



Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 04/08/2025

# Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Cyprus Branch
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** School of Economics and Political  
Science
- **Department:** Business Administration
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## Programme 1

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

## Programme 2

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

## Programme 3

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** Choose status



**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

### ***Areas of improvement and recommendations:***

The timescale for the establishment of the new Branch is very challenging and will place demands on faculty and administrative staff. It is important that the clear support among staff for the new Branch is not unfairly exploited and that staff in all roles are supported and resourced to undertake additional work for the new enterprise.

### **Department's response:**

*The department intends to conduct a thorough workload assessment for all faculty and administrative staff involved in the new Branch. We will implement clear guidelines for managing additional responsibilities, and will ensure adequate administrative and technical support, and provide access to relevant professional development opportunities. We will consider a phased approach to new initiatives to manage workload effectively and establish a system for recognizing and rewarding staff contributions to maintain morale and prevent burnout. The NKUA will implement its recruitment teaching plans for the staffing of the Cyprus Branch.*

### ***Areas of improvement and recommendations:***

It is also important the Branch does not work as a pale imitation of the parent institution and that it is helped to develop similar levels of excellence.

### **Department's response:**

*We will define and articulate a unique strategic vision for the Cyprus Branch that builds upon the strengths of the parent institution while also establishing its own distinct identity and areas of excellence. This will include encouraging innovation in curriculum design, pursuing specialized research initiatives relevant to the local context, emerging global trends, and fostering community engagement that differentiates the Branch and enhances its reputation for academic distinction.*

### **Findings**

We do see scope to make alumni relations and communication with graduates more expansive. This would be a worthwhile agenda for the new Branch given its societal aspirations

### **Department's response:**

Establishing a Dynamic Alumni Association, is a strategic priority for the NKUA Cyprus Branch. This initiative will serve as a vital feedback channel, providing data, experiences, and assessments of the social impact of our activities, while fostering joint actions that showcase the Branch's academic, research, and social contributions and enhance graduates' professional and social advancement.

Following the successful model implemented at the parent Institution, the strategy will leverage the Career Office of NKUA Cyprus Branch to create an alumni network offering services and engaging members in programme evaluation and career-tracking activities. A dedicated Alumni Office will be established at the "Elenio" Primary School (Central Administration Building), underscoring the significance attributed to graduates for the Branch's future growth.

The overarching goal is to establish a **systematic, lifelong, and mutually beneficial relationship** between the University and its graduates. This will be achieved through seven strategic pillars:

1. Monitoring graduates' professional and social progression through structured tracer studies.
  2. Ensuring continuous two-way communication between NKUA and its alumni.
  3. Maintaining an integrated alumni registry within the Career Office's information system.
  4. Creating a human resource pool for internships, mentoring, innovation, and entrepreneurship initiatives.
  5. Developing interactive communication tools such as surveys, newsletters, interviews, and social media engagement.
  6. Enhancing academic quality through graduate participation in improvement studies.
  7. Exploring the creation of a formal alumni association with full technical and operational support.
- Through these actions, the NKUA Cyprus Branch will establish and operate a dynamic alumni network that actively contributes to academic excellence, societal impact, and the ongoing success of its graduate

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-areas

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

### 2.1 \*Internal Stakeholder Involvement in Quality Assurance Policy with External Stakeholders\*

"While the Branch has no faculty or staff at the time of evaluation, the stakeholders involved in developing the quality policy have been those of NKUA."

"Strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders in program evaluations is recognized as an area of improvement by the Branch."

#### Department's response:

We acknowledge the Committee's observation under specific criterion and wish to emphasise that the NKUA Cyprus Branch has already planned measures to ensure an enhanced and structured involvement of **external stakeholders** in its quality assurance processes.

