

Doc. 300.3.1

External Evaluation Report (Departmental)

Date: 15 July 2021

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty:** School of Architecture, Engineering,
Land and Environmental Sciences
- **Department:** Department of Real Estate
- **Department's Status:** Currently Operating

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο στην Εκτίμηση και Ανάπτυξη Ακινήτων

In English:

BSc in Real Estate Valuation and Development

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό στην Εκτίμηση και Ανάπτυξη Ακινήτων

In English:

MSc in Real Estate

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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

Department's programmes (to be filled by the CYQAA officer and verified by the EEC):

DEPARTMENT	PROGRAMMES OF STUDY
Department of Real Estate	BSc and MSc

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Due to the restrictions of the covid19 pandemic the site visit of the department of Real Estates was conducted remotely by the External Evaluation Committee (EEC). Documents provided by the CYQAA were studied by the committee members before. The committee had a first briefing session on June 16. Documents including the online tour -prepared by NUP- were provided by CYQAA on June 16 to all EEC members. In the first briefing session EEC explored the backgrounds of each member and prepared a plan. Additional sessions on June 24 and June 29 sessions were organized to share information and develop a strategy for the upcoming visit.

The remote site visit took place on July 12th and was structured by the CYQAA in coordination with the department of Real Estate of the Neapolis University of Cyprus (NUP):

After a short briefing with the CYQAA a brief introduction of the EEC followed by a meeting with the Rector, the head of the faculty, and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs. After these sessions the EEC had the opportunity to meet the Head of the Department of Real Estate. Subsequently, the Bsc and MSc-programme of the department were introduced in combination with a Q&A-session with the head of the programmes.

After the lunch break the EEC met the teaching staff of both programmes, students and graduates of the two programmes. as well as some of the administrative staff. At the end of the virtual site visit the EEC met the Rector of the NUP, head of the department, and the programme's coordinator again. Besides posing last questions, the EEC used this opportunity to thank the attendees for their cooperation and interesting insights. for posing open questions.

09:45 – 10:00 (all EEST)

- Last briefing CYQAA

10:00 – 10:10

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

10:10 – 10:40

- A meeting with the Rector - Head of the Institution and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs – short presentation of the Institution

10:40 – 11:20

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department.

11:30 – 12:30

Programme 1: Real Estate Valuation and Development (4 years / 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

12:30 – 13:30

Programme 2: Real Estate (18 months / 90 ECTS, Master)

14:30 - 15:30

- A meeting with members of the teaching staff on each course for all the years of study (QA session).

15:40 – 16:20

- A meeting with students and graduates only (5 – 15 participants).

16:20 – 16:40

- A meeting with members of the administrative staff.

16:55 – 17:20

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the programme's Coordinator - exit discussion (questions, clarifications).

18:00 – 18:10

- Debriefing CYQAA

18:10 – 18:30

- Debriefing EEC-only

External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
prof dr Arno J van der Vlist (chair)	Professor of Real Estate Development	University of Groningen
Dr Edward Shepherd	Associate Professor of Planning and Development	University of Reading
Prof Tobias Keller	Professor of Business Administration, Management & Human Resources Development	EBZ Business School (University of Applied Sciences)
Georgios Nicolaou	Student Member	Cyprus University of Technology
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report refers to the Department as a whole (programmes offered, teaching staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, resources, etc.).*
- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*
- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*
- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*
- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), **which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report.***
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
- 3: *Partially compliant*
- 4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)

1 - 5

1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	4
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	5
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	5
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	5
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	4

1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	5
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.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The efforts by the Dept members to coordinate and initiate a BSc and MSc in RE are clearly seen and very much appreciated. The faculty is committed to serve students in developing their skills on a personal one-to-one basis. Visiting professors help connect the Programmes to RE industry practice. Also, the programmes are under continuous reviews by professional bodies (like RICS external examiners). SWOT is undertaken although some Strengths are in actual fact external Opportunities (bullet 3 and 6 on existing legislation). Further, we would have liked to have an equal number of strengths-weaknesses and opportunities-threats as the current SWOT flags a not so critical self-reflection.

