Council is responsible for:

- promoting the general wellbeing of the students;
- acting as an official link representing all the students enrolled in the College;
- developing and cultivating the cultural, intellectual, social and sports recreation of the students; and
- strengthening the communication between the College and its members.

2.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

For a successful quality provision and learning environment in higher education, Casa College uses quality assurance procedures that comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

ESG STANDARD REFERENCE	
ESG	Standard
1. Policy for Quality Assurance	Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.
2. Design and Approval of Programmes	Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer 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.
3. Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.
4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification	Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.
5. Teaching Staff	Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.
6. Learning Resources and Student Support	Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.
7. Information Management	Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.
8. Public Information	Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.
9. On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes	Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.
10. Cyclical External Quality Assurance	Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Table 1. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

Several handbooks, forms and measurement tools prepared and used at Casa College reflect the application of the above procedures. (See Appendices I, II and III for the list of handbooks, forms and measurement tools.)

2.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY STATEMENT

Remaining true to its vision and mission, and to the definition of its strategic goals for future development, Casa College is committed to assure quality through various actions. It is committed to quality through teaching, research and development, providing timely services to foster and develop academic excellence by training practice-oriented manpower, who can contribute effectively to social, intellectual and academic development. Based on this principle, the Institution has adopted a quality assurance policy.

2.5 POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW

The quality assurance policy is developed and implemented with the participation of all the members of the academic, administrative and technical staff of the College. The quality policy text is based on the following:

- the College's strategy,
- the last external evaluation report,
- the accreditation reports of the programmes of study,
- the Board of Directors' decisions regarding quality assurance, and
- CYQAA's relevant standards and guidelines for quality assurance, as well as relevant standards and guidelines of European quality assurance bodies and organisations (ENQA, EUA, EQAF, etc.).

The quality policy and quality system design process is described in the following steps:

- The Internal Quality Assurance Committee forwards its recommendation to the College management.
- The management considers the recommendation and during the meeting of the Board of Directors the final text of the quality policy is decided upon and approved (the final decision is issued).
- The final decision is communicated to all stakeholders for the implementation of the quality policy.
- The quality policy is published on the College website.
- The quality policy is reviewed when needed, as in the case of (indicatively):
 - suggestions made by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee for improvement resulting from the internal evaluation of the IQAS, regarding discrepancies, problems or areas of improvement;
 - the College's strategy review;
 - changes made in the current institutional framework;
 - adapting to the updated instructions and decisions of CYQAA; and
 - feedback received from the College faculty members.

The quality assurance policy is revised whenever necessary by the Board of Directors and evaluated by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee annually. The main aspects on which this quality assurance policy is built are the following:

- the enhancement of the prestige and visibility of all programmes of study;
- the improvement of the quality of academic activities that will further improve students' performance;
- the increase of the industry and society's satisfaction and confidence towards the knowledge, abilities and skills of the College's graduates;
- the fostering of the College's advantage over its competitors;
- the advancement of the College's research activities qualitatively and quantitatively; and
- the enrichment of a quality culture within the College — commitment to cultivate perceptions and attitudes that value the importance of quality and its assurance at the College.



3. DESIGN, MONITORING & REVIEWING OF PROGRAMMES

3.1 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Casa College aims to develop programmes that meet certain standards, provide students with inclusive and up-to-date curricula, and prepare them for employment. All under-development programmes must be internally approved by the College, before they are submitted to the external pertinent body (CYQAA) for consideration. To be approved for development, a programme proposal is submitted for consideration to the Academic Committee. A proposal must:

- outline the programme's rationale and link with the strategy of Casa College;
- have clearly defined the programme's aim(s), objectives and minimum intended learning outcomes;
- state the intended National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level of the programme and provide a clear rationale for the level chosen;
- state the intended delivery method, the teaching and learning strategies of the programme, and its assessment methods;
- outline the resources that the proposed programme would require; and
- provide a timeframe for the development of the programme.

The development of a potential programme entails the preparation of the application document using the template for programme accreditation provided by CYQAA. Several members from the College staff participate in this process. The development of a programme at Casa College:

- is informed of stakeholders' views and expertise;
- ensures students are fully informed about their access, transfer and progression opportunities;
- consults with professional bodies, where applicable — if possible, programmes seek membership, exemptions etc. for graduates of the programme; and
- meets the criteria for preparing an application for accreditation. This ensures that:
 - the preliminary matters for any accreditation are in place,
 - the programme is appropriately documented in the template provided by CYQAA, and
 - the programme has been evaluated against the validation criteria.

3.2 EXTERNAL EVALUATION

According to the provisions of articles (17) and (20) of The Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Law of 2015, the application for evaluation and accreditation of a new programme of studies is submitted once per year until the end of September of that year, with the aim of each programme being approved to start operating in the following academic year. The CYQAA appoints an External Evaluation Committee consisting of at least three academics — one of them comes from a foreign university — specialising in areas relevant to the programme, and a university student. Provided that, the members of the External Evaluation Committee submit a written statement declaring that they do/did not have any academic, research, service, financial or personal relationship with the institution under evaluation during the last three years.

The external evaluation procedure that leads to the accreditation of a programme is presented in the following stages:

- (a)
 - i. The institution is bound to inform in advance the CYQAA about both the first and subsequent external evaluations and when it intends to submit the relevant Special Self-Evaluation Report.
 - ii. The CYQAA shall subsequently notify the institution within two months from the receipt of the application about the time of the site visit of the External Evaluation Committee.
- (b)
 - i. The institution shall prepare the Self-Evaluation Report according to the format and the relevant forms that the CYQAA has prepared and posted on its website.
 - ii. The structure of the Self-Evaluation Report is determined by the CYQAA according to the criteria, as well as the quantity and quality indicators issued by it concerning the preparation of self-evaluation reports based on the area of interest.
 - iii. The Self-Evaluation Report must be documented and objective and, among others, must state the vision and mission of the programme.
 - iv. The general structure of the Self-Evaluation Report must be based on the critical analysis and presentation — from the institution's perspective — of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, as well as of the opportunities, challenges and threats posed by the external environment locally and abroad.

- (c) The CYQAA shall communicate to the institution the schedule of the forthcoming visit of the External Evaluation Committee at least one month before the visit.
- (d) The External Evaluation Committee visits the institution for the purpose of preparing a Report of Findings.
- (e)
 - i. The External Evaluation Committee submits the External Evaluation Report to the CYQAA within one month at the latest from the date of the site visit.
 - ii. The External Evaluation Report includes the findings, comments and recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee.
 - iii. The CYQAA sends the above Report to the institution which was evaluated, within two weeks from its receipt from the External Evaluation Committee. The institution may submit its comments on the Report in writing to the CYQAA within three months from the Report's release. It is noted that in case this is deemed necessary, the External Evaluation Committee may conduct a new site visit to the institution under evaluation.
- (f)
 - i. Within three months from sending the External Evaluation Committee Report to the institution, the CYQAA prepares its own Evaluation Report, after receiving comments from the institution. This report is sent both to the institution and to the Ministry of Education.
 - ii. In case the CYQAA — based on the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee and any observations made by the institution — considers that a second evaluation is required before finalising its decisions and recommendations, it schedules the conduct of a second evaluation based on a specific timeline set by the CYQAA and which is determined by the timeline on which the first evaluation was conducted.
 - iii. Upon completion of the second evaluation, the CYQAA prepares and communicates its final decisions and recommendations in the form of a Final Report to the institution and the Ministry of Education.
- (g)
 - i. The institution may — within one month from the receipt of the CYQAA's Final Report – raise an objection requesting the review of the CYQAA's evaluation, stating their reasons for requesting withdrawal and review of the Evaluation Report.
 - ii. The CYQAA — within two months from the submission of the objection – considers the reasons for the objection submitted by the institution, and decides whether the withdrawal of the evaluation and its review are justifiable, communicating its decision to the institution and to the Ministry.
 - iii. If the CYQAA accepts the objection submitted by the institution, the review is carried out by the CYQAA based on the data contained in the evaluation file of the institution and the reason why they are subject to objection, in order to issue a relevant decision.
 - iv. Upon completion of the review following the submission of an objection – as stated in points (i), (ii) and (iii) above — the institution has no right of another objection.
- (h) For transparency purposes, the Final External Evaluation Report as well as the CYQAA's final decision (issued after the raising of the objection) are composed in Greek and English, and published by the CYQAA on its website in both languages for everyone's information.
- (i)
 - i. If the institution fails to submit a Self-Evaluation Application either for the initial External Evaluation or for Re-evaluation, then the CYQAA gives a six-month notice for the institution to comply with the obligations arising from the provisions of this article.
 - ii. Non-compliance of the institution with the content of the above notice results in the non-accreditation of the programme, and if this concerns an already accredited programme, the failure leads to the withdrawal of the accreditation of the programme and its removal from the Accredited Programmes' Register.

