



Doc. 300.2.2

# Institution Response (Institutional Evaluation)

Date: 5-8-2025

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
National & Kapodistrian University of Athens  
(NKUA) (Cyprus Branch)
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Institution Status:** New Institution

**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.300.2.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the Institution in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, in the section building facilities, student welfare services, infrastructure, the HEI must respond on the comments and scoring of the EEC.*
- *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. 300.2.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*



The **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)** warmly thanks the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for its thorough review, valuable suggestions, and constructive recommendations. We fully agree with the findings and strengths identified by the Committee and highly appreciate the recognition of our efforts. We will provide comments, clarifications, propose corrective actions, and supply additional supporting material on all Areas of Improvement and Recommendations, as well as on all Quality Indicators that received a score below 4. We fully concur with the Committee's observations on the Quality Indicators that scored 4, and, given that scores of 4 or 5 indicate a degree of compliance, we do not consider it necessary to submit further justification on these.

## **BUILDING FACILITIES - STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES - INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **1. Building facilities**

#### **1.1 Plans and licenses**

##### **1.1.1.**

##### **1.1.1.2**

**Description:** A general site plan, which marks the building facilities, allocated parking spaces (for students, academic and teaching personnel, visitors and disabled individuals), sports premises and outdoor areas

**Notes:** The general site plans bearing the stamp of the permitting authority have not been submitted. However, UOA's representatives submitted plans which reflect the on-site conditions.

It is noted that the buildings under evaluation are currently not permitted for the intended use which is Buildings for Higher Education and especially for a Medical School with special requirements for laboratories etc. Except for the student halls, the buildings are permitted for other uses, which may be similar, i.e. for commercial or office use. It is likely that during the process of acquiring permits for Higher Education use, the permitting authority may impose further requirements that should fit the purpose of Higher Education Usage. These requirements are expected to focus on laboratories, especially suitable for medical education.

**p.6**

#### **Institutional response**

##### **On the Description:**

Given the integration of the NKUA Cyprus Branch into the urban grid of the city of Nicosia, a comprehensive site plan consolidating all relevant information could only be an additional version of the topological plan (similar to those already provided under section 1.1.1.1). This enhanced topological plan (titled: MASTERPLAN-BUILDINGS&FACILITIES-PARKINGS-ATHLETICS.pdf) has been prepared and uploaded to the communication platform provided by the CYQAA authority. This Masterplan simultaneously indicates:

(a) the building facilities,

(b) the locations of designated parking areas (for students, academic and teaching staff, visitors, and individuals with disabilities), and

(c) the sports facilities designated exclusively for the NKUA Cyprus Branch.

It should be noted that most of this information has already been presented through other forms of documentation – such as agreements, mature proposals, or offers regarding facilities and building infrastructure. These documents have been submitted, either from the side of the property owners, or from the side of the applicant (NKUA), and have been included as supplementary material during the QAA process. Although these documents do not constitute final agreements (since their finalization is contingent upon the outcome of the current QAA procedure) they are in most aspects complete and ready for ratification.

The aforementioned upload constitutes documentation that may fulfil the requirements of documentation of point 1.1.1.2.

#### On the Notes:

All buildings of the NKUA Cyprus Branch evaluated during the QAA process include: (i) institutional buildings (primarily for administrative use, i.e., offices), (ii) student halls and classrooms for theoretical instruction, (iii) computer labs and study rooms, (iv) a library, and (v) student residences. The existing usage permits for these buildings closely align with the proposed functions of the NKUA Cyprus Branch.

Additionally, it should be emphasized that all buildings and facilities are designed for public use and are of high quality, consisting either of entirely new constructions or extensively renovated and modernized structures within the past 2 to 5 years (in most cases). They all, fully comply with the latest regulations of both Cyprus and the European Union.

It is important to note that no Medical School laboratory facilities were included in the inspection during the QAA process, as these needs are addressed through the relevant agreement with the Medical School of the University of Cyprus. The agreement is mature, but its finalization is contingent upon the outcome of the current QAA procedure. Still, we should emphasize that the laboratory facilities of the Medical School of the University of Cyprus are state-of-the-art and already possess all necessary permits for their intended use.

#### **1.1.2**

**The operating licences have not been submitted because they have not been issued yet. The undersigned evaluator's opinion is that the operating licences should be issued shortly. This is a typical process. Once the buildings are completed, the permitting authority will inspect the buildings and certify their compliance with the issued building permits and issue the Final Approval Certificate. Then the Municipality of Nicosia will issue the required permits *p.6-7***

#### **Institutional response**

In evaluating this particular point, it is important to note the limited significance that the undersigned evaluator attributes to the absence of this specific certification. This limited significance is clearly explained in the "Notes" of this section, where the certification procedure and the time it typically requires are well described.

Furthermore, as previously stated in section 1.1.1.2, all buildings and facilities are intended for public use and are of high quality – either newly constructed or extensively renovated and modernized within the past 2 to 5 years in most cases. They all fully comply with the most recent regulations of both Cyprus and the European Union. This is why the undersigned evaluator confidently concludes that "According to the rest of the material submitted it seems that it is a matter of time for the above procedures to be finalised."

### 1.1.3

#### 1.1.3.1 & 1.1.3.2

**The inspection forms have not been submitted. However, the buildings under evaluation are newly renovated buildings. The renovations have been carried out following all the required procedures, upon the issuance of the relevant building permits and therefore the undersigned evaluator can temporarily accept the evidence submitted, provided that the inspection forms are issued within a reasonable timeframe. *p.7***

#### **Institutional response**

In evaluating this particular point, it is important to note the limited significance that the undersigned evaluator attributes to the absence of these specific inspection forms. This limited significance is clearly explained in the “Notes” of this section.