One point is worth noting here:

The research capacity and research output needs attention and is not sufficient in the medium-long term in order to stay connected and aligned with international Academic practice. According to the initial information research time amounts to 4 to 8 hours a week. The information sent later on indicates 25% research time for faculty with administrative tasks (424 hours on annual 1680 gives 25%) and for faculty without administrative tasks (688 hours on 1680 gives 40%). If these latter figures are factual then the research output is rather low.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.

Yes. The BSc and MSc are coherent and compatible with the mission and strategy of the Department. The BSc is a 4-yr full-time programme. The MSc is a 18 month professional MSc or conversion programme. The MSc must target other groups of students (i.e. other than NUP BSc RE students) given that the MSc programme is a conversion programme that will not deepen the knowledge for NUP BSc RE students.

2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

Yes, the Programs naturally fit in the School of Architecture, Engineering, Land and Env Sciences.

3. Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

No incompatibilities

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society

1 - 5

1.2.1 The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.

5

1.2.2 The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.

5

1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	5
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	5
<p>Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.</p> <p>Department seems well connected with Society via various ways, visiting professors/adjunct faculty/professional accreditation. Also, the many practitioners among the MSc students provide a natural link to society and local firms and institutions in RE broadly defined.</p>		
1. Department's academic profile and orientation		
1.3 Development processes	1 - 5	

1.3.1	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.	4
1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	5
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	4
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Most procedures are in place, some procedures can be further developed (see 2/3 Quality assurance and 4/5 teaching staff). Additional resources for research seem opportune. Heavy teaching load - teaching/office hours/academic advisor system. Few tenured faculty lowers the viability of the department and the BSc/MSc programmes.

Additionally, write:

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

Education market for NUP is mostly local (Cyprus and Greece). With the new immigration rules it is unclear how this affects inflow from non-EU countries.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department is in the School of Architecture and Environmental sciences. It offers two programs which seamlessly fit into the mission of the Department. It is a small Department - 4fte tenured full time and 3 part-time visiting professors or adjuncts. Other affiliated members are in other departments (like the Economics Dept). Inflow of the students in the BSc is 30 in 3 years (~ 10 students per year) and for the MSc it is 94 (~ 30 per year). Outflow is: for the BSc 19 out of the 34 (over 3 yrs, T5) for the MSc 31 out of 94 (over 3 years, T5).

Strengths

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

BSc and MSc in RE fits in the School. Particularly the MSc shows student numbers that suggest a good basis for further development and capacity building in both teaching and research. The MSc Programme is internationally recognised in terms of RICS which may give students a good job market position upon finishing the MSc program in RE. The BSc needs further growth in terms of number of students in order to be viable in the long term; with an inflow of 10 students it seems a track in the School of Architecture rather than an independent BSc. This is perhaps not a real concern as long as the students are trained in real estate specifically.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

-The small size of the Department means that most of the administrative tasks are in the hands of a few. So Prof Sivitanides is head of the Department (Department Director), Coordinator of the MSc (postgraduate studies), but also member of the internal quality committee and in the Department council, responsible for the research strategy (5% research time) and in overseeing the Department in terms of quality. For a clear distinction between quality and day-to-day business we would suggest a further separation in terms of management and quality control.

-The small size of the tenured staff means that research - while mentioned in the mission statement and Dept strategy - is not so viable both now and in the future. We suggest NUP to further broaden the Department's knowledge base and invest in academic research (which would only then feed into education as the Dept strategy suggests). It must be noted that we received additional information on academic workload. These figures indicate research time of 25% and 40% for faculty with and without administrative tasks, respectively (424 hours and 688 hours of research time on an annual basis of 1680 hours). But then the research output seems rather low.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	<i>compliant</i>
1.2 Connecting with society	<i>compliant</i>
1.3 Development processes	<i>compliant</i>

2. Quality Assurance

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas

2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant

3: Partially compliant

4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		
2. Quality Assurance		
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy		1 - 5
2.1.1	The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	5
2.1.2	Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	5
2.1.3	The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	5
2.1.4	The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1	Teaching and learning	5
2.1.4.2	Research	5
2.1.4.3	The connection with society	5
2.1.4.4	Management and support services	5
2.1.5	The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	5
2.1.6	Students' evaluation and feedback	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

According to the report, students' evaluation of each course will be forwarded to the lecturer within 3 – 6 months. That seems to be a rather long period regarding that the feedback should be considered in course improvements.

