

Doc. 300.3.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

Date: 27/7/2025

- **Higher Education Institution:**

NKUA

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty: School of Economics and Political Sciences**

- **Department: Department of Economics**

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Economics, 4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name



- **Department's Status: New**



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

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

We would like to start our response by thanking the EEC for its detailed feedback. We feel this has been an excellent opportunity for us to review and improve our processes and focus on the successful deployment of the Cyprus branch. The EEC feedback and the process leading up to that, have been valuable for us to further enhance our preparation for the Cyprus branch deployment. On academic profile and orientation we have the following responses to tender:

1.1 Mission and strategic planning

“Quality indicator 1.1.5 The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies. - Score 4” (p. 6)

Department's Response

All academic staff of the Department participate in the Departmental monthly Meetings, which make decisions on all academic and administrative matters, and particularly on strategic issues. Moreover, the Heads of Departments, together with the Dean, shape the strategy of the School, while the Senate determines the overall strategy of the University. Therefore, the entire academic community is involved in strategic planning

“Quality indicator 1.1.7 The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective. - Score 4” (p. 6)

Department's Response

The Department has a comprehensive and efficient mechanism for collecting academic and administrative data. Specifically, there is a fully integrated information system that records data on students, teaching staff, grades, postgraduate students, PhD candidates, examination participation, and other teaching and research related fields. This system provides all necessary data to support academic planning and development both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Similar systems we intend to put in place at the Cyprus branch.

“Additionally, provide information on the following:

- 1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.***
- 2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs). (p.7)”***

Department's Response

1. Coherence and Compatibility among Programmes of Study Offered by the Department:

The Department ensures a high degree of coherence among its constituent programmes of study through a well-structured curriculum framework. In its undergraduate economics programme it offers both core modules that cover the key competencies for economics and a wide variety of optional modules. The programme passes through regular revalidation and review so that it remains up to date and its various components retain their relevance fulfilling their academic purpose.

2. Coherence and Compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty:

The School/Faculty actively promotes interdisciplinary collaboration and curriculum coherence across its Departments. Several compulsory modules with overlapping content are taught by the same lecturer across departments and lecturers who cover similar areas are in close contact building inter-module conceptual links for the students. In addition, students from one Department may attend modules offered by another, provided these are included in their programme of study. There are also joint postgraduate programmes and collaborative research projects. This complex network of options and core modules will be replicated in the Cyprus Branch, and it is our intention to provide a wide range of modules that link interdisciplinary study with a pluralist education.

1.3 Development processes

“As above, these are positive scores reflecting confidence in the plans, and respect for the parent department.

Additionally, write:

- Expected number of Cypriot and international students

- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

Numbers are subject to successful recruitment, pending accreditation, and the initial target markets are mainly Cyprus and Greece.” (p.8)

Department’s Response

On Recruitment challenges we should note that the programme is delivered in Greek. As a result, almost all students are expected to come from Cyprus and mainland Greece, although Greek-speaking students from other countries are also welcomed. We estimate 20–25 students from Cyprus, 15–20 from mainland Greece, and 2–5 from other countries, such as ex pats or students who speak Greek but live abroad. To improve the recognizability of the new offering we intend to do outreach activities that range from school visits to open lectures by the renowned professors of the department showing the importance of the economics viewpoint- and our pluralist programme – to tackle social issues..

Areas of improvement and recommendations

***“Recruitment challenges and competition from other HE providers
Faculty retention” (p.8-9)***

Department’s Response

If and only if a simple market research has been conducted, it can be mentioned how the NKUA department of Economics differentiates itself from the other HE providers in Cyprus. An easy way to do it would be to mention that the NKUA is ranked higher in the subject of Economics than the



best Cypriot university (University of Cyprus) according to the QS World university rankings 2025. This excellent performance and the relevant know-how will be transferred to the branch.

As soon as the operating licence for the Cyprus branch is granted, the staff recruitment process will begin. The same procedures as those of the parent institution will be followed, ensuring a high level of academic quality. The staff will be renewed and adjusted according to the number of students, so that there is never any shortfall.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

We want to thank the EEC for its clear and detailed report on quality assurance. As the report touches on a number of subfields we have organized this response by providing detailed answers in the specific fields.