Specifically:

1. **Participation in the annual internal evaluation of study programmes** – External stakeholders (e.g., employers, professional associations, public bodies) will receive **specialised questionnaires** designed to collect their assessment of the qualifications of graduates employed in their organisations. They will also be invited to provide feedback on the structure and content of the study programmes and to submit proposals for improvement.
2. **Membership in Advisory Boards** – External stakeholders will participate in the **Local Advisory Board** of the Branch, as well as in **Departmental Advisory Boards** at programme level, ensuring close alignment of curricula with labour market needs and sectoral developments.
3. **Involvement in initial and periodic external evaluations** – In line with the applicable legal framework, external stakeholders will take part in the **initial and periodic accreditation processes** of the Branch's study programmes, contributing to their relevance and quality.
4. **Integration into the Internal Quality Assurance System** – A **new dedicated process ("Process 9")** will be added to the Internal Quality Assurance System, explicitly defining the participation of external stakeholders in all relevant quality assurance procedures, from feedback collection to the formulation of improvement actions.

These measures build on existing NKUA good practices (as detailed in our stakeholder engagement plan) and ensure a transition from ad hoc personal contacts to a formal, institutionalised model of collaboration. They will guarantee that the voice of the Cypriot labour market, society, and professional community is systematically heard and integrated into the strategic and operational development of the Branch.

**Table 1: External Stakeholder Engagement Plan of NKUA Cyprus Branch**

Form of Involvement	Description	Frequency	Expected Deliverables
Annual Internal Evaluation of Study Programmes	Completion of dedicated questionnaires assessing graduate qualifications,	Annually	Completed questionnaires, qualitative feedback

	programme relevance, and improvement suggestions.		reports, proposed improvement actions.
<b>Participation in Branch-level Local Advisory Board</b>	Regular meetings with representatives from academia, industry, public bodies, and alumni to provide strategic input.	Twice per year	Meeting minutes, strategic recommendations, follow-up action items.
<b>Participation in Departmental Advisory Boards</b>	Programme-level boards focusing on aligning curricula with labour market needs and professional standards.	Twice per year	Curriculum alignment reports, proposals for updates or new modules.
<b>Participation in Initial and Periodic Accreditation Processes</b>	Active role in formal evaluation committees, as per the legal framework, to ensure programme quality and relevance.	Every 5 years (or as required by accreditation cycle)	Evaluation reports, recommendations for accreditation.
<b>Integration into IQAS – Process 9 (Stakeholder Involvement)</b>	Formalised process in the Internal Quality Assurance System defining stakeholder roles, feedback channels, and integration into improvement actions.	Ongoing – embedded in IQAS procedures	Stakeholder engagement log, documented feedback integration into quality improvement plans.

Through this structured and multi-level engagement framework, the NKUA Cyprus Branch ensures that external stakeholders are not only consulted but are integral contributors to the ongoing quality enhancement of its study programmes and institutional activities.

**2.1** The quality assurance system related to the connection with society could be strengthened. Specifically, Quality Indicator Criteria 2.1.4.3, "The connection with society," received a score of 3, indicating partial compliance.

**Department's response:**

We acknowledge the Committee's evaluation and wish to underline that the NKUA Cyprus Branch has been designed to operate as an open, engaged, and socially embedded institution, ensuring a continuous and mutually beneficial relationship with Cypriot society. To elevate the quality assurance system's connection with society, the department will establish a dedicated Societal Engagement Framework. This framework will include a formal process for identifying key societal stakeholders (e.g., industry leaders, NGOs, government bodies) and developing mutually beneficial partnerships through Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs). Concrete, measurable indicators for engagement will be defined, such as the number of joint research projects, guest lectures by industry experts, and student internship placements that directly address societal needs. A structured annual review mechanism, involving direct feedback sessions with employers and community partners, will be implemented to ensure curriculum relevance and to proactively identify emerging societal demands for incorporation into program design and delivery. The outcomes of these engagements, particularly their impact on student employability and curriculum enhancement, will be regularly reported and used for continuous improvement.