3.3 REVIEWING & IMPROVING THE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

The Academic Committee, in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, is responsible for the evaluation, revision and updating of the accredited programmes. After collecting the data from the students' evaluation and taking into account both the students and lecturers' feedback regarding mainly the content of the programme, and upon meetings and discussions among the aforementioned committees' members, relevant changes are decided. The committees are called for meetings to evaluate the programme (mainly at the end of the academic year) and discuss on its improvement.

The Academic Committee and the Internal Quality Assurance Committee are also responsible for the reassessment, adjustment and update of the programme curriculum. Analysing all the data derived from the students and lecturers' evaluations, and examining, at the same time, all the proposals so that the current

academic regulations and all relevant external regulations are not violated (e.g. Tertiary Education Law of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus), the committee can make changes on the programme curriculum. When a subject is decided to be introduced in a programme, emphasis is given on its appropriateness and the support provided for achieving the learning objectives. For any significant changes to an existing subject, the Director of Academic Studies and the Academic Committee must be able to prove the need for the proposed modification and — where required — a full review of the programme is carried out by the Internal Quality Assurance Committee. Regarding the suggestion for removing a subject, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee examines and approves or rejects the proposal before the commencement of the new academic year, so that the subject can be removed from the prospectus. The CYQAA and the Ministry of Education are notified about the decisions on subject removal from the programme (even if temporary). The subject material is updated — even after accreditation — when deemed necessary and its objectives are adjusted accordingly.

3.4 QUALITY INDICATORS FOR THE PROGRAMMES & THEIR MONITORING

3.4.1 PROGRAMME PROFILE

The central features of a programme of study at Casa College are:

- It must respond to the objectives of the Department.
- A set of procedures control for this response (how effectively they were used in the process of designing the programme).
- The objectives of the programme are appropriate to the type and level of study.
- The objectives of the programme and the learning outcomes are clearly defined, and the relevant information is easily accessible to anyone interested in.
- The programme profile is compatible with corresponding programmes in the Cypriot market.
- The advantages, strengths or differences of the particular programme over similar ones of other institutions are identified.

3.4.2 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Any programme offered by Casa College is structured in a way that:

- The curriculum meets the requirements of legislation and European policies.
- The structure is defined by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the relevant procedures are applied (e.g. link between workload and credits, credit weighting in the grade received on the degree, ranking of degree grade, etc.).
- There are detailed subject outlines where the desired learning outcomes of each subject, the content, the teaching and learning approaches (theory/practice), and the assessment method of students' performance are clearly defined.
- The content of the subjects corresponds to the type and level of studies.
- The subjects are evenly distributed without excessive overlapping, and they are supported by sequences of prerequisite subjects.
- The content of the subjects and the corresponding educational activities are appropriate for achieving the desired learning outcomes in terms of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities.
- The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes.
- The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements/developments in science, the arts and technology.
- Flexibility of choices / possibility of adaptation to the personal needs or requirements of the students is given.

3.5 PROGRAMME RE-ACCREDITATION

The external evaluation and accreditation of an already accredited programme is repeated every five years. After completing and submitting the application for re-evaluation in the relevant form provided by the CYQAA, the CYQAA then appoints an External Evaluation Committee that consists of at least three academics — one of them comes from a foreign university — specialising in areas relevant to the programme, and a university student. The external evaluation procedure for an existing programme is the same as for the evaluation of a new programme (see section 3.2).

4. LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

4.1 EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

Casa College recognises that the teaching and learning of its programmes is integral to its educational provision. Therefore, the College is cognisant of the need to ensure that it maintains a high standard of teaching and learning. It is also cognisant of the importance of the learning experience and environment, which support the teaching and learning efforts of the College. Maintaining the quality of the learning experience is central to the ethos of Casa College. To ensure this, the College recognises the need to continuously monitor and improve the learner experience that it offers.

The range of teaching and learning forums (lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical classes and virtual learning) allows the student many opportunities to acquire knowledge and/or skills, and then to check or test whether learning is adequate. However, it is essential that students also become self-reliant. The College provides the student with learning resource centres such as the library and computer labs that provide students with a variety of reading materials and access to educational sites. Students also have access to multimedia such as films and educational videos to support their learning. Additionally, the College provides virtual learning resources such as Moodle and Microsoft Teams. Teaching-learning methodology must be regularly evaluated and updated.

In student-centered sessions, students are expected to listen, interact and take notes. Lectures are always supported by well-written and well-designed material/notes from lecturers, along with the usage of various Information and Communication Tools (ICT). Enhancement of the delivery of the lecture should be done continuously with innovations from both the lecturer and the students. Continuous motivation of the students by the lecturer is therefore a necessity.