2. Quality Assurance

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

1 - 5

2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	5
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	4
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective, which have been presented and discussed.	5
2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	5
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	5
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	5
2.2.7	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.	5
2.2.8	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	5
2.2.9	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	4
2.2.10	The Department flexibly uses a variety of teaching methods.	5
2.2.11	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	5

2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	5
2.2.13	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
2.2.12.1	Building facilities	5
2.2.12.2	Library	5
2.2.12.3	Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	5
2.2.12.4	Technological infrastructure	5
2.2.12.5	Academic support	5
2.2.14	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
2.2.15	The Department's mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.	5
2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	5
2.2.17	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	na
2.2.18	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	na
2.2.19	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	na
2.2.20	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Admission for the Bsc.-programme requested a score of 16.5. Applicants who do not meet this score can be admitted to the programme when they have convincing arguments. The latter will be proved in a personal interview. Standards for assessing qualification in the personal interview are not available yet.

Students in the meeting mentioned that for some examinations they wish to get more explicit feedback. Sometimes they only receive their marks without any additional comments on that.

Finding

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

During the evaluation meeting and also in the report the external evaluation committee came to the impression that Quality Assurance is ranked very high by each member of the department. The activities conducted to assure quality are in line with the department's vision to become a reference point for high-quality education and research excellence in the context of Real Estate.

Numerous regulations and committees have been established for assuring quality in teaching and research. As part of the Neapolis University Pafos the department is committed to the implementation of an internal system for quality management and evaluation which confirms the guidelines and the European standards for quality assurance in higher education. This includes a Quality Assurance Committee consisting of the head of the department, members of the academic staff and a student. The committee has multiple responsibilities (e.g. watch the staff and student evaluation reports, maintain a quick response to student complaints and requests, develop assessment rules, implement Quality Assurance Policies as per IQA Handbook).

The established internal quality management process is well structured and comprises students' evaluation, self-assessments, supervisor-reports, and course observations. Academic procedures are also monitored in Moodle based on the European Standards and Guidelines for the Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The department's programmes content and development is also under constant review by the department's council. An advisory board also consists of external bodies from the Real Estate industry. Additionally, the MSc-programme also undergoes regular review by RICS.

Programmes of studies will be checked and monitored by the Department's Committee (made up by the permanent faculty members) and the Department's Internal Quality Assurance Committee, under supervision of the head of the department. Students' feedback will be used for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The evaluation of teaching and learning is conducted every semester for every course. Academic staff receive feedback based on students' evaluation, self-assessment report, supervisor's report, and course observations.

Almost all of the admission criteria for the department's programmes are consistent and transparently communicated. Admission to the Bsc.-programme requested a score of 16.5, students with lower scores were accepted. The latter was depending on the student's conviction in a personal interview. In that, admission can also be given when the score criteria (16.5) is not met. According to the head of the department, the staff-student ratio in the department is 1:9, which guarantees a direct contact between student and teaching staff. However, this ratio may be a bit biased due to the fact that a great extent of teaching staff in the BSc-programme comes from other departments and some of the teaching staff in both programmes is not available full time. Students' highlighted the department's advisory service. In that, every student can turn to a personal tutor for addressing problems. The personal tutor also takes care of the student's progress in the study programmes and supports when needed. Although some students wish to have more profound feedback on assessments.