Furthermore, since the date of this External Evaluation (24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> July 2025), Certificates of Visual Inspection were issued (Π.Ο.Ε.), together with Certificates for Adequate Electrical, issued by the Electromechanical Department and Certificates for the Mechanical Services that are documents that cover in certain extent the absence of E.O.E. 102 and E.O.E.Σ.E.K. 103. These Certificates were forwarded by the owners of the properties to the applicant (NKUA). Consequently, NKUA uploaded the certain documents to the communication platform provided by the CYQUAA authority.

The aforementioned upload constitutes documentation that in substance meets in an acceptable degree the requirements of documentation of points 1.1.3.1 and 1.1.3.2 . In parallel, all additional steps were taken immediately to complete any gaps of the documentation needed regarding E.O.E. 102 and E.O.E.Σ.E.K. 103.

#### 1.1.3.3

**The Certificates 104 have been submitted only for the following buildings.**

- a. Student Halls at Adamantiou Korai str. Archbishop Palace.
- b. Theological School (Paedagogical Dept. for Primary Education, administration services)
- c. Isokratous Str. Listed Buildings (Dept. of Nursing) *p.7*

#### **Institutional response**

The 104 Certificates for the remaining buildings are expected to be issued soon. All involved parties – including the building owners (the Municipality of Nicosia, the Archbishopric of Cyprus) and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) – are making every effort to provide detailed information in order to facilitate and, where possible, expedite the relevant processes required for obtaining this documentation in the shortest period of time.

Meanwhile to secure the quality of building infrastructure NKUA alongside with the building owners, completes processes of visual inspections that provide the relevant Certificates of Visual Inspection (Π.Ο.Ε.) most of which have been issued to the communication platform provided by the CYQUAA authority.

#### 1.1.3.4

**UOA’s representatives submitted a Fire Safety Certificate only for STOA Building. The remaining Fire Safety Certificates are expected to be issued within the process of the Final Approval of the**

**Buildings expected to take place within 2025. These certificates will for the commercial usage permits and not for the Higher Education Usage, but the two usages are not expected to have major differences.**

**p.7**

### **Institutional response**

Further expanding on the reasoning presented by the undersigned evaluator, as outlined in the "Notes" of this certain section and based on findings from the External Evaluation, it is important to emphasize that, although the described usage of the buildings may be broadly categorized as commercial, this commercial use already incorporates office spaces and areas designated for educational activities and practices. Moreover, it was in this context that the certain buildings were appropriately selected to serve the purposes of the NKUA Cyprus Branch.

This was clearly observed and understood during the inspection process, which led the undersigned evaluator to confidently conclude that the Fire Safety Requirements and Certificate should remain consistent requiring no changes between the initial and subsequent uses of the buildings.

#### **1.1.3.5**

**The Certificates for Adequate Electrical, issued by the Electromechanical Department have been submitted. The Certificates for the Mechanical Services have been submitted although signed by the design and supervision engineers of each building. The undersigned evaluator is of the opinion that the above can be accepted for the temporary period. p.7**

### **Institutional response**

At this particular point, it is important to note that the undersigned evaluator accepts as satisfactory the Certificates for the Mechanical Services issued by the engineers of the buildings. This acceptance is intended to adequately cover the entire period for the preparation and relocation of NKUA from the temporary buildings and facilities to the permanent ones. The Certificates were forwarded by the property owners to the applicant (NKUA), and consequently, NKUA uploaded the documents to the communication platform provided by the CYQUAA authority.

The aforementioned upload constitutes documentation that meets in an acceptable manner the requirements of documentation of point 1.1.3.5

## **1.2 Other facilities**

### **1.2.3 (mistakenly referred as 1.2.2)**

**The number of laboratories and their adequacy cannot be verified because the buildings under evaluation have not been permitted as buildings for higher education.**

**p.8**

### **Institutional response**

It should be reiterated that the agreement between the two Universities is mature; however, its finalization remains contingent upon the outcome of the current QAA process. The commitment of both parties to conclude and implement this agreement (aspects of which include legal details that are not

yet subject to publication) is clearly stated to relevant documents that have already been uploaded to the communication platform provided by the CYQAA authority.

The above-mentioned documents as well as the provided information should most probably form a satisfactory level of compliance with the requirements of point 1.2.3 (mistakenly referred as 1.2.2).

### **1.2.6 , 1.2.7 , 1.2.8**

**UOA's representatives have presented a number of public spaces which can be used by the students, teaching staff, administrative staff and for people with disabilities. However, UOA must submit agreements with the parking spaces owners i.e. the Municipality of Nicosia, who is the major owner of most of the parking spaces that the students may use freely or under specific conditions. p.8-9**

#### **Institutional response**

The NKUA and the Municipality of Nicosia are actively collaborating toward an agreement regarding the allocation of designated parking spaces for NKUA Cyprus Branch, under specific conditions. A preliminary agreement is currently in preparation; however, several of its key details – such as the exact numbers of parking spaces for all categories – remain contingent upon the outcome of the ongoing QAA procedure and, therefore, cannot yet be finalized. The agreement includes provisions for the allocation of parking spaces for each category (students, teaching staff, and individuals with disabilities), situated in close proximity to the buildings and facilities of the NKUA Cyprus Branch.

On the part of the Municipality of Nicosia, a clear commitment to providing a viable solution, regarding designated parking areas that adequately meet the needs of the NKUA Cyprus Branch, has been formally expressed in the uploaded Letter of Certification. This Letter is accompanied by a detailed map indicating all municipal parking locations within the urban area of Nicosia's historic center.