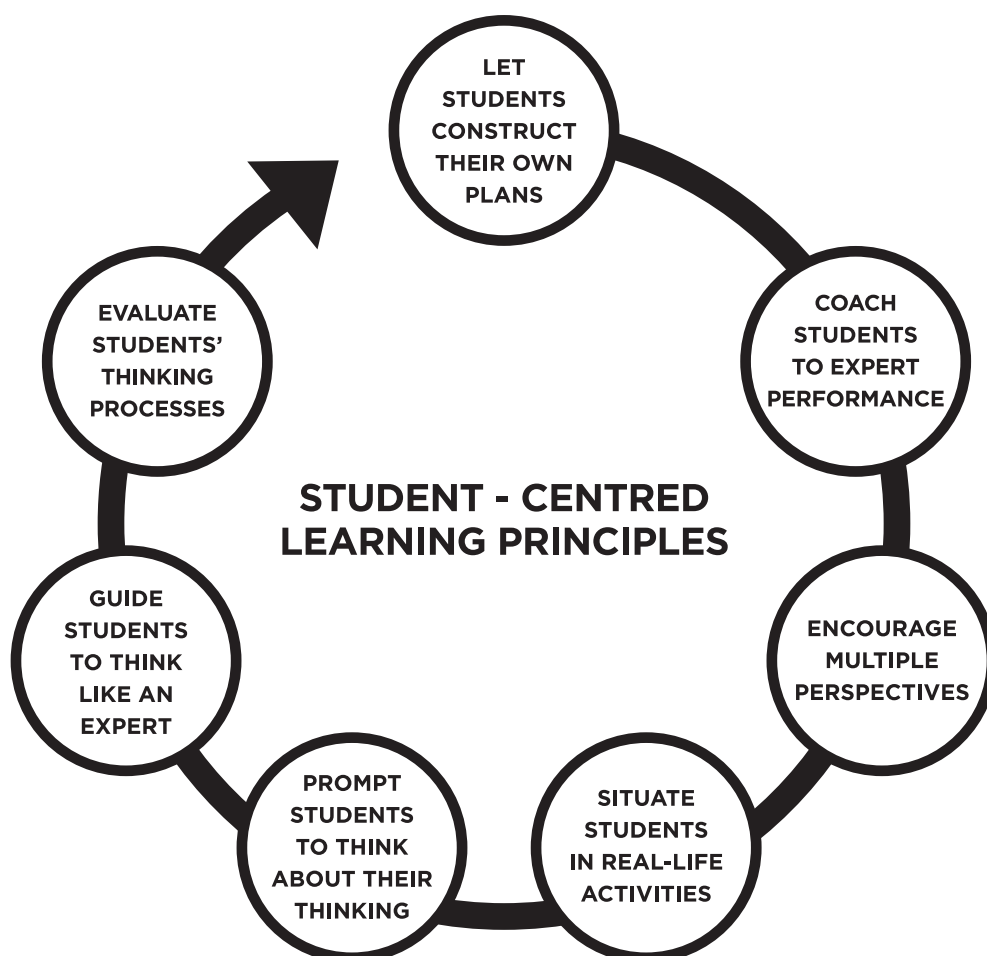


Figure 4. Student-Centred Learning Approach

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee collaborates closely with members of the administrative staff (the Head Registrar, the IT Department, the Department of Finances & Economics, the Research Centre, the Academic Committee, the Student Affairs & Welfare Committee and the Administrative Committee) in order to gather all the information needed for an evaluation. It also collaborates with the faculty and the students both in the initial phase of specific evaluations with the completion of all relevant questionnaires and, at a later stage, with their representatives' participation in meetings to discuss the results of various surveys and find actions for improvement. However, an equally important role in quality assurance is played by the Board of Directors which aims at guiding and coordinating services, preparing and submitting the strategic plan, as well as monitoring, evaluating and adjusting its targets.

In the context of the Institution's quality assurance system, the results are usually obtained from the completion of questionnaires or other forms and maintaining common procedures upon agreement between the members of the academic community involved. Data are also collected from interviews or group discussions (between members of the various committees, members of the administrative staff, the faculty and the students). Initially, the design and standardisation of data collection tools, and the establishment of relevant procedures for the extraction and formulation of results and conclusions constitute the main goal during the evaluation procedures. The main tools used to ensure and check the quality of the learning process are the following:

Lecturer Evaluation Questionnaire

The Lecturer Evaluation Questionnaire includes the following thematic sections: A. Quality of teaching - lesson delivery, B. Preparation of assignments, C. Lecturer's skills, D. Expectations of studying. The questionnaire is completed by the students at the end of each academic semester. Initially, the specific questionnaire was distributed (for every subject) during the lesson and completed anonymously by the students upon the lecturer's departure from the room. But later, the specific questionnaire was uploaded on Moodle for the students to complete it electronically during the last week of classes.

Lecturer's Observation Form

A class observation is determined by the following factors: the lesson planning-orientation that determines the teaching objectives; the strategy through which they will be achieved; and, the assessment. Observation establishes collaborative relationships while realism, self-confidence and flexibility in teaching are developed. All lecturers are informed about the purpose and stages of the observation at the beginning of each semester from the *Performance Evaluation Handbook for Lecturers*. A class observation lasts for at least 55 minutes. Upon completion of the process, the observer/evaluator completes a form (*Lecturer's Observation Form*) with comments and remarks. Observations are performed for formative purposes and always aim at the lecturer's development and improvement. To this end, upon completion of the observation, a professional discussion is held between the observer and the observed, announcing the results of the observation and giving feedback that lays the foundations for reflection.

Subject Evaluation Form

The *Subject Evaluation Form* is one of the main tools as far as teaching and learning evaluation is concerned. It is completed by the lecturer of each subject at the end of the semester. In case of co-teaching, the lecturers agree upon the content of the form, so that for each subject there is only one form.

Library Evaluation Questionnaire

The library evaluation focuses on lecturers and students' satisfaction with the library services, and seeks to improve the weak areas. This evaluation is anonymous.

Annual Staff Evaluation Form

The *Annual Staff Evaluation Form* of the administrative staff is completed by the Human Resource Director at the end of each academic year. It aims at the improvement of the quality of supportive services in the Institution such as the administrative services. All the members of the administrative staff are evaluated in terms of their performance in employment skills (e.g. leadership, organisation and planning, negotiation, teamwork, cooperation, communication, adaptability, etc.). The strengths and weaknesses of the employee are highlighted on the form, along with suggestions for improvement. The ultimate goal is professional development/growth and, thus, the increase of productivity in the Institution promoting excellence and quality.

For data analysis, a database has been created to systematically structure and store all data. Data in Excel format can usually be extracted for further statistical processing. The College has ensured that these data are accessible only to authorised people — the website of this sub-system can only be visited through the internal network of the College. After that, all stakeholders are informed about and discuss the results with the main positive and negative points of the College according to each criterion. This is followed by the recording of opportunities to benefit from the positive points and the potential risks from the negative points, while improvement measures for the aspect evaluated are proposed and recorded.

4.2 THE COLLEGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO ASSESSMENT

Student assessment is a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process. Apart from providing a measure of the students' achievement, it also provides diagnostic information for the lecturer and the student to improve the learning and teaching process. Therefore, assessment constitutes a core element at Casa College and, in order to be successful, it is based on the following principles:

- i. The College has the responsibility to ensure that:
 - the assessment process is fair and reliable;
 - lecturers assess students regularly and provide feedback to students where possible;
 - students are notified about their grades on time and advice is given to them for improvement; and
 - any instances of student malpractice concerning their assessment are fairly and fully investigated.

- ii. The College acknowledges that its assessment practices and procedure through which it assigns grades are of great significance, thus they must always be handled with professionalism.
- iii. Assessment is a tool that assesses students' ability to think and express themselves carefully and clearly under pressure.
- iv. The College's assessment process is fully integrated with methods of curriculum delivery. To this end, it emphasises on interactive learning, practical tasks, and the cultivation of critical thinking and independent study skills.
- v. The College seeks to employ a variety of assessment methods aiming at satisfying a specific programme's needs. These are further communicated to the faculty so that they can make effective decisions in assessing students.
- vi. The assessment tools used by the College are:
 - final examinations;
 - mid-term examinations;
 - assignments — they offer students the opportunity to work individually to discuss issues of relevance to the subject, and show individuality and creative thinking skills;
 - oral presentations — they enhance interpersonal and computer skills;
 - practical tests — they teach students practical skills and they test their performance instead of their knowledge;
 - continuous assessment;
 - and project work.
- vii. The College uses the following assessment methods:
 - monitoring and evaluating students' attendance;
 - monitoring and evaluating students' in-class participation; and
 - encouraging students to engage in case studies and role play that enhance their creativity.
- viii. Assessment at Casa College has a formative and summative function. This means that student work is returned promptly with clear feedback.
- ix. All subjects taught at the College have standard subject outlines where the subject's content, learning outcomes and assessment patterns are clearly described. The assessment tools used offer the students the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the desired learning outcomes.
- x. The learning outcomes of each subject are clearly explained so as not to leave any doubt as to what students are expected to learn. They also reflect the students' progress towards mature thinking, reflection, analysis and evaluation.
- xi. To ensure the quality of assessment, the final examination paper is designed according to the subject content and delivery plan of the expected outcomes.