2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

“Quality indicator 2.1.2 Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. - Score 3” (p. 10)

Department’s Response

In the monthly meetings of the Departments, the Schools, and the Senate, representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as administrative staff, participate. These representatives have the opportunity to express their views, raise concerns, and propose possible solutions. In this sense, the system also functions as a mechanism for evaluation and detailed feedback gathering. Additionally, a more formal evaluation process is in place through dedicated online feedback platforms, where all procedures and practices are systematically assessed.

Strengthening Collaboration with External Stakeholders

Development and Implementation of Procedures and Tools for collecting feedback from external stakeholders regarding graduates’ qualifications, as well as the design, structure, and quality of the Institution’s Study Programmes.

Establishment of Advisory Committees or Informal Support Councils comprised of representatives from external bodies and organizations (Central Advisory Council and Councils per Department or Study Programme).

Further Initiatives for Institutional Communication and Feedback

Establishment of Advisory Committees or Informal Support Councils comprised of members from external bodies and organizations, both at the Institutional Level and at the Study Programme Level. Development of a dedicated questionnaire to collect feedback from external stakeholders, which will be distributed to them for input.

Creation of a Stakeholder Registry to be utilized in the internal and external evaluation processes of the Study Programmes, as well as in evaluations related to international university rankings.

Strategic Actions – Communication and Outreach

Transition from the model of “personal acquaintance” to a model of official institutional communication with external stakeholders.

Improvement of the procedures for informing stakeholders about the results of the external evaluation and accreditation of the IQAS and the Study Programmes.

Establishment of Events specifically addressed to external stakeholders.

Execution Measures – Stakeholder Information

Sending updates to stakeholders regarding the results of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the IQAS and the Study Programmes.

Organizing an annual event as part of a broader initiative (Quality Days), specifically addressed to stakeholders, during which the results of internal and external evaluations and the resulting changes and improvements will be presented.

Posting on the University and Department websites of specific reports and information regarding the progress and outcomes of quality assurance procedures

“Quality indicator 2.1.4.3 The connection with society. - Score 3” (p. 10)

Department’s Response

Connection with society is achieved through the following actions: 1) A plan to recruit locals, for the administrative and academic staff in addition to the existing NKUA staff that will be allocated to the branch. In doing so, our intention is to combine NKUA's established practices with the local know-how. also locally for administrative and academic staff. 2) Planned lectures for the population and high school students on various topics of economics from leading Professors of the home department (initially) and the branch department in due time. 3) Activities for the local community that address societal needs. 4) Research activities that are relevant to social needs both of the Cypriot population and more broadly of the European society. 5) The development of business and employment links that acts in two ways- brings in expertise to the local community through our educational system and is responsive to the needs of the community by keeping abreast with world leading research and teaching advances.

“The Department applies policy for teaching, risk assessment, introduction of new programmes, as well as monitoring and revision of existing programmes. It also engages with teachers and students’ evaluation and feedback. However, there is a room for improvement to formalise research informed teaching. Quality assurance system of the connection with society could, however, be strengthened.” (p 11)

Department’s Response

Regarding the integration of research into teaching, the Department actively encourages its staff to propose new courses that reflect the latest developments, particularly in the more advanced semesters. It also promotes the adoption of innovative teaching methods and new forms of student assessment that take into account emerging technological tools, such as artificial intelligence. We also focus on new pedagogical approaches such as the flipped classroom approach that would be appropriate for smaller group teaching equivalent in size to the Cyprus branch plan. Furthermore, we intend to oversee in detail the communication channels with students in the parent department to make sure students receive the right information on the appeals process. This is something that we will fully implement in the Cyprus branch as well. Finally, as regards evaluation by society, this can be achieved through the acceptance and uptake of the Department’s postgraduate and e-learning programmes as well which are part of our future plans on developing the Cyprus branch.

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

“Quality indicator 2.2.6 The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective. - Score 3” (p. 12)

Department's Response

There is an established and clear process on students' appeal. Any student who has complaints regarding their grading may address them to the Head of Division, the Head of Department, or the Department Assembly. Furthermore, the law stipulates that any student may request the Dean to appoint a three-member examination committee, which has the authority to re-evaluate their grade.

“Quality indicator 2.2.12 The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information. - Score 3” (p. 12)

Department's Response

There is a dedicated mechanism at the University of the parent institution—the Career Office—which informs all graduates about potential job opportunities and (ple information on graduate employment prospects. Furthermore, it has established links with employers to make sure our graduates receive the skills that are required in the labour market. In addition, regular meetings are held with representatives from the labour market who are seeking employees. Employment opportunities and a focus on employment prospects is a core aspect of our branch policy as well, and further support in this area is something that we will properly address in our recruitment plans for branch staff.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“Strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders in program evaluations.