The aforementioned document, along with the supporting information, is expected to constitute a satisfactory level of compliance with the requirements of points 1.2.6, 1.2.7, and 1.2.8.

#### **FINAL REMARKS / CONCLUSION**

**It should be expected that the building owners, who are the Municipality of Nicosia and the Archbishopric, will take the necessary actions to procure the missing documentation and permits within a reasonable amount of time. p.9**

#### **Institutional response**

All documents that are not yet available are subject to the formal procedures prescribed by the Republic of Cyprus. All involved parties – including the building owners (the Municipality of Nicosia, the Archdiocese of Cyprus) and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) – are making every effort to provide detailed information in order to facilitate and, where possible, expedite the relevant processes required for obtaining the missing documentation and permits in the shortest possible time.

It is evident throughout all the extend of the undersigned evaluator's written findings that there are no significant gaps in the documentation provided, nor were any issues identified during the visual inspection that could support an opinion of an unsuccessful outcome of the current evaluation.



## 2. Student welfare services

We are grateful that the committee assessed that nearly all areas in this field are in no need of improvement, and it granted compliance. In the only area that improvement is desired, that is area 2.9 (student clubs/organizations/associations), we plan to encourage the establishment of a Student Union, a university-based organization after the model of the Student Union at the parent university, that would encourage and oversee the establishment of cultural and athletic clubs, associations, and societies within the Branch.

## 3. Infrastructure

We are grateful that the committee did not identify any areas of improvement in this field and granted compliance.

## 1. Institution's Academic Profile and Orientation

### Sub-Areas

#### 1.1 Mission and strategic planning

#### 1.2 Connecting with society

#### 1.3 Development processes

### 1.1 Mission and strategic planning

#### Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

*The Committee sees excellent synergies, with some room to more fully involve staff voice. P.15*

#### **Institutional response**

NKUA fully agrees with the Committee's observation and will strengthen staff participation in decision-making at the Cyprus Branch through:

(a) Encouraging the establishment of Academic and Administrative Staff Associations immediately after staff recruitment, with elected representatives in the Governing Committee and Academic Council, holding voting rights on matters affecting their category.

(b) Amending the Internal Regulations within two months of licensing to incorporate these provisions.

(c) Appointing a General Director as a senior administrative officer to implement management decisions on resources, human resources, and service organization.

These measures align with NKUA's institutional commitment to recognizing and supporting staff associations for all categories, ensuring inclusive and effective governance.

### 1.2 Connecting with society

#### Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

*Again, this is a very positive section of the report. We highlight the scope to make communication with graduates more systematic and inclusive. P.16*

#### **Institutional 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

### 1.3 Development processes

#### Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

*Given that the plans await accreditation, hard numbers are a little provisional. The Branch will target a high proportion of Cypriot students. The plans also anticipate some students from Greece being attracted to studying in Cyprus, as well as potential to target students from the wider region, especially when English-language programmes are launched. P.17*

#### **Institutional response**

We acknowledge that, at this stage, quantitative projections are indicative pending the accreditation process. Nevertheless, the NKUA Cyprus Branch has a clearly defined recruitment strategy, which prioritises attracting a high proportion of Cypriot students, while also engaging prospective students from Greece who may be drawn to the academic and cultural advantages of studying in Cyprus.

In addition, the Branch's strategic development plan includes the gradual introduction of English-language programmes, which will enhance the Branch's appeal to students from the wider Eastern Mediterranean, Balkan, and Middle Eastern regions. This internationalisation effort will be supported by targeted outreach campaigns, partnerships with educational institutions and agencies abroad, and participation in higher education fairs.

Our confidence in meeting the planned enrolment numbers is supported by OECD *Education at a Glance* data, which demonstrate a strong potential student market:

It must be underlined that thousands of Cypriot students have been studied to NKUA for more than one century. NKUA is today the top choice for Cypriot students, following national (Pan-Cypriot) exams, and only those with highest grades achieve admission. The market gap, presented through numbers and charts, is in the range of several hundreds of students from Cyprus and other countries where Greek speaking students aim for studies in NKUA.

Moreover, in 2022, over 40,000 Greek students were enrolled in universities abroad, primarily in the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and the United States. [source: US Trade administration, citing the UNESCO 2022 data: <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/greece-education-and-training-services-sector-snapshot> ] By offering high-quality programmes within a culturally familiar environment and at a competitive cost, the NKUA Cyprus Branch is well-positioned to attract a significant share of these students, retaining both talent and resources within the Greek-speaking academic sphere.

Through this balanced approach—addressing local, regional, and international audiences—the Branch aims to ensure a diverse and vibrant student body that will enrich both the academic environment and the social impact of its activities

#### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

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

*It is important that the new Branch works to continue to involve stakeholders in Cyprus in the future strategic developments. The particularities of the context need to be reflected in all areas of the work of the Branch. As we mention elsewhere, a range of resources will be needed to ensure the flourishing of the Branch, including regular reviews of progress. P.18*

## **Institutional response**

We fully share the Committee's view on the importance of actively involving stakeholders in Cyprus in the future strategic developments of the NKUA Cyprus Branch. From its inception, the Branch has embedded stakeholder engagement into its governance and operational framework, ensuring that the particularities of the Cypriot educational, social, and economic context are reflected across all areas of activity.