From its inception, the Branch has embedded in its governance and academic structures mechanisms for **active societal involvement**:

1. **Local Advisory Board at Branch Level** – Comprising representatives from the labour market, professional associations, local authorities, cultural organisations, alumni, and NGOs, providing strategic advice and ensuring alignment of the Branch’s mission with societal needs.
2. **Departmental Advisory Boards** – Each Department will establish its own Board, focusing on the relevance of curricula to labour market trends, fostering entrepreneurship, and strengthening sector-specific collaborations.
3. **Annual stakeholder consultations** – Through targeted questionnaires, focus groups, and thematic workshops, stakeholders will evaluate graduate skills, propose curriculum improvements, and suggest new initiatives for societal contribution.
4. **Integration into Quality Assurance** – Stakeholder feedback will feed directly into programme review and strategic planning, with a dedicated “Process 9” in the IQAS to ensure structured engagement in quality improvement cycles.
5. **Public engagement and transparency** – Annual “Quality and Society” events (building on the “Quality Days” model) will present evaluation results, societal impact reports, and planned actions to the community and partners.

Beyond governance and quality assurance, the Branch’s **connection with society** is grounded in:

- **Historic and cultural ties** – NKUA has educated over 320,000 Cypriot graduates, shaping the country’s institutions, especially in education and healthcare.
- **Overwhelming public support** – According to the 2024 ALCO survey, 87% of Cypriots welcome the establishment of the Branch, and 85% recognise NKUA’s prestige and historical legacy.
- **Institutional partnerships** – Formal collaboration with the Archbishopric of Cyprus, municipalities, and local institutions ensures shared use of infrastructure, provision of student housing, and joint cultural and educational initiatives.
- **Contribution to local development** – The Branch will boost the local economy, create employment, enhance research and innovation capacity, and promote Cyprus as an academic hub in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**Table 2: – Societal Engagement Framework**

Level	Mechanism	Frequency	Expected Societal Impact
<b>Branch</b>	Local Advisory Board	Twice per year	Strategic guidance on mission, societal needs alignment, outreach priorities
<b>Department</b>	Departmental Advisory Boards	Twice per year	Curricula alignment, labour market links, entrepreneurship support
<b>All Programmes</b>	Annual Stakeholder Consultations	Annually	Graduate skills assessment, curriculum feedback, new project proposals
<b>Institution</b>	Annual “Quality and Society” Event	Annually	Public accountability, dissemination of impact and improvement actions
<b>Cross-cutting</b>	Partnerships with local authorities, cultural & social institutions	Ongoing	Shared projects, infrastructure use, joint cultural/educational events

**2.2** The established procedures for examining students' objections/disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective (Score of 3 - Partially Compliant). While clear procedures exist, students were not sufficiently aware of them, indicating a gap in communication and accessibility.

## 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. To ensure full compliance and student empowerment, the department will launch a comprehensive Student Grievance Awareness and Accessibility Program. To strengthen existing practices and ensure full compliance with international quality assurance standards, the following actions will be implemented:

- **Formal Documentation:** All appeals and objection-handling procedures will be clearly documented within the Internal Quality Assurance System and relevant institutional regulations, ensuring transparency, consistency, and accountability.
- **Early Communication:** Students will be informed about these procedures at the commencement of their studies, during the induction/orientation programme, ensuring they are aware of their rights and the mechanisms available to them from the outset.
- **Student Appeals and Academic Ethics Guide:** A dedicated guide will be developed, presenting the process in a clear and accessible manner, with step-by-step instructions for each possible case. This guide will be available in both printed and digital formats, and will serve as an authoritative reference tool for the student community.
- **Accessibility and Support:** The procedures and guide will be permanently accessible via the University's and Departments' websites, with designated staff members available to provide personalised clarification and guidance upon request.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The effectiveness of these procedures will be reviewed annually through feedback collected from students who have used the mechanism, as well as through analysis of case resolution times and outcomes. The results of this review will inform any necessary adjustments to further enhance the clarity, fairness, and efficiency of the process.

