

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 15.07.2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY PAFOS
(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)
- **Town:** PAFOS
School/Faculty School of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities
Department/ Sector: Department of History Politics and International Studies
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)
In Greek:
Πτυχίο Στις Διεθνείς Σχέσεις και Ασφάλεια (4 έτη/240 ECTS/Συμβατικό)
In English:
BSC IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND SECURITY (4 years / Full-time /240 ECTS, Bachelor of Science (BSc), Conventional)
Language(s) of instruction: English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EEC felt that some elements of the BSc programme on International Relations and Security would benefit from further consideration with regard to the alignment of the teaching courses with more recent trends and direction of the disciplines of International Relations and the subdiscipline of Security Studies. 	<p>Done, we accepted recommendations made. We have updated certain teaching courses, which would include updates to meet contemporary and recent trends and direction of the disciplines of IR and security studies, as follows:</p> <p>We present 3 important courses, which include all levels of requirements:</p> <p>Introduction to International Relations and Security Studies, Research Methodologies in IR and Security Studies and Contemporary Conceptual Approaches and Emerging Issues, to project direct direction of the discipline reflective and in line to the BSc in international relations and security studies, please, see Annex 1.</p> <p>Courses updated are now directly also mapped between PLOs and CLOs, which have also been updated according to recommendations made showcased in Annex 6.</p> <p>We also created a new course “Advances in Critical Security Studies” to keep the programme aligned and updated with recent trends and direction of disciplines in relevance to the field of International Relations & Security, please see Annex 2.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EEC found that including recent epistemological trends in the study of International Relations, and widening the agenda of security studies, to include, for example, the varieties of critical security studies, will benefit the formation and future employability of students. 	<p>The Department accepts the recommendations made. Based on the recommendations and epistemological trends we created a specific course curriculum under the title of “Advances in Critical Security Studies” to keep the programme aligned and updated in relevance to the field of International Relations & Security, please see Annex 2. The <u>current course substitutes the IRS 124 Introduction to Modern Diplomacy</u></p> <p>Hence the list of compulsory courses, which we present has been updated, presented in a separate document in Annex 2 as Annex 2B.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The EEC found that more emphasis on research methodologies would allow the programme to enhance the sustainable employment of its students allowing them to</p>	<p>The Department accepts the recommendations made. As such, in order be in line with the suggestions of the EEC, we updated the programme, to include an updated research methodology course seen in Annex 3_ Research Methodologies in International Relations and</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>encompass a wider variety of phenomena in their professional analyses.</p>	<p>Security Studies, to meet the sustainability in professional analysis, while we proceeded to add research methodology in the new course, Annex 2_Advances in critical security studies. The new course puts research methodologies to the practice, enabling critical thinking and advances with new and update current and future knowledge and practical formations based on the course expectations from Bloom's Taxonomy. This enables students' future capacity building and capabilities to enrich future processes in sustainable competition in possible employability knowledge and requests.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EEC had concerns with the level of criticality encouraged amongst students. For example, the BSc programme on International Relations and Security learning outcome refers to a "basic understanding" and the Committee considered that this could potentially be presented in a more advanced manner. 	<p>Done. We accepted. the recommendations changing the basic understanding learning outcome of the program from "Basic" on PLO1 to reflect a more contemporary, updated and advanced manner in line with blooms Taxonomy on PLO1.</p> <p>We have also revised all other PLOs to meet current modern standards with minor yet important changes to interconnect each PLO, see Annex 5. We also mapped the new PLOs with the COs of courses seen in Annex 6. We further added in "aims and objectives" of courses the expectation and encouragement of critical thinking, please, see Annex 7</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EEC would like to recommend the development of critical skills from the start of the program. 	<p>Done. We accepted the recommendations made updating specific curricula of certain courses to include more critical skills within the courses themselves from the start of the program seen in Annex 4.</p> <p>We have also re-evaluated the course of research methodology seen in Annex 3. We enriched it to meet current trends and future needs, while practical approaches and thus critical skillsets and thinking when applied.</p>	