To this end, our strategy includes:

- Establishing a Local Advisory Board at the Branch level, comprising representatives from academia, industry, professional associations, local authorities, and alumni in due course, which will meet regularly to provide input on strategic priorities and programme development.
- In addition, each Department within the Branch establish its own Departmental Advisory Board, with the specific mandate to advise on curriculum enhancement, strengthen links with the labour market, and ensure that graduates' skills match the evolving needs of the economy.
- Ongoing consultation mechanisms with key stakeholders, including public and private sector partners, to align the Branch's academic offerings and research agenda with local needs and opportunities.
- The integration of Cypriot context into curricula and research projects, with an emphasis on topics of direct relevance to Cyprus's economy, culture, and society.

In terms of resources and continuous improvement, the Branch will adopt a robust quality assurance cycle that includes:

- Annual progress reviews with performance indicators agreed in consultation with stakeholders.
- External evaluations at regular intervals to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to emerging needs.
- Strategic resource planning to secure the financial, human, and infrastructural capacity necessary for sustainable growth.

Through these measures, the Branch will remain closely connected to the Cypriot community, ensuring that its development is both locally relevant and internationally competitive.

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-Areas

#### 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy

#### 2.2 Ensuring quality for the programmes of study

### Quality Indicators/Criteria

#### 2.1 System and Quality Assurance Strategy

2.1.2 *Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. p.19*

#### **Institutional response**

We acknowledge the Committee's observation under criterion **2.1.2** 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
<b>Annual Internal Evaluation of Study Programmes</b>	Completion of dedicated questionnaires assessing graduate qualifications,	Annually	Completed questionnaires, qualitative feedback reports,

	programme relevance, and improvement suggestions.		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.

#### 2.1.4.3 The connection with society p.19

##### **Institutional 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.

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

## 2.1 System and Quality Assurance Strategy

### Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

*The quality assurance system covers teaching and learning, research, and management and support services. Quality assurance system of the connection with society could, however, be strengthened. Strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders in program evaluations is recognized as an area of improvement by the Branch. p.21*

### **Institutional response**

We acknowledge and agree with the Committee’s observation that the quality assurance dimension relating to the “connection with society” can be further strengthened. In line with our commitment to continuous improvement, the NKUA Cyprus Branch has already developed a structured plan to enhance cooperation with external stakeholders in programme evaluations.

As outlined above, this plan includes:

- Active participation of external stakeholders (employers, professional associations, local authorities, NGOs, alumni) in **annual internal evaluations** of study programmes through targeted questionnaires and structured feedback processes.
- Stakeholder involvement in **Branch-level and Departmental Advisory Boards** to ensure alignment of curricula with societal and labour market needs.

- Formal integration of stakeholder participation into the **Internal Quality Assurance System** through a new dedicated process (“Process 9”), ensuring systematic feedback collection, analysis, and incorporation into improvement actions.
- Inclusion of external stakeholders in **initial and periodic accreditation processes** in line with the legal framework.

These measures will ensure that the Branch’s connection with society is both measurable and impactful, with external stakeholders serving as integral partners in the ongoing enhancement of our academic offerings and societal contribution.

**Table 3: Measurable KPIs – Connection with Society & External Stakeholders**

KPI Category	KPI Description	Measurement Method	Frequency	Target
<b>Stakeholder Participation</b>	Number of active external stakeholders engaged in Advisory Boards (Branch + Departments)	Attendance logs, membership records	Annual	≥ 80% of invited members
<b>Consultation Coverage</b>	Percentage of key societal sectors represented in annual stakeholder consultations	Sector mapping, participant analysis	Annual	≥ 90% coverage of identified sectors
<b>Graduate Skills Alignment</b>	Percentage of employers rating graduate skills as “Good” or “Excellent”	Annual employer questionnaire	Annual	≥ 85% positive rating
<b>Societal Projects Initiated</b>	Number of community-oriented projects co-designed with stakeholders	Project registry	Annual	≥ 5 new projects/year
<b>Public Events &amp; Outreach</b>	Number of public engagement events	Event reports	Annual	≥ 4 major events/year
<b>Impact Awareness</b>	Percentage of survey respondents aware of NKUA Cyprus Branch societal activities	Public opinion survey	Biennial	≥ 75% awareness
<b>Partnerships Formalised</b>	Number of formal agreements with local authorities, NGOs, and	Agreement registry	Annual	≥ 10 active agreements

	cultural/educational bodies			
<b>Societal Feedback Integration</b>	Percentage of stakeholder recommendations implemented	Tracking in IQAS Process 9	Annual	≥ 70% implementation rate
<b>Media &amp; Public Presence</b>	Number of positive media references highlighting societal impact	Media monitoring	Annual	≥ 20/year
<b>Student Community Engagement</b>	Percentage of students participating in volunteering or outreach activities	Student records, volunteer logs	Annual	≥ 30% participation

Through this structured and measurable engagement framework, the NKUA Cyprus Branch will not only respond to societal needs but will also act as a **catalyst for social progress**, fostering trust, collaboration, and long-term value creation for Cyprus and the broader region.

## 2.2 Ensuring quality for the programmes of study

2.2.6 *The institutionalised procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective. p.22*

### Institutional response

Our Institution recognises the importance of maintaining institutionalised and effective procedures for NKUA Cyprus Branch for examining students' objections or disagreements on matters related to student evaluation or academic ethics. 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 Institution ensures that the procedures are not only formally established but also effectively communicated, consistently applied, and regularly monitored for improvement.

This approach reinforces the credibility and effectiveness of the mechanism, aligning it with the requirements of Criterion 2.2.6 and supporting full compliance.

Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

*2.2.5 The Academic Council accepts and examines any student appeals. In the discussion with the NKUA students, they were not aware of the official procedures of raising objections on their evaluation. P.23*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution confirms that the Academic Council is formally responsible for accepting and examining any student appeals, in accordance with the established regulations and the Internal Quality Assurance System. We would like to thank the Evaluation Committee for this observation, which is particularly useful for us in identifying areas where further communication with students can be enhanced. While the procedure is clearly defined in the parent institutional framework, it is acknowledged that, during the discussion with students, some were not fully aware of the formal process for raising objections regarding their evaluation.

To address this communication gap, the Parent Institution and the Cyprus Branch will implement the following measures:

- **Early and Structured Communication:** Information on the appeals procedure will be explicitly presented to all students during the induction/orientation programme at the beginning of their studies.
- **Dedicated Student Appeals Guide:** A concise, step-by-step guide will be developed, describing the process for raising and submitting an appeal. This will be made available in both printed and digital format, and will be accessible through the University's and Departments' websites.
- **Ongoing Awareness Actions:** The procedure will be regularly communicated to students through academic advisors, departmental notices, and periodic information sessions.
- **Monitoring of Awareness:** Annual student surveys will include specific questions to assess the level of awareness regarding the appeals mechanism, ensuring continuous improvement in communication effectiveness.

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

*Strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders in program evaluations. p.24*

### **Institutional response**

As already outlined in the observations of the committee, targeted efforts will be undertaken to further strengthen and enhance the engagement of external stakeholders in program evaluations. This objective will be pursued through the involvement of stakeholders in advisory boards, the systematic annual completion of dedicated evaluation and feedback questionnaires concerning the study programs, the establishment of a formal registry of external stakeholders, and the development of a dedicated process and procedures within the Internal Quality Assurance System of the NKUA Cyprus Branch to ensure their effective participation.

The actions to be implemented are outlined below in brief to enhance Stakeholder Engagement in Quality Assurance Processes:

#### 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 targeted 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

#### *Clear communication to students of appeals processes and related mechanisms.p.24*

##### **Institutional response**

Clear communication to students regarding appeals processes and related mechanisms constitutes a key component of the Institution’s commitment to transparency, fairness, and quality assurance. All students will receive comprehensive information on these mechanisms at the commencement of their studies, as part of the induction process, ensuring that they are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities, and available procedural avenues.

In addition, the Institution will develop a dedicated Student Appeals Guide, presented in a clear and accessible format, which will describe step-by-step the process to be followed in each case. This guide will be made available both in printed and digital form and will serve as a practical and authoritative reference tool, enabling students to navigate the appeals process with confidence.

The implementation of these measures will ensure that appeals procedures are not only formally established but also effectively communicated, consistently applied, and easily understood by the student community.

### 3. Administration

#### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation. P25-26*

There are ways for members of the teaching and administrative staff and students to participate in influencing the management of the institution. However, based on our sessions with staff and students there may be scope to strengthen the role of staff and student voice in deliberative mechanisms, and it would be a strength of the new Branch if these mechanisms (and culture) could be built in from the outset. Doing so will also ensure confidence in the transparency of processes. **P.26**

#### **Institutional response**

The Institution acknowledges and thanks the Evaluation Committee for this valuable observation, which is particularly relevant to the development of the NKUA Cyprus Branch. We recognise the importance of ensuring that both teaching and administrative staff, as well as students, have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the decision-making processes and to influence the management of the Institution.

While mechanisms for staff and student participation are already in place, we agree that there is scope to further strengthen their role in deliberative bodies and to foster a participatory culture from the outset of the Branch's operation. To this end, the following measures will be implemented:

- **Formal Representation:** Ensure representation of teaching staff, administrative staff, and students in key decision-making committees, including advisory boards and quality assurance bodies.
- **Structured Feedback Channels:** Establish regular staff and student forums, held at least once per semester, to discuss institutional policies, academic matters, and operational issues.
- **Integration into Quality Assurance:** Incorporate staff and student feedback systematically into the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) processes, ensuring that their perspectives are reflected in programme design, evaluation, and improvement.
- **Transparency Measures:** Communicate the outcomes of participatory processes to all stakeholders, highlighting how staff and student input has informed institutional decisions.
- **Capacity-Building:** Provide training and guidance to staff and student representatives to ensure their effective engagement in governance and decision-making processes.

*A key first step, following accreditation, needs to be the appointment of an excellent Branch Director, and the assembly of an effective administrative team. P.26*

#### **Institutional response**

The Institution deeply acknowledges and thanks the Evaluation Committee for this significant observation, recognizing that the appointment of an excellent Branch Director, supported by an effective administrative team, is a key strategic step following accreditation.

**(a) Immediate Recruitment Action:** Within one month of receiving the licensing decision, the position of **Branch Director of the NKUA Cyprus Branch** will be formally advertised. The recruitment process will draw on NKUA's substantial experience and proven expertise, particularly given its recent successful procedure for selecting an **Executive Director** at the parent university.

**(b) Role & Qualifications:** The Branch Director will possess qualifications and meet standards equivalent to those required of an Executive Director in higher education institutions, including:

- Strategic leadership: designing, developing, and implementing the Branch's strategic and operational plans in alignment with NKUA's overall institutional vision

- Operational oversight: managing day-to-day academic and administrative functions, supervising staff, and ensuring compliance with institutional policies and accreditation requirements
- Stakeholder relations: building and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including advisory bodies, regulatory authorities, and community partners
- Governance interface: acting as principal liaison between the Branch and the NKUA central leadership and Board, guiding policy implementation and institutional development

**(c) Supported by an Administrative Team:** Alongside the Branch Director, an effective administrative team will be assembled, ensuring coverage of academic administration, quality assurance, student services, finance, and operations. This team will mirror the structure and responsibilities of successful branch executives in comparable higher education contexts

These measures guarantee that the Branch leadership will embody both strategic vision and managerial competence from the outset. They demonstrate NKUA's Cyprus Branch commitment to institutional excellence, administrative effectiveness, and full alignment with the Committee's expectations regarding transparent and high-quality governance.