Clear communication to students of appeals processes and related mechanisms.” (p.14)

Department's Response

An Advisory Committee will be established, consisting of external stakeholders, who will provide recommendations regarding the improvement and development of the programmes. (please see the response above at 2.1)

Students will be informed of their rights through the study guide, announcements on the Department's website, as well as by the teaching staff.

3. Administration

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“A robust recruitment process and appropriate training and development for new hires is an important priority.

Attention to development needs in both the parent institution and the new Branch is vital to the sustainability of the internationalization strategy.” (p.16)

Department’s Response

The Cyprus Branch will implement the same recruitment methods as those used in Greece, adapted to the legislation of the Republic of Cyprus. The Athens branch is an equal opportunity employer that follows a transparent and fair process in its recruitment drives. It offers its administrative staff full training and mentoring opportunities and is fully compliant with labour law practices of the European Union.

Furthermore, part of the deployment plan is for the staff hired to be mentored by experienced administrators of the parent institution and this will be achieved through informal and formal processes such as a mobility scheme we are setting up in place. All emerging needs will be recorded and addressed promptly to ensure the Branch is fully sustainable and supported from the beginning. Finally our internationalization strategy extends beyond the close collaboration of the home and branch institutions to include training and support at national and international (and especially European) levels following established practices of the home institution.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“Ensuring sufficient faculty resources is crucial for the successful launch of the programs. Supporting existing staff in their mentoring and developmental roles is vital to the success of the new Branch.

Ensuring parity of support across the Branch and the parent institution is very important, e.g. in relation to research time, and developmental support.” (p.19)

Department’s Response

We would like to thank the EEC for its thorough review and feedback on learning and teaching. As we note in other sections of this response as well, we are committed to a successful launch of the programme and we are immediately setting in motion processes for staffing so that our initial cohort has an excellent teaching experience.

Furthermore, the parent department has an informal mentoring scheme where young members of staff can ask for guidance and support older established members, who give career advice and support on research and research papers. The plan to have a circulating visiting professor scheme in the Cyprus branch is a concentrated effort to replicate these practices in the branch. This is part of a mobility scheme that allows branch members to visit the parent institution for research and teaching exchange and vice versa. Thus, not only are we committed in providing research support equivalent to the parent institution in the branch, we also plan to extend and strengthen the informal mentoring channels that allow the thriving of research in the parent branch. We believe this will be in the benefit of the parent institution as well and thus we have every reason to utilise all the resources and available means to support the Cyprus Branch, ensuring that it becomes equivalent to the parent institution in research and teaching excellence.

5. Teaching Staff

“A minimum of 5 teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work will be recruited initially.” (p. 21)

Department’s Response

We thank the EEC for its constructive feedback and share the commitment that the working conditions in the branch department will mirror the parent department. A minimum of 5 teaching staff working full-time exclusively for the branch will be recruited as part of the start up phase operations. We also would like to note that our recruitment scheme is the same as the parent department, as we are looking for excellence in teaching, research and administrative work.

The home department is committed to properly provisioning the branch from its first days of operations in a fashion that is planned, coherent and offers continuity in teaching and research so that the phasing in of students is as seamless as possible. From the beginning and in proportion to the number of students recruited so that they are properly supported, the branch is organized to have: Five (5) teaching staff working full-time across fields of knowledge and with complementing expertise in teaching and administrative duties. One (1) special teaching-staff fully focused in developing and maintaining processes and quality of provision. We are also paying plans for up to five visiting professors and one or two special scientists to help with knowledge exchange and mentoring of the branch staff in maintaining the level of provision at the standards of the parent department.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“It is strongly recommended that the work load arrangements in terms of teaching/research/administration for the new faculty at the Cyprus branch be the same as those that obtain for faculty colleagues at NKUA in Athens.” (p.21)

Department’s Response

Every possible effort will be made by the administration of both the Department in Athens and the Cyprus branch to ensure that teaching hours and research conditions are exactly the same.