As part of the Neapolis University Pafos (NUP) the Department of Real Estate offers a great variety of facilities and scholarships to its students that support studying and well-being. All facilities have been already established. Regulations for dealing with students with disabilities are existing and are also embedded in a diversity management established with the NUP.

Research is supported by funding of the department and by pursuing a strategy for participation in international research projects. Incentives (e.g. leave-programme, reduction of teaching hours) are used to encourage research. The academic staff is free to conduct research. Teaching staff include their own research in the courses. Citations of each member of the teaching staff is measured and will also be considered by making promotion decisions in the department.

Strengths

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

Quality assurance covers a lot of different aspects and involves different sources of information.

Different mechanisms of quality control due to inclusion of members of different status groups in the quality assurance process (Department's committee, Internal Quality Assurance Committee, head of the department, Advisory Board).

Following an excellence strategy in teaching and research that covers short-term and long-term developments.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The time between completion of the evaluation forms and the forwarding of the reports to the academic staff and superiors is rather long (3 – 6 months). That may be due to the fact that the reports are included in the evaluation of teaching staff by the Head of the department/dean of the faculty once a year. The external evaluation committee recommends reducing the time lag between students' course evaluations and forwarding of the reports to teaching staff. More immediate feedback can be better regarded in course improvements.

For the BSc. a score of 16.5 is requested but sometimes applicants with lower scores (14/15) are accepted. This decision is based on a personal interview. Although the tolerance regarding the requested scores is fine for the external evaluation committee, setting standards in assessing qualification for the BSc.-programme in the personal interview may be helpful.

In order to avoid conflicts of interests between quality assurance and teaching the department could attempt to separate responsibilities for quality assurance and teaching in the programmes more strictly. Doing so, the quality assurance committee can take a more neutral position in dealing with problems within the BSc- and MSc-programmes. Although this should require expanding the staff within the department, the external evaluators see this only as an advice to be considered in the near future.

Some students express their dissatisfaction with poor feedback on some examinations although feedback on assignments was generally fine. We will also recommend giving more explicit feedback on examinations. This only relates to course examinations

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	<i>compliant</i>
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	<i>compliant</i>

3. Administration (ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
3. Administration		
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	5
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	5
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	3
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	5
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	5
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	5
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	5
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	5
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5
3.11	Internalization of the Department and external collaborations.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

There is only one full time employee in the secretariat of each programme. Administration is shared with other departments. This should result in a high amount of administration work that has to be fulfilled by the academics or by external administration staff.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The external evaluation committee is convinced by the report and the discussion with the staff that the activities meet the legislative standards. Policy regulations are in line with the Quality Regulations of the University of Cyprus and are complemented by their own regulations. Decisions about teaching and research are met in the department and are transparently communicated via different media (e.g. Moodle, internet, and committee-meetings).

Due to the rather small size of the department the staff members put a high value on direct communication. The numerous committees of the department meet regularly to discuss their issues. The teaching staff meets at least once a month. Most issues can be addressed immediately. This also refers to students' complaints. The students report a reaction time on requests for support sent via email of no more than two days.

For administration affairs the department uses synergies with other departments of the NUP and especially synergies between the three units of the school of architecture. Facilities like libraries, students clubs, and the IT-Infrastructure are managed by specialized administration staff of the NUP. Thereby, short reaction times on students or academic requests are assured. The IT offers a ticket-system and can also be reached by email and a hotline. Beside the two programmes of the department are supported by two secretariats (one for each programme).

Students are given the right to access assessed documents for feedback. In case they question the given grade they have the opportunity to submit a request for re-assessment within 15 days after announcement of the final grade. The evaluation committee is responsible for checking the final grades before distributing them to the students. A committee for students' Appeals is established and consists of the dean of school, the head of the department and members of the faculty. The rights and obligations of staff members are written down in Internal Regulations.

Although the department expands its collaborations with external institutions, there are already collaborations with other universities. The department participates in ERASMUS +. Databases of partner universities as well as other universities of Cyprus can be also accessed by members and students of the NUP.