*The commitment to training, development, and mentoring of new appointments, will add to the busy workloads of administrative staff. Resourcing this enterprise accordingly is important to its success. There is scope to invest further in provision for training and development opportunities for administrative staff in both the parent university and the new Branch. Areas for further support suggested to the Committee include, for example, legislative changes; technology; systems; AI; and general skills and career development. P.26*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution warmly thanks the Evaluation Committee for this constructive observation, which aligns with our strategic vision for ensuring the long-term effectiveness and professional development of administrative staff both at the parent university and at the new NKUA Cyprus Branch.

We fully recognise that the commitment to training, development, and mentoring of new appointments requires dedicated resources in order to succeed without adding excessive pressure to existing workloads. To this end, the Institution commits to:

- **Dedicated Resourcing:** Allocating specific budget lines and personnel time to training and mentoring activities, ensuring their smooth integration into daily operations.
- **Structured Training Programmes:** Designing and delivering targeted training modules covering, inter alia, legislative updates, technology advancements, administrative systems, artificial intelligence applications, and general skills enhancement.
- **Career Development Pathways:** Establishing opportunities for administrative staff to pursue continuous professional development, supported by mentoring schemes and participation in external workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- **Parent University–Branch Synergy:** Leveraging the expertise and infrastructure of the parent NKUA to extend high-quality training opportunities to staff at the Cyprus Branch, including access to NKUA's e-learning platforms, resources, and professional networks.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing an annual review of training effectiveness, with staff feedback used to refine and expand the training portfolio.

By embedding these measures, the Institution will ensure that both current and newly appointed administrative staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to excel in their roles, thereby supporting operational excellence and the achievement of institutional objectives.

## 4. Learning and Teaching

### Sub-Areas

#### 4.1 Planning the programmes of study

#### 4.2 Organisation of teaching

*Areas of improvement and recommendations p.28-29*

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

Ensuring sufficient faculty resources is crucial for the successful launch of the programs. **p.28**

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully agrees with the Committee's observation that ensuring sufficient faculty resources is crucial for the successful launch of the programmes, and we are firmly committed to this objective. The recruitment plan for the NKUA Cyprus Branch has been carefully designed to ensure that by the end of 2025, **30% of the new academic staff positions required for the first year's teaching needs** will be filled, with the **full complement of faculty in place by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year**.

During the initial phase, the Branch will also be supported by experienced professors from the parent NKUA, who will contribute to covering teaching needs and provide academic guidance to newly appointed staff, ensuring a smooth transition and the transfer of NKUA's academic standards and culture.

Furthermore, the **student-faculty ratio** has been strategically planned to be at the **optimal level**, enabling high-quality teaching, personalised academic support, and effective student engagement from the outset. This approach will guarantee that the Cyprus Branch meets its academic objectives while maintaining parity of quality and support with the parent institution.

*Supporting existing staff in their mentoring and developmental roles is vital to the success of the new Branch. p.28*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully agrees with the Committee's observation that supporting existing staff in their mentoring and developmental roles is vital to the success of the new Branch. In addition to the guidance and support that new appointees will receive from the existing members of the academic staff, they will also participate in a **dedicated induction and training programme** to be delivered by the **Teaching and Learning Support Centre (Gr. KYΔIMA)** of the parent institution, in collaboration with the Academic Council of the NKUA Cyprus Branch.

The mission of the **Teaching and Learning Support Centre** is to promote new teaching approaches and innovative practices, leverage information and communication technologies (ICT) in the educational process, facilitate the exchange of good practices, and develop modern and effective training activities. Through this initiative, academic staff at the NKUA Cyprus Branch will have the opportunity to attend professional development sessions and receive advisory support aimed at enhancing their teaching practices.

These measures will ensure that faculty members are fully prepared to excel in their teaching, mentoring, and research roles, thereby contributing to the academic excellence and overall success of the NKUA Cyprus 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.28*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully shares the Committee's view on the importance of ensuring parity of support between the NKUA Cyprus Branch and the parent institution, particularly in relation to research time and developmental support. The NKUA Cyprus Branch will operate under the same academic policies, quality assurance framework, and support mechanisms as the parent university, guaranteeing equivalent access to research time allocation, professional development programmes, mentoring schemes, and funding opportunities. This alignment will ensure that faculty at the Branch enjoy the same conditions, resources, and opportunities as their colleagues in Athens, fostering an equitable, high-quality, and research-active academic environment.

*It is important to maintain the strong tradition of interdisciplinarity within and across the programmes in the new Branch. p.29*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution wholeheartedly agrees that **maintaining a strong tradition of interdisciplinarity** within and across programmes at the NKUA Cyprus Branch is essential. Interdisciplinary research is a core strength of the parent university and will be a foundational principle in the Branch's curriculum design, research strategy, and institutional culture.

The **National & Kapodistrian University of Athens** holds a prominent position in the inaugural *Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2025*, placing within the **201-250** bracket globally—a significant achievement that underscores NKUA's leadership in cross-disciplinary research

[https://www.timeshighereducation.com/interdisciplinary-science-rankings#!/length/25/locations/GRC/sort by/rank/sort order/asc](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/interdisciplinary-science-rankings#!/length/25/locations/GRC/sort%20by/rank/sort%20order/asc)

This ranking validates our ability to foster high-calibre interdisciplinary strategy and serves as a strong benchmark for the Cyprus Branch.