Through these measures, the Department ensures that the procedures are not only formally established but also effectively communicated, consistently applied, and regularly monitored for improvement

Beyond basic dissemination, this program will involve mandatory, interactive training sessions for all faculty members and student advisors on the objection procedures, equipping them to guide students effectively. For students, a multi-format communication strategy will be employed, including a dedicated, easily navigable section on the departmental website, an interactive digital portal for online submission and real-time tracking of objections, and clear visual aids (e.g., infographics, short videos) explaining each step of the process. Annual surveys will be conducted to measure student awareness and confidence in utilizing these procedures, with findings directly informing continuous improvements to communication strategies and support resources.

### 2.2 The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.

## Department's response:

While already compliant, the department can further enhance the impact of this practice by regularly reviewing the methodology for analyzing graduate employment data to ensure its robustness and relevance. Additionally, explore new channels and formats for publishing this information to maximize accessibility and utility for prospective students, current students, and external stakeholders, thereby reinforcing the program's value and societal connection.

## Findings



The effectiveness of the quality assurance system still relies on the parent University's experiences because the Branch has no faculty, staff or students and operations have not been launched<sup>111</sup>. While the Branch currently lacks its own faculty or staff, the stakeholders involved in developing the quality policy have been those of NKUA. Strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders in program evaluations is recognized as an area of improvement by the Branch.

**Department's response:**

As the Branch builds its own faculty and staff, it will establish a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit within the department which will be chaired by an academic or administrative member. This unit will formalize processes for internal stakeholders to actively develop and implement quality policies, ensuring they are tailored to the Branch's specific context. Concurrently, the Branch will proactively engage a diverse range of external stakeholders (e.g., industry professionals, alumni, community leaders) by forming advisory boards, conducting regular feedback forums, and involving them in curriculum review and quality assurance committees. This will ensure external perspectives are integrated into policy development and program evaluation, enhancing relevance and accountability.

### 3. Administration

The training and development of new staff will create extra responsibilities and work pressures for existing staff. It is important that corners are not cut and that this undertaking is resourced adequately. It is unclear whether existing staff will be able to take up posts in Cyprus.

#### **Department's response:**

The majority of the individuals which were presented during the interview/meeting with the External Evaluation Committee "will form part of the administrative staff of the new Branch. They are professionals with significant administrative experience at the University of Athens and possess strong expertise in their respective fields. Naturally, additional administrative staff will be hired — preferably from Cyprus — to complement the Branch's administrative team. The entire administrative team will reside permanently in Cyprus and will work exclusively for the Branch, not for the main institution. During the transitional period, some of the permanent staff will assist with the implementation of the Branch's operations until the recruitment process is completed. In this phase, we will also serve as trainers and mentors to the new colleagues to ensure a smooth transition to the new working environment of the Branch.



## 4. Learning and Teaching

### Sub-areas

#### 4.1 Planning the programmes of study

#### 4.2 Organisation of teaching

We would like to thank the EEC for its thorough review and feedback on learning and teaching. 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.



## 5. Teaching Staff

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 three (3) 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.

## 6. Research

Adequate research support for faculty in the new Branch will be needed for the Branch to flourish and make the societal and intellectual impacts envisioned.

### **Department's response:**

There will be implemented comprehensive research support mechanisms for faculty in the new Branch, including access to research grants, dedicated research time, infrastructural support, and opportunities for collaboration. We will develop policies and incentives to encourage faculty to systematically integrate their research findings and methodologies directly into their teaching. This will involve providing professional development workshops focused on research-led teaching, supporting curriculum redesign initiatives that embed current research, and will foster a departmental culture where faculty regularly share their research and discuss its pedagogical applications. After the third year of operation, awards will be established for excellence in teaching, contribution to society and the branch, and excellence in research. These are awards that the parent university has and will be adopted by the branch as well.

## 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 programme.

### **Department's response:**

We thank the EEC for its constructive feedback and 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 Business Administration would like to thank the members of the EEC for the useful discussions and feedback during the accreditation process. We would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the organization of the entire 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 implementing all of the above.

### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Dimitrios Thomakos</b>	Head, Department of Business Administration, NKUA	
FullName	Position	
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Date: [Click to enter date](#)