6. Research

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“Retention of staff

Appropriate research support (including time) in the new Branch.” (p.23)

Department’s Response

The plan for staff retention has two pillars. The first is the adequate provisioning of teaching in research staff in accordance with our business plan, the second is a mobility plan that allows staff to circulate between the home and branch departments, retaining staff satisfaction and allowing interchange of ideas in teaching practices and research. Through this comprehensive plan we believe that staff wellbeing will be enhanced and staff will not only be retained but also expanded through new recruitments. As the department is putting in place structures that will enable the mobility of staff between branch and parent department creating a research and teaching community that exchanges ideas, processes and knowledge creation. Thus, research collaboration with the parent Department will be continuous and uninterrupted throughout the year from the beginning of the branch’s operations.



7. Resources

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“As of now there are no problem areas. However, the Department will need to keep a keen eye on the management of its resources as it rolls out its new activities in Cyprus.” (p.26)

Department’s Response

We thank the EEC for its constructive feedback on resources. We fully agree that monitoring of resource deployment is necessary so that we provide effectively for the branch and retain current working conditions, as well as, student provision in the parent institution. The current rollout plan is fully costed and we are committed to continuing with this good practice.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

“The Department of Economics at NKUA is a long-established department with a stellar reputation and a long record of highly meaningful engagement with society. It is recognised for its teaching quality, its research prowess and for its impact on government and commerce.

The Department has developed a convincing plan to establish itself in the proposed Cyprus branch of NKUA. The plan is very well prepared and included the undertaking of appropriate risk and sustainability analyses as well as a fully costed budget for the initial years of operation.

Very appropriately the plans for the branch Department include the initial recruitment of a minimum of five new Faculty members as well as administrative staff. It is important that the newly recruited faculty members have the same workload conditions in terms of teaching/research and administration as their NKUA Athens based colleagues.

The new branch Department has an opportunity to engage with local stakeholders in terms of teaching programmes, research and other initiatives that capitalise on the unique locational aspects of Cyprus. Embedding into the local context has the possibility of delivering rich dividends for both the local society and for faculty members as it helps to secure the branch as a key feature of the educational landscape in Cyprus.

The parent department embraces intellectual pluralism, and this is an important tradition to embed within the new Branch.

The EEC are confident of the potential of the new Department at the Cyprus branch of NKUA and wishes it and its stakeholders every success as it develops into the future. (p. 27)”

Department’s Response:

The Department of Economics would like to thank the members of the EEC for the useful discussions and feedback during the accreditation process. We would like also to record our sincere thanks to the members of the agency for organising so efficiently the accreditation process and for their guidance throughout the process.

The accreditation process and the final report were an excellent opportunity for the department to reflect on its current programme, its student and staff provisions and the way this can be effectively transferred to the Cyprus branch. The department is committed to retaining its high quality face-to-face teaching in the Cyprus branch and for this is taking immediate steps to set in place procedures as well as recruit staff to support the educational process from the very beginning. Furthermore, the department is committed to retaining and enhancing its pluralist education curriculum in its Cyprus branch, and we intend to do this not only through properly recruiting staff but also through integrating processes and staff between the parent and the branch institution.

We are committed to a successful launch of the Cyprus branch that will help the branch immediately gain a reputation as a high quality provider in Cyprus. To this end our immediate actions include:

- Working with the central administration to prepare the facilities necessary to welcome students and their learning needs.
- Putting in place student bodies (a student club, peer-to-peer learning processes) that will help cohort dynamics both in achieving learning outcomes and enhancing social welfare.
- Addressing staff needs by starting a process of recruitment and organising in a formal way the link with the parent department on staff mobility.
- Setting up quality assurance systems that will address the needs of students and staff and effectively support the learning process. Following the excellent feedback by the committee, we



intend to review this process at the home institution also so that students are better informed about our official procedures available to them.

- Starting to develop deep links with the local community to integrate our branch in a fruitful way in the local society and labour market. Social impact is a core value of our home institution and the vision is to enhance our reputation and link with the local community in Cyprus through the branch.

- Starting a campaign of student recruitment to inform prospective students of our unique offering and distinctive economics programme and, thus, recruit a high-quality student body that will help maintain and enhance the reputation of the parent institution.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our sincere thanks for the process and feedback tendered by the committee, and to state once again our resolve in making the Cyprus branch of the economics department a thriving teaching and research place that is also a beacon of intellectual activity for Cyprus and the wider area.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Stelios Kotsios	Head of Economics Department, NKUA	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	

Date: Click to enter date