(A detailed analysis of student assessment at Casa College is found in the *Internal Regulations Handbook*.)



5. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION & CERTIFICATION

5.1 STUDENT ADMISSION & REGISTRATION

Casa College follows a non-discrimination admissions policy (see *Equality & Diversity Policy* of Casa College), and actively seeks to recruit and enrol students of different backgrounds, interests, talents and cultures, in order to create and sustain a multicultural environment. Therefore, the student population of our Institution consists of diverse and multicultural groups blending their different backgrounds, interests and heritage to create a truly global learning environment.

5.1.1 NEW ADMISSIONS

The College's admission policy relies on each applicant's past records and grants admission under several categories, depending on each applicant's qualifications and educational objectives. All candidates should possess a six-year secondary / high school leaving certificate, or an equivalent qualification with an average mark of at least 50/100. (More information about admission requirements can be found in the *Prospectus* and *Student Application Handbook*). All candidates applying must have proof of English Language Proficiency (accepted English Language tests by the MOEC).

The registration of a new student essentially means registration in the Students Registration System. The registration of new students in the Students Registration System is done once — when the student first appears at the College — on a College database which has been developed by the IT Department. However, for the student to be able to continue his/her studies, (s)he needs to re-register after completing his/her first year of study.

5.1.2 TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

The transfer of students from one programme of the College to another is based on the provisions of relevant legislation and related circulars. The transfer can be made without exams, before the beginning of each new semester or each new academic year and always upon request submitted to the Director of Academic Studies by the student in time, through the completion of the relevant forms (*Change of Course Form* and *Transfer Credit Evaluation Form*). The Director of Academic Studies, in cooperation with the Programme Coordinator, approves or rejects the specific request.

Transfer from other educational institutions to Casa College is based on the provisions of the relevant legislation (the Institutions of Tertiary Education Law of 1996, Articles 32, 72/ and R.A.A. 143/96 (7)) and related circulars). To be able to accept the transfer of a student, the student must complete an application form describing the reasons for wishing to transfer, and submit it along with a progress report and/or transcripts and a completed *Transfer to Casa College Form*. After the Director of Academic Studies and the Programme Coordinator examine the student's application and assess his/her academic qualifications, the College approves or rejects the transfer. Students with the required number of credits (ECTS) have the right to register in the corresponding semester.

In both cases, transfers are finalised after the approval by the Ministry of Education (and the Migration Authorities in the case of an international student).

5.2 STUDENT PROGRESSION & CERTIFICATION

For a student to be regarded successful in a subject, (s)he needs to receive the passing grade (50%) and obtain the credits/ECTS that correspond to the subject. As for the student who successfully completes the total number of credits required by the programme (240 ECTS credits for the bachelor's degrees and 120 ECTS credits for the certificates), (s)he receives the relevant degree together with the transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement (see Appendix IV).

For the Hotel Administration programme (4 years, plus an optional foundation year), students are awarded the 'Bachelor of Arts in Hotel Administration', while for the Business Administration programme (4 years, plus an optional foundation year), students receive the 'Bachelor of Science in Business Administration'.

Students who successfully complete the Adult Nursing programme (1 year, plus an optional foundation year) are awarded the 'Certificate in Adult Nursing', while students are awarded the 'Certificate in Cruise Ship Hospitality Operations' when they obtain the required number of ECTS credits in the Cruise Ship Hospitality Operations programme.

5.3 STUDENT RECOGNITION

Casa College is committed to recognise the achievements and attainments of current and prospective students gained prior to or during their studies at the College. Student recognition is granted with valid and reliable evidence in the case of:

- Transferring from another Institution: The student's progress report and transcript obtained from the other institution are examined and the student receives a number of ECTS credits that allow him/her to enrol in the corresponding semester.
- Obtaining a school leaving certificate with an excellent grade: The College awards ten scholarships per year based on this criterion.
- Permanent participation in a sports club of premier league: These students receive scholarships to study at Casa College.
- Erasmus student mobility: Students who have attended a semester/year of study abroad are eligible to receive ECTS credits for subjects that match the programme curriculum enrolled in for at Casa College.
- Continuing students with excellent academic performance can:
 - receive scholarships,
 - be members of the Student Council that allows them to participate in in the College committees for decision-taking, and
 - receive prizes on their graduation.



6. STAFF RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Casa College provides consistency and transparency in how it recruits, manages and develops its staff. This procedure is holistic in its scope, covering staffing issues from prior to appointment through to development of existing staff. The importance of consistency and transparency is to ensure that no individual is discriminated against, and that all potential and current staff are fully aware of what the College expects from them. Casa College also recognises that its staff — management, administrative staff and lecturers — are intrinsic to ensuring that it delivers a quality education experience for its students. Therefore, its policies for recruiting, managing and developing its staff safeguard that staff are sufficiently qualified, supported and capable to deliver the quality education that it endeavours to provide for its students.

6.1 STAFF RECRUITMENT

Casa College recognises that staff recruitment selection is of paramount importance both for recruiting highly skilled competent individuals, and ensuring that there is transparency in its recruitment process treating all applicants fairly and without bias or prejudice. Hence, its staff recruitment policy is outlined in the following steps:

- A rationale is provided if the recruitment is for a new position. Either for an academic or for a non-academic appointment, this rationale must be approved by the Board of Directors and ensures the College has the financial resources to support the appointment of the new position.
- The vacancy is advertised at the Department of Labour of Cyprus, on the College website, and on the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES Network), enclosing all the details of the vacancy, the specific duties and responsibilities, and the required qualifications of the candidates. The job description includes details such as:
 - position title,
 - required skills, qualifications and experience for an individual to be eligible to apply for the position,
 - key roles and responsibilities of the position,
 - a summary of the tasks that the individual will be expected to perform, and
 - the duration and terms of employment of the position.
- All candidates send their CV with two references and a cover letter to the Human Resource Director for evaluation.
- All CVs are examined and evaluated by the Human Resource Director in collaboration with the Director of Academic Studies based on the requirements of the specific vacancy. The College uses a criteria-based rating system to evaluate each candidate, based on previously agreed criteria linked to the job description.
- The candidate is called for an interview if it is deemed that his/her CV meets the needs of the vacancy.
- If the candidate successfully passes the above stage, (s)he is called for a second meeting where specific skills and knowledge relevant to the vacancy are evaluated — for teaching staff recruitment, a teaching demonstration in front of a three-member committee is conducted in this stage.
- The candidate is informed about the outcome the committee has decided upon;
- Upon common agreement, the candidate signs a contract with all the terms and conditions of employment.

6.2 STAFF INDUCTION

For all staff to be able to become effective and efficient in their role promptly, induction, and mentoring are essential. Induction is the process of welcoming and briefing new staff so that they immediately feel at home in the work environment, and begin to operate in their role with effectiveness from an early stage. The staff induction procedure at Casa College leads to improved staff morale and job satisfaction. It encourages individuals to effectively utilise their potential, growing in competence and efficiency. Besides, a quality organisation is one in which all staff know their roles and responsibilities, and carry them out to the best of their ability.