Strengths

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

Benefit of sharing administrative work with other departments of the university.

Drawn on a well-established infrastructure of administrative processes in the university.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Having only one staff in the secretariat of each programme of the department runs the risk of shortfalls due to illness, holidays and turnover. Building up a somewhat more reliable basis of administration staff within the department that discharges the academics from administration tasks should have a priority in further developments of the department.

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
3. Administration	<i>compliant</i>

4. Learning and Teaching

(ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study
- 4.2 Organisation of teaching

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
4. Learning and Teaching		
4.1 Planning the programmes of study		1 - 5
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	5
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	4
4.1.3	Intended learning outcomes, the content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	4
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

There is opportunity for students to be more actively involved in the review and development of programmes via more meaningful incorporation of student voice into student partnership arrangements. Currently, student involvement in such matters appears to be limited to providing feedback via Student Evaluations as part of the PROSE system, and the appointment of a single student representative to the Internal Evaluation Committee.

There is opportunity for more structured ‘community of practice’ measures to be introduced to enable the dissemination of good practice and reflective discussion regarding teaching, including the integration of and relationship between theory and practice. Currently, these matters are addressed informally between individuals and so good practice is reliant on the goodwill, ability and engagement of faculty. This may be adequate for the time being, but it could be useful to have a more structured way of ensuring that approaches remain current and suitable - particularly if the department grows.

4. Learning and Teaching

4.2 Organisation of teaching

1 - 5

4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	4
4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	4
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	5
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students’ motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	4
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	4
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	4
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

There is potential for improvement in the provision of feedback to students on their assignments. There appears to be some inconsistency in how faculty provides feedback, the volume of feedback provided and its degree of usefulness to students. There is potential for greater consistency to be introduced so that students receive similar levels of quality of feedback across their modules, which is oriented towards explaining what they did well and, perhaps more importantly, what they needed to have done to have achieved a higher mark so that the feedback can help them continuously improve.

There is potential for the introduction of clear marking rubrics for students as part of the assignment briefs, so that students have a clear idea of what is being asked of them as part of the assignment.

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Based on the documentation provided and the site visit, the Department has good processes and practices in place for the organisation and delivery of teaching and student learning. There are processes in place for the design and review of programmes and their delivery. These involve stakeholders including industry representatives and students, although to a somewhat limited extent. Theory and practice appears to be well integrated in the teaching, particularly via assignments - although there could be a more structured system set up to share best practice regarding teaching. Facilities supporting teaching, including teaching rooms, appear to be adequate for current needs. Based on the sample of assignment briefs and marked assignments provided, the intended learning outcomes, the content of the programmes of study and the assignments correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework. Based on this, it is assumed that the final exams are also compliant. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

Strengths

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

Students appreciate how available and responsive faculty members are and feel that they have the support that they need in terms of teaching and learning.

There appears to be a collegiate atmosphere in the department that is conducive to faculty members collaborating and discussing good practice.

Admissions criteria appear to be generally adhered to - with any exceptions made on the undergraduate programme subject to a clear process with due careful consideration of other factors.

There are good links with industry via alumni, accreditors, external speakers and other collaborations.

The module descriptions are clear and provide proper information regarding learning outcomes, methods of assessment, weightings, readings and so on.

There is some good practice evident in terms of the level of feedback provided to students on coursework, based on the sample provided. Feedback is helpful and, in some cases, very detailed.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

There are no critical 'problem areas' where the department is failing - but, as always, there is potential for improvement in some areas. Some suggestions for consideration are set out below.