To build on this expertise, we will integrate interdisciplinarity across all dimensions of the Branch:

- **Curriculum integration:** Study programmes will encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration, joint modules, and projects bringing together diverse academic fields.
- **Research alignment:** Through the dedicated **Research Committee**, the Branch will promote interdisciplinary research initiatives that address societal challenges in Cyprus—leveraging partnerships with local stakeholders, public bodies, and NGOs.
- **Faculty development:** Support systems—including mentoring, writing assistance, and collaborative research funds—will enable faculty to pursue innovative interdisciplinary studies, underpinned by the experience of senior academics at the parent institution.

This strategic approach ensures that the Cyprus Branch not only replicates but also extends NKUA's excellence in interdisciplinary research, aligning with global benchmarks and serving the evolving needs of students and society at large.

*Alongside this, the pluralism for different intellectual traditions within and across different fields should be embedded in the new Branch. p.29*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully agrees with the Committee's observation that **pluralism of different intellectual traditions** within and across academic fields should be embedded in the NKUA Cyprus Branch. This principle is deeply rooted in the academic culture of the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, which embraces diversity of perspectives, methodologies, and schools of thought as a driver of academic excellence and innovation.

At the Cyprus Branch, this commitment will be reflected in:

- **Curriculum design** that incorporates diverse theoretical frameworks, disciplinary perspectives, and scholarly debates.
- **Interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research projects** that draw on varied intellectual traditions and foster dialogue between different academic communities.
- **Faculty recruitment and development policies** that value and promote academic diversity, ensuring that staff bring a wide range of academic backgrounds, research approaches, and teaching philosophies.
- **Student learning experiences** designed to encourage critical thinking, openness to multiple viewpoints, and the ability to navigate complex, multi-perspective issues.

By embedding pluralism into both teaching and research, the NKUA Cyprus Branch will nurture a dynamic academic environment that reflects global best practices while being responsive to the cultural, social, and intellectual diversity of Cyprus and the wider region

*There is a significant opportunity to work beyond the 'Greek paradigm' in the recruitment process. p.29*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution acknowledges the Committee's observation and agrees that the recruitment process for the NKUA Cyprus Branch presents a significant opportunity to **work beyond the 'Greek paradigm'**. While drawing on the parent university's high academic standards and extensive network, the Branch is committed to adopting an **open, inclusive, and internationally oriented recruitment strategy**.

This will include:

- **International outreach** in advertising academic and administrative positions to attract candidates from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.
- **Merit-based selection criteria** aligned with global best practices, ensuring transparency and equal opportunities for all applicants.
- **Emphasis on interdisciplinarity, innovation, and diversity** in the recruitment process to enrich the academic environment of the Branch.
- **Integration of faculty from multiple national and academic traditions**, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and global perspectives in teaching and research.

By moving beyond the constraints of a single national recruitment model, the NKUA Cyprus Branch will strengthen its international profile, attract top talent, and create a truly global academic community.

## 5. Teaching Staff

*Areas of improvement and recommendations p.31*

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

*It is imperative that NKAU implement its recruitment teaching plans for the staffing of the Cyprus branch. p.31*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully acknowledges the importance of promptly implementing the recruitment plan for the teaching staff of the NKUA Cyprus Branch. In this context, we commit that by the end of 2025, **30% of the new academic staff positions required to meet the teaching needs of the first year of the study programmes** will have been filled. The **full recruitment of the remaining new positions** will be completed by the end of the academic year 2025–2026.

During this transitional phase, the Branch will be supported by experienced professors from the parent NKUA, who will not only contribute to covering immediate teaching needs but will also provide academic and research guidance to the newly appointed staff. This dual approach ensures a smooth start, high-quality delivery of programmes, and the transfer of NKUA's academic culture and standards to the Cyprus Branch from the outset.

## 6. Research

### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

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

*It is important that faculty in the new Branch receive support for research activities on a par with colleagues in the parent institution, including time, writing support, mentoring, conference allowances and so on. p.35*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully shares the Evaluation Committee's view that faculty at the NKUA Cyprus Branch must receive support for their research activities on a par with colleagues at the parent institution, including adequate time allocation, writing support, mentoring, conference allowances, and other resources essential for high-quality research.

In this respect, the **NKUA Cyprus Branch** has adopted a **comprehensive Research Policy & Strategy** that ensures equitable and systematic support for research across both the parent institution and the new Branch. The parent institution, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, is an internationally recognised, research-oriented university with a dynamic and innovative research strategy aimed at generating knowledge with tangible societal, economic, and environmental impact. The Cyprus Branch will operate under the same strategic principles, policies, and quality standards.

To implement this vision, a **dedicated Research Committee** will be established at the Branch with the following mandate:

- Develop and oversee the **Research Strategy** of the NKUA Cyprus Branch.
- Ensure **full integration of research into teaching**, with specialised courses on research methodology embedded in undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes.
- Provide **mentoring, guidance, and writing support** to faculty, drawing on the expertise of senior researchers from the parent institution.
- Facilitate participation in **national and international conferences**, including budget allocations for travel and registration.
- Actively support applications for **research funding** from domestic and international public and private sources.
- Promote collaboration with the **parent university's research structures** as well as with other institutions, research centres, and enterprises in Cyprus and abroad.
- Foster a **strong research culture**, including opportunities for researcher mobility, conference organisation, and publication of scholarly work.
- Safeguard **research ethics and integrity** in all research-related activities.