The College, therefore, endeavours at all times to follow its procedures for staff induction, mentoring and development, meticulously and with enthusiasm. The induction of a new staff member includes:

- the College Director's welcome,
- information regarding the College structure,
- the several administrative staff positions and contact details,
- the Equality & Diversity Policy,
- safety information,
- the duties and responsibilities of the faculty/administrative staff (as applicable),
- professional development information,
- the Lost & Found Policy,
- information about the library, and
- instructions regarding students' assessment (for faculty induction).

(Further details are found in the *Faculty Induction Handbook*.)

6.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Casa College is committed to provide opportunities and support to staff members to pursue their development goals and objectives. Staff members who wish to attend conferences, seminars or training courses locally or abroad may apply for financial support to the College. Each application will be considered on an individual basis. Both internal and external seminars and conferences are offered continuously to the staff members in order to develop their skills and offer support to areas of improvement. What is more, staff members can seize the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ programme that aims at improving their professional skills and exchanging practices with other institutions abroad.

Faculty members are also encouraged to conduct research which mainly focuses on the areas of interest to the College. Research is an integral part of tertiary education institutions that fosters innovation and enthusiasm for excellence. Supported and monitored by the Casa College Research Centre, Casa College faculty write research papers and present their work at local and international conferences. They also publish reviews and research papers in academic journals. The Research Centre motivates the staff and develops their research skills and collaborations.

Professionalism, integrity and excellence in teaching, and/or research, and/or service to the community are the main goals of the College. Staff performance is evaluated regularly by the relevant people at the College — faculty members are evaluated every semester by the management and the students, while the administrative staff is evaluated by the management annually. All evaluations are followed by a discussion between the evaluator and the employee aiming at enhancing staff performance. (See *Induction Handbooks* and *Performance Evaluation Handbook for Lecturers* for more information).

6.4 FACULTY RANKS & PROMOTION

The minimum qualification for the academic staff is the bachelor's degree. According to the pertinent legislation, no more than 20% of the faculty can hold only a bachelor's degree. But, in general, the College aims at recruiting academic staff with a Master's or Doctorate degree, many years of teaching experience, university teaching skills and research. The standard academic ranks applied at Casa College are:

- Lecturer,
- Assistant Professor,
- Associate Professor, and
- Professor.

As soon as a new member of the academic staff is employed, they are appointed to the Lecturer rank; unless, they have already been placed to a higher rank by another institution of tertiary education, or they have been hired by Casa College for a position at a rank other than that of the Lecturer.

The basic qualifications and standards established to identify the degree and types of achievement expected in each rank apply to all the programmes offered by the Institution. The general descriptions for promotion from one rank to another are as follows:

- Upon completion of five years in the rank of the Lecturer at Casa College, the evaluation procedure is activated which leads either to the continuation or non-continuation of employment, or promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor. In case of continuation of employment without promotion to the next rank, the Lecturer is required before completing the sixth year of service to request re-evaluation; otherwise, the process is activated by the College. In case of another failure for promotion, the Lecturer's employment is ended. The individual is given one-year notice.

- Upon completion of four years in the rank of Assistant Professor at Casa College, the evaluation procedure is activated which leads either to the continuation or non-continuation of employment, or promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. In case of continuation of employment without promotion to the next rank, the Assistant Professor is required before completing the seventh year of service to request re-evaluation; otherwise, the process is activated by the College. In case of another failure for promotion, the Assistant Professor's employment is ended. The individual is given one-year notice.
- Upon completion of four years in the rank of Associate Professor at Casa College, the individual can request his/her promotion to the rank of Professor. In case of failure for promotion, the Associate Professor can request for re-evaluation four years after. Regardless of his failure to be promoted to the rank of the Professor, an Associate Professor's employment is not terminated.

For the appointment to the various ranks, the Board of Directors at the College appoints a special committee in collaboration with the Academic Committee. The committee usually consists of five members: two examiners/lecturers (internal or external) of the same or related area who hold the same or higher rank than the candidate in a recognised educational institution (college, university); the President of the Board; the Human Resource Director; and, the Director of Academic Studies. The special committee examines the candidate's evaluation file which contains:

- a fully updated CV,
- a list of publications,
- a summary of his/her research activity,
- a report of the teaching work, and
- a report of any other experience.

Then, it is decided whether to invite the candidate to an open lecture and an interview in order to examine him/her promotion. Otherwise, the committee decides whether the lecturer will continue to be employed or his/her employment will be terminated. The President of the Board of Directors at the College informs the candidate about the final decision.



7. LEARNING RESOURCES & STUDENT SUPPORT

Casa College recognises its responsibility to support its students fairly and reasonably; i.e. the support provided is transparent, students are aware of it, and their stance is taken into consideration. It places students at the centre of all its actions as it provides ample resources to support their learning. The College firmly believes in enhancing a supportive environment which promotes the wellbeing and integration of all students into the College community, and guarantees a positive learning experience. Moreover, the College also acknowledges the significance of communicating the students its expectations regarding their conduct which are outlined in the *Student Handbook*.

7.1 LEARNING RESOURCES

The College has resources capable of supporting its educational and teaching activities, and ensuring the adequacy of the available infrastructure that supports learning and students. The effectiveness of the learning process depends not only on the faculty, but also on various support infrastructures, from material (such as the library and information infrastructure) to human support (in the form of individual counselling, etc.). For this, the College provides sufficient and appropriate learning resources according to European and international standards and practices regarding:

- the building facilities,
- the library,
- the lecture and laboratory rooms,
- the technological infrastructure,
- support structures satisfying special needs and learning difficulties,
- academic affairs, and
- student welfare services.

All support infrastructures are immediately available to students and are designed according to their needs, while they are adjusted based on feedback from those who use them. Support activities and infrastructure are organised in various ways. It is also ensured that they are appropriate for satisfying the corresponding need, they are easily accessible, and students are aware of the services available. More specifically, the quality of the learning resources is assured through the following:

- an accreditation process followed to assure that all the programmes have appropriate and adequate infrastructures to support learning, and they are designed according to their needs;
- ways to inform students about the available educational infrastructure and services;
- easy accessibility of support infrastructure and services;
- procedures for regular systematic control, evaluation, revision and improvement of the suitability and effectiveness of the support services available to students;
- a process for upgrading the available infrastructure based on the feedback provided by those who use the services offered;
- a procedure for offering students personal assistance in the form of mentoring and support; and
- the College management's way to handle remarks and recommendations made by the external experts in the External Programme Evaluation Reports of the Institution regarding the educational infrastructure and support of students. The Programme Coordinator, in collaboration with the students and the Director of Academic Studies, records the needs that may arise regarding the adequacy and suitability of learning resources (textbooks, booklets, scientific journals, databases, lecture notes, videos, tests, assignments, use of new technologies in teaching, human support mentoring), as well as discussions between the Academic Committee and the Internal Quality Assurance Committee that take place at the end of the academic semesters where the development, reuse or non-use of learning resources is suggested. Decisions are forwarded to the Administrative Committee and all measures are taken to develop, distribute and use properly the learning resources.

7.1.1 THE LIBRARY

The library is operated by a certified librarian who provides support, assistance and guidance to the members of the academic community on how to use the tools and resources of the library. The library is fully computerised and the computer workstations are available for users to access the internet and the library's catalogue. The library has computer stations, wireless internet access, a study area and a copier. The library collections are organised according to the international conventions. For effective retrieval when needed,

they are organised according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDCS). The library provides its users with easy access to books, journals and other reference material. The College library uses the complete KOHA Open Source bibliographic system and the cataloguing of all its collections meets the international standards. Book searching is carried out by a user simply through inserting the author's name, a keyword, or the title of a book. The user can also search on the database with a specific topic, so (s)he can see all the books in the library related to it.