Assessment: The EEC is grateful for the sample of assignment briefs and marked work that has been provided. This sample gives a good insight into the good quality of the types of assessment being set. However, there may be potential to introduce more consistency in how coursework assignments are set, in particular with the use of marking rubrics. Some of the briefs provide some rubric-style information and some of the marking appears to be provided using a set template that connects to the original marking rubric - but this does not appear to be consistently used. It may help students to have a clearer and more consistently used template structure for assignment briefs for ease of interpretation. As part of this, marking rubrics could set out in tabular form each key criterion for the assessment in question, with brief but clear explanations of what students need to demonstrate in order to achieve each grade boundary for each criterion. This would give the students a clearer indication as to the

relative importance of each criterion and what they need to demonstrate in order to achieve their desired grade. These can be quite time consuming to write when setting the assessment, but can actually save time when it comes to providing students with constructive written feedback on assignments - as the marker can simply incorporate elements of the rubric criteria in the written feedback. It can also help when explaining to students what they needed to have demonstrated in order to achieve a higher grade.

Feedback to Students: Based on the samples provided, markers do a good job of providing written feedback on coursework. However, there may be an opportunity to tighten up on the consistency of how feedback is provided. The department might like to consider introducing greater consistency in how feedback on marked work is provided to students, and in what format. Some of the examples of feedback used a set tabular template that appeared to be connected to a marking rubric, with both a mark provided for the various criteria as well as written feedback explaining what the student did well and what they could have improved on. This approach seems very useful and it would be worth considering ensuring that this is adopted more consistently. Students would therefore be able to consistently and clearly see how their work measures against the rubric. It might also be useful to introduce a mechanism for providing feedback on exams. This could either be at the individual student level, or at a more 'generic' level whereby colleagues provide the student cohort for a particular module with some general commentary on what students tended to do well in the exam and, perhaps more importantly, what they could have done better.

Student Centred Learning and Partnership: Students are involved in the quality assurance of the programmes, but to a somewhat limited extent. There is a student evaluation process for modules which is good. There are Student Representatives, which is also positive. However, there may be potential to consider how more effective student partnership might be developed so that students feel more like they are active stakeholders. This is not to say that the department should simply bow to every whim of the students - but there could be potential for greater ongoing dialogue between students and the department, rather than waiting for formal feedback exercises and evaluations. More regular meetings between student representatives and programme directors might help to foster greater dialogue.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	<i>compliant</i>
4.2 Organisation of teaching	<i>compliant</i>

5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
5. Teaching Staff		1 - 5
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	4
5.2	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.	5
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	5
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	na
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	na
5.6	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The department appears to be sufficiently staffed for the effective delivery of the programmes. There are relatively small class sizes. Staff appear to be sufficiently qualified for their respective teaching roles. The department has no special teaching staff / special scientists.

Also, write the following:

- Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: There are 13 full time teaching staff.
- Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work: N/A

- Number of visiting Professors: 3
- Number of special scientists on lease services: N/A

[Click to enter text.](#)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The department is adequately resourced with well-qualified staff to support the teaching delivered via its two programmes. The student/staff ratio of 1:9 in the department appears sufficient to support the quality of the two programmes - although this does potentially double count non-departmental lecturers. The actual student/staff ratio in the department might potentially be higher. There are proper processes in place for students to provide anonymous (and therefore hopefully honest) feedback to staff via the student evaluations at the end of each semester. There is room for improvement in terms of programmes of training and support provided to colleagues to ensure that the teaching methods and techniques remain current.

Strengths

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

Colleagues appear to be fully engaged and sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to support high quality learning experience for students.

The balance between numbers of students and numbers of teaching staff appears to be adequate.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

There are no critical 'problem areas' where the department is failing - but, as always, there is potential for improvement in some areas. Some suggestions for consideration are set out below.

Feedback for teaching staff: There is a student evaluation process that runs each semester. However, at present there does not appear to be a clear process in place for 'closing the feedback loop' i.e. a means for the academic staff to communicate back to the students the key points that were raised in student feedback, and what is going to be changed as a result. This could be partly to do with the fact there appears to be a long delay between the students providing feedback and it being passed to faculty. Ideally, the results of feedback should be provided to faculty within a week or two of it being submitted by students, with academic staff providing a response to students shortly thereafter. There could also be potential for colleagues to run some kind of mid-semester feedback process with their students to enable them to provide more continuous feedback. Or, alternatively, provide some kind of space for students to provide ongoing feedback with colleagues throughout the semester. This could be on Moodle where students can leave comments and feedback for lecturers to respond to (if Moodle allows such a function). Whatever the method, providing some means for feedback to be provided on a more frequent 'little and often' basis, rather than waiting for the end of the module, might enable more constructive staff student partnership and might help identify issues early so that they can be resolved more quickly for higher student satisfaction. Clearly, there is always a balance to be struck between what students are asking for and what we as academics are willing and/or able to provide, but developing an ongoing dialogue in addition to more formal student evaluations may be useful for students and staff.