Through these measures, the NKUA Cyprus Branch will ensure that its faculty benefit from the same level of research support as their counterparts in the parent institution. This includes access to resources, mentoring, research funding opportunities, and professional development activities, thus guaranteeing an environment conducive to the production of high-impact, internationally competitive research from the very outset of the Branch's operation.

There is a major opportunity for new and existing faculty to embrace collaborative and society-relevant research projects reflecting the needs and emerging challenges in Cyprus. p.35

### **Institutional response**



The Institution fully acknowledges the Committee's valuable observation and recognises the significant opportunity for new and existing faculty to engage in collaborative, society-relevant research addressing the needs and emerging challenges of Cyprus. The NKUA Cyprus Branch's **Research Policy & Strategy** explicitly prioritises the development of research projects with tangible societal, economic, and cultural impact, in close alignment with the parent institution's internationally recognised research standards. Through its dedicated **Research Committee**, the Branch will foster partnerships with local stakeholders, public and private bodies, and the broader research community, ensuring that research outcomes directly benefit Cypriot society while contributing to regional and international knowledge creation.

## 7. Resources

### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

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

*As with any off-shore branch of an institution, it will be essential that NKUA closely monitor its resource commitments at the Cyprus branch with extreme diligence. p.37*

### **Institutional response**

The Institution fully acknowledges the importance of closely monitoring resource commitments for the Cyprus Branch with the utmost diligence. NKUA is fully dedicated to the successful establishment and long-term sustainability of the Branch and has already allocated the necessary financial resources for its **start-up operational phase**.

Through the coordinated efforts of the **Financial Services Directorate**, the **Special Account for Research Funds**, and the **Quality Assurance Unit**, the Institution ensures the smooth, timely, and transparent allocation of funds, as well as the effective implementation of the operational plan.

Furthermore, the Institution guarantees that the Cyprus Branch will be able to operate seamlessly in the **academic year 2025-2026**, even in the unlikely event that no student enrolments are recorded in the first intake. The full operational costs for the first academic year will be covered through NKUA's own resources and secured donations.

This approach underlines NKUA's unwavering commitment to ensuring both the successful launch and the long-term viability of the Cyprus Branch.

## B. Conclusions and Final Remarks

### *E. Conclusions and Final Remarks p.38*

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

*The panel is highly appreciative of the efforts that NKUA put into the organisation of documentation and the structuring and conduct of the visit. The information provided was highly detailed and provided a rich picture of both NKUA and the plans for the proposed branch.*

*The EEC are pleased with the plan for the establishment of a branch of NKUA in Cyprus. They are impressed with the degree of enthusiasm and commitment on the part of all components of NKUA – top management, faculty, administrators and students – to the branch establishment. They were especially pleased with the very strong support voiced by a diverse group of highly significant stakeholders during the visit. There is tangible excitement about the impacts that the new Branch can make on the city and region. They found the level of meticulous planning and thorough considerations that had gone into the preparation of the branch proposal to be impressive.*

*The panel were particularly pleased with the intent to immediately appoint a branch Director and to start the recruitment of faculty and administrative staff.*

*The panel noted the very rich history and successful record of NKAU and the desire to leverage that history and record to maximum effect in ensuring the success of the branch.*

*The visit to the branch facilities was a very important and successful part of the visit. The panel were happy to see the various facilities currently in development and feel confident that they can serve as the footprint of a highly attractive physical infrastructure.*

*Finally, the panel wishes to highlight the crucial importance of the following for the proposed branch and its successful establishment:*

*a. Immediate appointment of a branch Director*

*b. Implementation of the recruitment plan for faculty and administrative staff*

*c. Activation of the student recruitment strategy*

*d. While allowing autonomy for the branch, NKUA needs to monitor very closely the activities and resources of the branch to ensure that its trajectory proceeds on a sustainable basis.*

*Overall, the EEC is confident of the potential of the Cyprus branch proposed by NKUA and wishes them both and their stakeholders well as it embarks on its mission.*

### **Institutional Response**

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the time, effort, and dedication they invested in the evaluation process for the accreditation of our proposed branch in Cyprus. We highly appreciate the thoroughness, professionalism, and constructive spirit that characterized both the review of our documentation and the on-site visit.

We are deeply encouraged by the Committee's positive and appreciative remarks regarding our vision, planning, and commitment to the establishment of the Cyprus branch. The recognition of the efforts of our leadership, faculty, administrative staff, and students—as well as the strong support voiced by our stakeholders—reinforces our determination to ensure the success of this important endeavor.

We take careful note of the Committee's recommendations and fully commit to addressing them without delay. Specifically, NKUA will:

1. **Immediately proceed with the appointment of the Branch Director.**
2. **Implement the recruitment plan for faculty and administrative staff** according to the proposed timelines.
3. **Activate the student recruitment strategy** to ensure a strong first intake.
4. **Establish a robust monitoring framework** to oversee the activities and resources of the branch, ensuring its sustainable development while respecting its operational autonomy.

We firmly believe that the branch will have a significant and positive impact on the city and region, fully aligned with NKUA's tradition of academic excellence and service to society. Once again, we warmly thank the Committee for its invaluable contribution, constructive feedback, and confidence in our project. We look forward to implementing the recommendations and to welcoming you in the future to witness the progress and success of the Cyprus branch.



#### D. Higher Education Institution Academic Representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Gerasimos Siasos</b>	Rector	
<b>Sophia Papaioannou</b>	Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, International Relations and Outreach	

**Date:** 5-8-2025