The new College students receive a free digital library membership and specific educational guidance from the librarian to familiarise themselves with the library and its services. Alumni library membership is also free of charge for two years after graduation. For its users' convenience, the library provides flyers on how to search on the shelves and find books according to the item's taxonomic number, as well as the electronic library sources. The most useful and popular taxonomic numbers are found on cards on the shelves to make searching easier and faster. As far as research and the library's contribution are concerned, open-access databases are used, such as DOAB, DOAJ, BASE, Open Science Directory, ROAD, Web of Science® and Academic Search.

For better service and its users' convenience, the College library website (<http://library.casacollege.com>) encloses useful links for research that provide access to online repositories of books and journal articles (e.g EBSCO), as well as electronic catalogues of other libraries.

The College library makes sure that its collection is updated every year. In particular, it contains books of compulsory subjects, as well as reference books with a publication date no more than five years old. Also, the librarian investigates what has been recently published and gets informed by the publishers for the latest editions. Then, (s)he informs the College management who approves the list of items to be ordered for new additions in the library's collection. Existing books in the library collection that have been damaged are also included in the additions. Special attention is paid to the maintenance of the library's printed material. In case where material is damaged due to extensive use or loss, it is replaced.

7.1.2 COMPUTERS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENT USE

The whole academic community has access to the computer laboratories. Priority is given for these laboratories to be used for teaching, study and printing of assignments, projects, etc. To help the educational process and promote scientific research, there are two computer laboratories for public use. After enrolling in subjects, all students are provided with personal credentials, both for laboratories and internet services such as the College e-mail, the Moodle platform and the library network. Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, Adobe Reader, SPSS, JAVA and Libre Office are installed in all laboratories of the IT Infrastructure Service. Assistance with the use of computers or other laboratory equipment is provided to the students by the IT Department.

7.1.3 TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Technological support issues regarding the operation and maintenance of information systems are resolved by the IT Department. The IT Manager is responsible for the operation, maintenance, update and further development of the College's information systems, as well as for the continuous operation of the IT systems (servers, networks, backup, etc.). (S)he is also responsible for the smooth operation of the systems in the computer laboratories and for the computerisation of internal procedures (educational and administrative). (S)he further organises the College operation, takes care of the efficiency and integrity of technical equipment, and informs the Managing Director about any deficiencies or losses of technological means suggesting substitutions. (S)he is constantly up-to-date with new technologies and proposes the purchase of new modern systems that could upgrade the level of education and generally the College operation. However, the College collaborates with external partners for technological support on issues regarding the internet, classroom technological equipment, printers, copiers, electrical installations, cameras, fire systems, alarms, etc.

7.2 STUDENT SUPPORT & PASTORAL CARE

Quality pastoral care focuses on the student as a whole considering personal and social aspects as they enhance students' wellbeing and, thus, they are inextricably linked with their academic life. Supporting students is among the College's priorities. The main body for monitoring the adequacy of student support is the Student Affairs & Welfare Department, along with the Student Affairs & Welfare Committee which meets regularly to discuss issues related to student wellbeing and progress. The Student Affairs & Welfare Committee acts as a link between students and lecturers on the one hand, and the lecturers, Programme Coordinators, the Director of Academic Studies and the management, on the other hand. It works closely with all the other committees in which it is represented by a member when needed.

The Student Affairs & Welfare Department aims at providing students with support, and developing their self-esteem and performance, so that they can be successful in their academic and personal life. The ultimate goal is to secure students' rights and wellbeing. Therefore, it mediates between students and faculty or administration of the College, dealing with phenomena of malpractice upon student's request and helps in their resolution. In case of a disciplinary offense the Head of the Student Affairs & Welfare Department informs the Disciplinary Committee in order to act accordingly. This department also coordinates the Student Council and – in collaboration with them – organises various recreational, extra-curricular activities on and off campus. Students can find details concerning the support offered by the College in the *Student Affairs Handbook*.

7.2.1 COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Student Affairs & Welfare Department informs students about the overall functioning of the College, their rights and obligations; provides psychological and mental health counselling to them for their normal integration in high education and academic life; and supports students with disabilities or students dealing with difficulties regarding the successful completion of their studies. Upon completion of the relevant College forms by the students that inform the relevant bodies at the College (and external collaborators) about their disability/matter and claim for special arrangement or facilities (see Appendix I), the Student Affairs & Welfare Department is responsible for:

- the registration of the students with disabilities;
- the recording of any health, social or emotional problems students face so as to help them respond to their academic obligations;
- the adjustment of the learning/teaching process as well as the arrangements for the exams (e.g. oral examination, extra time);
- the investigation and resolution of students' complaints about administrative or academic affairs;
- the accessibility of the College premises to people with disabilities; and
- the access to student mental and physical health services and activities organised for students.

7.2.2 ACADEMIC SERVICE

Orientation Days

Before their enrolment in the programme, new students are informed about various student issues on the Orientation Days which are organised by the Department of Student Affairs & Welfare. At first, the members of the administrative staff and their roles are presented to the students in order to know who they should refer to when they need something. Information is also provided about the premises; the tuition fees payment; internal regulations they must comply with; exams and assessment; as well as life in Cyprus (transportation, useful phone numbers, etc.). They are also provided with web links necessary for their studies (College website, Moodle platform, HOSCO, etc.), an email account (*****@casacollege.ac.cy), and access credentials for Moodle and MS Teams. Finally, the presentation includes useful information on services (e.g. banks, telecommunication companies, insurance companies) as well as sources of information (the College magazine and the monthly newsletter).

Educational Advisor

The Educational Advisor at Casa College works with students to help them understand various issues regarding their studies and assists them with choices that will impact their future. It discusses career issues and supports students experiencing academic difficulties in order for them to succeed in meeting their personal, academic and professional goals. (S)he ensures that students are on track to completing their

degree requirements, (s)he assists with the registration process, (s)he builds relationships with students in order to understand their personal and academic needs, and stays up to date with policies and procedures, enforcing rules when necessary.

Academic Mentoring

The institution of academic mentoring at the College aims at the development of a collaborative professional culture that benefits those engaged in the educational process. A lecturer is responsible to guide and support certain students throughout their studies, in order to maximise their prospects, develop their skills and improve their performance. Apart from individual mentoring, students can take part in group mentoring (one lecturer/mentor for a group of 5-10 students/mentees) where joint discussions are being held, expressing common concerns and encouraging interpersonal relationships among mentees at the same time. The personal academic mentor assigned to each student is recorded in the student's data on the College's database software.

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is implemented at Casa College in an effort to offer its students academic support in a more comfortable way as they receive additional instruction from fellow students. Peer tutors are students with exceptional academic performance who assist other students with specific concepts, problems or assignments of a subject taught. They consult with the lecturer of the subject for direction when needed and attend meetings with the faculty in order to report on their tutees' progress.