Teaching staff recruitment and development: I find it odd that this is one of the below assessment areas, but is not part of the above scoring for this section. Nevertheless, I have marked this as 'compliant' as there are no significant areas of concern. However, there does appear to be potential to improve the level of training and support provided

to teaching staff. There is an annual training programme that covers university processes - and this is to be applauded. However, there is no corresponding training programme that specifically covers pedagogy: delivery, assessment, feedback, running groups etc. It seems as though there is potential for the university as a whole to develop a structured programme of training on pedagogic issues for new lecturers and that can also be taken as a refresher course by established lecturers so that their knowledge remains current.

Synergies of teaching and research: I find it odd that this is one of the below assessment areas, but is not part of the above scoring for this section. Nevertheless, I have marked this as 'compliant' as there are no significant areas of concern. However, it appears from the documentation as though there are only four research-active members of staff. Although those members of staff are producing research that has good synergies with teaching in the department, the limited number of research active staff does mean that there are limited opportunities for synergies of teaching and research than one might find in a more research-active departmental culture. It is an aspiration of the department to be excellent in research - so it seems as though there are opportunities to allow more time for colleagues to devote to research activities. This would help create more synergies between teaching and research.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	<i>compliant</i>
Teaching staff recruitment and development	<i>compliant</i>
Synergies of teaching and research	<i>compliant</i>

6. Research

(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*

3: *Partially compliant*

4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		
6. Research		1 - 5
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	5
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	4
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	5
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	5
6.5	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.	3
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	5
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	5
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	4
6.9	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Faculty have proven research skills to publish in international Journals, and so faculty is capable of appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.

Over the period 2016-2019 which we consider here -based on the information in the application package- very limited output/few publications are listed. Listings in the self-evaluation package seem to be lists of life-time publications.

For the medium-long term we suggest the School to either invest in academic research or discuss with the core faculty to undertake research and set output targets, in order to ensure that faculty will remain capable of appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The Department consists of 4 core faculty members. Two have a Ph.D. and two have a MSc. Research methods (Math/Statistics/Research methods) are taught by a lecturer with a Ph.D. EEC perceives that the Department has appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.

EEC perceives that most of the attention/resources of the Department and faculty is invested in the teaching and management of the BSc and MSc. Discussions with faculty do not reflect a clear strategy in terms of academic research. The budget of the Department is rather small (from a research university perspective) and seems to hamper academic research.

Procedures are in place. Basically, faculty members need to submit a proposal for research in the budgeting cycle to the Department (head)/School (dean) /NUP (rector). While a procedure seems in place, research seems not a core activity. Table 11 indicates 5 to 10 % research time per core faculty member. Then, the Head of the department (Prof Sivitanides) with the longest track record and greatest research output potential has 5% research time on a full time position basis (2 hours per week). This is reflected in the research output. With 5-10% academic research one expects at most 2 or 3 peer-reviewed publications per faculty member over 2016-2019. Additional information suggests that research time is 25 or 40% (for faculty with and without administrative duties, respectively). But then this would suggest more output.