7.2.3 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Apart from academic excellence, the College aims at enabling students to make the most of their college life and engage in activities that will improve their skills and increase their chances of future employment. Hence, the Student Affairs & Welfare Department supports students — and alumni — in finding either part-time jobs during their studies or full-time jobs after their graduation. This is achieved by:

- helping the students in their integration into the labour market being the link between students and the labour market;
- announcing scholarships offered by various agencies such as the Fulbright, the British Council, the National Scholarship Foundation, Embassies etc.;
- announcing vacancies and internships inside and outside the Institution;
- offering them the opportunity to participate in the Summer Placement programme during their studies;
- being a member of the HOSCO network that connects the College with world-class companies and industry leaders;
- providing information and advisory services to students and graduates for the labour market as well as postgraduate studies and further education / research in Cyprus and abroad;
- developing a network of cooperating businesses and organisations to identify potential jobs and promoting the students' CVs to respective companies;
- organising seminars and workshops on topics such as CV writing, the selection interview, the job-search techniques, writing cover letters, exploring interests and work preferences, the design of a career plan etc.;
- developing and maintaining educational and advisory material in print and electronic form, as well as managing and developing specialised psychometric tools for the need of providing customised information services and counselling to students and graduates (with the assistance of external partners);
- organising professional events and Career Days with the participation of companies and organisations from all sectors of the Cyprus economy; and
- conducting periodic surveys on the employability of our graduates and the labour market trends.

7.2.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Committed to secure everyone's right to education, Casa College offers quality education at an affordable cost. Additionally, the College grants students' awards and scholarships based on their academic performance during their studies, as well as their family and social situation, and their individual or family income. This is an effort to praise exceptional effort, morality and performance, and support financially the students who stand out in adverse conditions. What is more, the College makes special offers and discounts throughout the year, and implements a Tuition Fee Payment Plan which enables the students to spread the cost of their tuition fees by paying in instalments.

7.2.5 RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Students can also use the housing service which offers support for finding accommodation. The Student Affairs & Welfare Department maintains an up-to-date list of available lodgings in the nearby area which is provided to students. It also uses social media to bring into contact our College students seeking for accommodation or roommates, with others who are aware of available ones.

7.3 LEARNING SUPPORT

7.3.1 STUDENT SUPPORT THROUGH LEARNING TOOLS

Several tools are used at Casa College that further support student learning, along with and outside the classroom. The high-tech tools used are Moodle and Microsoft Teams.

Moodle

The College uses Moodle, a multifunctional online platform which allows for the monitoring, design and direct management of the educational activity. It is used by lecturers and students as a support to the learning process, where subject material and relevant up-to-date information are available. Through Moodle, students can receive feedback from their lecturers, or they can communicate with them. Also, this is where test / exam results are announced with comments for the students' improvement. The announcement of results and any further comments are available only to the person they refer to, ensuring protection of personal data.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams for Education is also available to Casa College faculty and students, in order for them to conduct virtual individual or group meetings any time from any place. It is another tool used to share material and news, or solve problems appearing in the learning process instantly.

7.3.2 STUDENT SUPPORT THROUGH INFORMATIVE TOOLS

All members of Casa College community (students, full-time and part-time faculty, and administrative staff) upon enrolment receive an email address with the domain name of the College (****@casacollege.ac.cy) to be used for communication within or related to the College. For instance, the administration uses these emails to keep students up-to-date with information about examinations (dates, rooms, announcement of results, etc.) and events or various activities (meetings of committees which involve students, elections, seminars, entertainment events, etc.).

Other sources of information where students can refer to are the College's:

- Website (www.casacollege.ac.cy/)
- Student Pocket Guide (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/student-pocket-guide/>)
- Prospectus (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/prospectus/>)
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Casa-College-2275558962699138/>)
- Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/casacollege/?hl=en>)
- Monthly newsletter (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/newsletter/>)
- Biannual magazine (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/magazines/>)
- Promotional leaflets (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy/promotional-materials/>)
- Student Pocket Guide (<http://www.casacollege.ac.cy/student-pocket-guide/>)



8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The College is responsible for the accuracy of the information that it puts into the public domain. Therefore, it must preserve the validity of such information to ensure transparency with its stakeholders. For the purposes of this procedure, Public Information refers to 'information that providers communicate and publish about their activities'.

The College publicises its educational and academic activities as well as its quality assurance policy and the results of internal and external evaluations. More specifically, published data pertain to:

- what we are and what we offer;
- what our priorities are and how we reach our goals;
- how we make decisions;
- the structure, organisation and operation of IQAS;
- internal and external evaluation reports;
- the educational activity;
- the research activity; and
- the College policies and procedures.

The main platform that the College uses for such communication is its website (<https://www.casacollege.ac.cy>). Apart from the College's website, information is published on:

- CYQAA website (<https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/el/>),
- social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), and
- electronic and print information materials.

The College ensures that its public communication is:

- honest and transparent when detailing the College facilities, programmes, and its history of its quality assurance policies and procedures;
- accessible and easy to navigate for stakeholders and published in full;
- clear with regards the accreditation of a programme;
- clear in the fact that access, transfer and progression for each programme (if applicable) is presented in a user-friendly manner.

When the public communication is specifically targeted at prospective and/or current students, the College ensures the following:

- that the access, transfer and progression procedures for each applicable programme are clearly stated; and
- that student information is monitored and updated as required.



9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Casa College is dedicated to quality education and has established a robust quality assurance system. The system covers a wide spectrum of aspects ranging from the College's vision, mission and values, programme development, monitoring and review, to management, resources and student support.

We fully acknowledge that quality assurance is not restricted to rules and regulations posed by pertinent authorities, but also affected by its stakeholders' practices. To this end, various processes and tools have been established for collecting feedback in an effort to continuously improve the quality policy and system.

The evolving nature of the quality assurance process makes this manual a living document. The Internal Quality Assurance officers review the College's guidelines and procedures continuously to ensure their efficient and effective operations lead to the development of the College. Thus, they always welcome recommendations and feedback from stakeholders for further refinement of the quality assurance system.



10. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - LIST OF MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Annual Administrative Staff Evaluation
End-of-Term Evaluation
Lecturer's Observation Form
Lecturer's Evaluation Questionnaire
Library Evaluation Questionnaire
Subject Evaluation Form



APPENDIX II - LIST OF FORMS

Student Forms

Absence Application Form
 Accident Report Form
 Accommodation Request Form
 Add & Drop Form
 Alumni Contact Form
 Application Form
 Change of Course Form
 Change of Grade Form
 Change of Personal Information Form
 Claims Form
 Consent to Release Student Information
 Consultation Form
 Document Request Form
 ECTS Validation Form
 Examination Re-Mark Form
 GDPR Consent Form
 Graduation Ceremony Application Form
 Make-Up Examination Form
 Lost & Found Form
 Registration Process Form
 Re-Registration Form
 Re-Registration Process
 Scholarship Application Form
 Sexual Harassment Form
 Student Council Candidate Eligibility Form
 Student Proxy
 Student Regulations
 Student Withdrawal Form
 Transfer Credit Evaluation Form
 Transfer from Casa College Form
 Transfer to Casa College Form
 Work Placement Opportunities

Staff Forms

Accident Report Form
 Application for Research Grant
 Book Order Form
 Claims Form
 Employer Warning Notice
 Employment Reference Form
 Faculty Information Form
 Funding Request Form
 GDPR Consent Form
 Leave Request Form
 Lost & Found Form
 Recruitment Process Form
 Sexual Harassment Form



APPENDIX III - LIST OF HANDBOOKS-LOGBOOKS

Application Handbook
Induction Handbook for Administrative Staff
Induction Handbook for Faculty
Internal Regulations Handbook
Lecture Overview Logbook
Lecturer Evaluation Handbook
Moodle Guide
Student Affairs Handbook
Summer Placement Logbook