Strengths

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

The Department manages a BSc and MSc and has a good starting position for further development. Also, the fact that the University considers the BSc a Strategic investment will help the Department to attract funds and strategically invest in academic research and research output. The Department head has a good record to guide and lead this development further.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

We would like to see more dialogue among core faculty in terms of research: what is the research strategy of the Department and what Journals to target, how to set up a system of research seminars (perhaps with Departments in other Schools), and ultimately research output in internationally recognized peer reviewed Journals.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Research mechanisms and regulations	<i>compliant</i>
External and internal funding	<i>compliant</i>
Motives for research	<i>compliant</i>
Publications	<i>partially compliant</i>

7. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: *Non-compliant*
3: *Partially compliant*
4 or 5: *Compliant*

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
7. Resources		
7.1	The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	4
7.2	The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	3
7.3	The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	3
7.4	The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	3
7.5	The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	4
7.6	The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	3
7.7	The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

See findings below. From an international perspective the Dept budget is rather small to develop a Department. The financial report does show a strong increase in ebitda but not how it is re-invested. If revenues indeed are rising (not indicated is how and what the origin is) then typically the number of students rise (but this comes with more teaching activities and so additional costs). The finances do not reflect a clear investment strategy. Revenues are extrapolated with a factor 1.5 whereas costs rise with 1.17 and ebitda with 4.4.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The department has the approval for funding by the ministry of finance. Research funding is given to the academics when projects are approved by the department. A SWOT-analysis for the department was conducted. The department profits from being part of the NUP and sharing numerous facilities with this institution. Although every

member of the teaching staff agrees that staff development in terms of training is conducted, a budget for staff development seems not to be considered in the department's financial plan. It was stated in the meeting that the department uses its synergies with the other departments of the NUP. This also allows for saving costs.

As indicated, the budget of the Department is rather difficult to assess. From an international perspective it is perhaps too small to have core faculty focusing on academic teaching and research, and abstain from private consulting or being funded by private firms - with 4 FTE close to a total of 140k euro.

As indicated in Ch 6. Procedures are in place. Basically, faculty members need to submit a proposal for research in the budgeting cycle to the Department (head)/School (dean) /NUP (rector). The rector assures that all proposals have been approved so that the resources are not the bottleneck. The question then arises as to why no more research proposals have been submitted by the core faculty members. It seems that after all teaching obligations, proposals for research will be submitted. We suggest reserving time for academic research first, and then use the remaining time for teaching.

Strengths

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

Synergies with other departments of the NUP. The synergies are in procedures like HR and IT as is generally the case in Higher Education. The Department is praised to leverage synergies even further by hiring colleagues from Departments in other NUP Schools. We understand that this may come at the cost of more coordination. Faculty (both core- and non-core) seem all very committed to developing a coherent BSc and MSc programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

A small Department and 2 programmes - a BSc and MSc - leveraging synergies among different Schools come at the cost of more intense coordination. While all academic staff are all very committed we would like to see some procedures/routine of how concepts across course units, programs, teaching staff is organized. The current system of informing each other on a bilateral basis - as indicated in the Q&A by the teaching staff - is very time consuming and prone to misalignments.

As said, resources for research are considered important for the medium/long term viability of the Department and programs.

Please ✓ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
7. Resources	<i>partially compliant</i>

C. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.

Overall EEC sees and appreciates the efforts made by the Department to generate a student-oriented learning environment for both BSc and MSc students. The EEC was impressed by the commitment and professionalism of the staff and the positive feedback provided by the student representatives. It is clear that the two programmes offered by the department are carefully considered.

The BSc is perhaps too small for a separate program. While so, the BSc is considered a strategic investment by NUP and that helps the Department to develop it further. The MSc is a conversion program and has a good number of students to develop the research-base further.

Overall most procedures are in place. Some suggestions are provided in terms of quality/admin (Ch 2 and 3) and in terms of teaching and training of teaching staff (Ch 4/5).

As indicated in Ch 6/7 resources are needed to invest in academic research. The forecasts / financial budget (p171) for the coming years show an increase in revenues but not so much in costs. We would like to see how the Department is going to invest in improving the BSc/MSc procedures, training and above all research.

D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof Arno J van der Vlist	
Dr Edward Shepherd	
Dr. Tobias Keller	
Georgios Nicolaou	
FullName	
FullName	

Date: July 15, 2021