APPENDIX IV - DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT



1. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION

<p>Last Name(s)</p> <p>1.1 <input type="text" value="Last Name"/></p> <p>Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)</p> <p>1.3 <input type="text" value="dd/mm/yyyy"/></p>	<p>First Name(s)</p> <p>1.2 <input type="text" value="First Name"/></p> <p>Student identification number or code (if available)</p> <p>1.4 <input type="text" value="File No"/></p>
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2. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION

<p>Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language)</p> <p>2.1 <input type="text" value="Bachelor of Arts"/></p> <p>Name and status of awarding institution (in original language)</p> <p>2.3 <input type="text" value="Casa College"/></p> <p>Name and status of institution (if different of 2.3) administering studies(in original)</p> <p>2.4 <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Main fields(s) of study for the qualification</p> <p>2.2 <input type="text" value="Hotel Administration"/></p> <p>Language of instruction/examination</p> <p>2.5 <input type="text" value="English"/></p>
--	--

3. INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION

<p>Level of the qualification</p> <p>3.1 <input type="text" value="Bachelor"/></p> <p>Access requirement(s):</p> <p>3.3 <input type="text" value="The minimum requirement for entry is evidence of the High School Leaving Certificate with an average of 12/20 or 60%"/></p>	<p>Official duration of programme in credits and /or years</p> <p>3.2 <input type="text" value="240 ECTS (4 Years)"/></p>
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4. INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME COMPLETED AND THE RESULTS RESULTS OBTAINED

Mode of study

4.1 **Full-Time**

Program details, individual credits gained and grades / marks obtained

4.3 **Please see attached transcript**

Grading system and , if available, grade distribution table

4.4

GRADING SYSTEM			
Academic progress is evaluated on the following grading system:			
Letter Grade	Quality Points	Number Grade	
A	4.00	93-100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90-92	Very Good
B+	3.33	87-89	Good
B	3.00	83-86	Good
B-	2.67	80-82	Good
C+	2.33	77-79	Satisfactory
C	2.00	73-76	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	70-72	Satisfactory
D+	1.33	67-69	Poor
D	1.00	60-66	Poor
D-	0.67	50-59	Unsatisfactory
F	0.00	0-49	Fail
I	0.00	--	Incomplete
W	0.00	--	Withdrawal
P	0.00	--	Pass
AU	0.00	--	Audit

Programme learning outcomes

4.2 • *Apply the major concepts, skills and values of the hotel and lodging industry to address problems and critically analyze and evaluate contemporary issues within the areas of hotel management.*

• *Apply managerial skills, leadership abilities and competencies in the management of hospitality operations and human resources.*

• *Use marketing and sales promotion strategies applicable to a whole variety of hospitality industry settings.*

• *Recognize the scope and significance of outstanding guest service quality and its impact on the success of any hospitality operation.*

• *Apply financial reasoning and performance analysis to evaluate issues in the hotel industry.*

• *Acquire supervisory and managerial level training experience within the hospitality industry.*

• *Seek employment at senior level management positions or pursue further studies in related fields.*

• *Utilize interpersonal skills to lead/manage first-level employees in a hospitality setting.*

• *Forecast sales and expenses in a variety of hospitality businesses.*

Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)

4.5 **Level 6 according to the European Qualification Framework of the European Union**

5. INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION

Access for further study

5.1 **This qualification may lead to studies at a Master's Degree Level**

Access to a regulated profession (if applicable)

5.2 **N/A**

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information

Further information sources:

- 6.1 *The specific programme requirements are detailed in the College prospectus. The College prospectus provides information on the length of the programme, credit structure, required units of study, intermediate awards, progression requirements, admission regulations and assessment regulations. Programme specifications are available via the College website: www.casacollege.com*

- 6.2 *For further information please refer to the College website: www.casacollege.ac.cy*

7. CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT

Date

Signature

- 7.1 8/2/2021

- 7.2

Capacity

- 7.3 *Head of the Department*

- 7.4

Official stamp or seal

Contact Details:

3, Jean Moreas Street
1075 Nicosia-Cyprus
P.O.Box 20545
Tel: +357 22 68 18 82
Fax: +357 22 66 24 14
Email: info@casacollege.ac.cy
Web: www.casacollege.ac.cy

This European Diploma Supplement is valid only with Bachelor Degree No: 1378 - 8/2/2021

8. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Description of Higher Education (HE) in Cyprus

One of the main goals of HE in Cyprus is to satisfy local and international needs. During the past two decades, important developments have been noted in the area of HE with the establishment and operation of public and private universities, research centres, and quality assurance bodies, which provide and safeguard the HE System of Cyprus. Building a solid foundation, and yet with a flexible structure, able to adjust according to local and international demands, has become the Ministry's twofold challenge. This goal has provided the incentive for the Cyprus Government and its stakeholders to make important decisions with regards to the future of HE and, at the same time, implement them in order to create a strong HE System.

National Qualifications Framework

National Qualifications Framework describes what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification as well as how learners can move from one qualification to another within a system. National Qualifications Framework is developed to be compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA, which was adopted in 2005 and consists of three cycles (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate). The overarching framework makes recognition of qualifications easier since specific qualifications can be related to a common framework. In Cyprus, the Council of Ministers with its decision on 9 July 2008 (number 67 445) decided to set up a Committee composed of representatives of all stakeholders with the objective of introducing a National Qualifications Framework for Cyprus, in line with the Qualifications Framework for the EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. There will be eight reference levels in the National Qualifications Framework defined by a series of indicators that measure the learning outcomes such as knowledge, personal and professional skills. The establishment of the National Qualifications Framework, together with the other transparency tools, facilitates the mobility of students within the European Union and the rest of the world.

Implementation of the Bologna Process in Cyprus

The Bologna Process is the process of creation of the EHEA. The process started on 19 June 1999 when Education Ministers from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Process in which they undertook the responsibility to create an EHEA that should be completed by 2010. On 19 May 2001, Ministers met

in Prague to review the progress achieved and to set out directions and priorities for the next stages of the Process. During that meeting, Cyprus together with Croatia, Liechtenstein and Turkey joined the Bologna Process. Since then, DHTE is actively involved in the Bologna Process and its implementation in Cyprus. For this purpose, a national working group, headed by the Director of Higher and Tertiary Education, was established. The members of this group include the Cyprus Bologna experts, representatives of universities, student unions, employer associations, the Director of the Foundation for the Management of the Lifelong Learning Programmes, and other stakeholders. During the period of the Bologna Process agreement in Cyprus, a series of measures have been promoted, targeting the quality assurance of HE, the enhancement of mobility, the promotion of the inclusion and the social dimension of HE in Cyprus.

Quality Assurance

As part of the European agenda for the modernization of HE, issues of quality assurance are constantly being revisited in an attempt to ensure that institutions of HE revolve around and build a culture of quality. Within this framework, Cyprus has placed quality assurance issues very high on its political and educational agenda. Recent educational developments on the island, including the establishment of three public and five private universities, have urged the MOEC to form a new legislation that will establish an Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The agency's aim is to further enhance internal and external quality assurance procedures as well as accreditation matters, in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

In order to make feasible one of the main aims of the Bologna Process, that of the mobility of graduates around the EHEA, the transparency and recognition of degrees earned must be ensured. These can be achieved through increasing transparency and trust among educational systems. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is considered as the main tool to ensure transparency. In the past, ECTS was used only for credit transfer, while nowadays has become necessary to transform to a credit accumulation system, since students are encouraged to spend a study period at another institution. In addition, credit accumulation in regular HE programmes should also provide students with the possibility to gain credits within informal and non-formal education, thus taking on board lifelong learning.