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The EC suggests that the Department makes clear to the students the logic behind the organization of the courses within the semesters and between the semesters.	Done. We accepted the recommendations made. We present to you at annex 8_ the logic behind the organization of the courses, which will be added to Programme’s website on the information in the subsection: “teaching, learning and assessment methods” .	
The Bloom's taxonomy is an important tool not only for teachers and for course curricula, but also for informing students about the expectations of skills and competencies to be developed. This latter part needs to be made clear to students.	Done. We accepted the recommendations. We present the inclusivity of the logic behind Bloom’s Taxonomy, added in example courses as presented in Annex 8B_ , where we added in the course descriptions the said necessary information.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The EEC suggests, that the student-centered approach could be strengthened by encouraging elements of critical and creative thinking already from semester one. 	<p>Done, see 2.1,2.2 above.</p> <p>Within the revised curricula and along the lines of the website information we underlined the importance and necessary information towards students on the framework and use of Bloom’s taxonomy.</p> <p>In our Annex 8B example courses we envisioned the importance of student-centered approach by defining constantly the need for critical and creative thinking based on the necessary skills provided by Bloom’s Taxonomy.</p>	
The EEC recommends the workload of the students in terms of required readings and examinations to be re-considered.	<p>Done. We accepted the recommendations proceeding accordingly as:</p> <p>The workload of students holds required reading, which is updated not exceeding two books.</p> <p>Each of the Programme’s courses accounts for 6 ECTS. Given that 1 hour corresponds to 10 pages, this translates to approximately to 55 pages per course.</p> <p>We now present in our reading list the rest as “recommended reading”. They are there to support the students in case they wish to learn or read more. as you may see at specific courses at Annex 8B</p>	
The EEC recommends that the BSc Programme could consider including a BSc thesis. This will be an opportunity for students	<p>The Department accepts recommendations. And informs the following:</p> <p>The Thesis Track Course will be of 12 ECTS and will be taken instead of 1 compulsory course and one selective out of the last</p>	

<p>to select a topic based on their own interests and focus on doing independent research. It will also allow them to bring together the different elements they have been, taught throughout the programme including, theory, methods and empirics.</p>	<p>5 courses of the semester or will be taking thesis track over the final two elective courses of the semester. The reason for the 6 ECTS is the weight of the research thesis. The requirements and the constant processes and meetings and research of the student, following the methodological approach and critical skills-sets gained through the period of study. At the beginning of the semester for those that chose the Thesis Track course, a course page is created on the Moodle platform for every thesis that is being written during that semester. There, the supervisor uploads reading material, the syllabus, see ANNEX 9_ and any multimedia material to assist the student during the research and writing process. Through the Moodle page all meetings are being recorded and uploaded automatically from the MS teams. Also, the Faculty has in-person meetings. The supervisors offer detailed feedback via Moodle or in comments by Word document. The BSc Thesis follows the study guide of the MSc merely as a process but also as a scientific learning bridge using critical skills and capabilities adopted at early point from the classes of research methodology and critical studies in security studies. During these meetings, the supervisors provide guidance and detailed feedback to the students as advisor. The handbook includes clear instructions in terms of criteria for assessment and evaluation. This handbook will be a guidebook for the supervisor/mentor to the student see Annex 10_ Dissertation Study Guide, p.18-21. While this is a conventional course, students are encouraged to use the Distance Learning Unit (DLU) information and trainings, see Annex 9_ which offers a wide variety of seminars and guides on mentoring of students during thesis-writing. It also organizes bi-annual coordination meetings (beginning of winter and spring semester) to discuss best-practices and improvements to the thesis writing process. For the latest meeting (6/3/2024) and relevant guides and processes, see Annex 10_ 10a_10b The Syllabus presented in Annex 9 is in line with the program expectations and ensures that students take knowledge and critical skills acquired into the test.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EEC finds that the teaching methods, tools and approaches are modern, with the caveats mentioned in section 1 above, and support the students' learning process. Yet, there is room for improvement in terms of regularly procedures for 	<p>The Department accepts the recommendations for improvement. As such, the Quality Assurance Committee of the Department of History, Politics & International Studies, convened on 18.04.2024, decided to institute an annual meeting at the end of the academic year dedicated to the evaluation and updating of course curricula and readings. At the meeting, the coordinators of the offered programmes, selected tutors of the programme, and if deemed necessary, external experts- will propose changes to the course curricula,</p>	

<p>updating the course curricula and particularly the course literature which the EEC finds relatively outdated and missing out some key policy journals in the disciplines involved.</p>	<p>reflecting developments in the respective fields and the state-of-the-art in terms of current debates and literature. The Committee as agreed will discuss upon the suggested updates. See attached: Annex 11_ meeting's minutes Annex 11b _Student Handbook AY 23-24 p. 60 Annex 11a_ Student Handbook AY 24-25</p>	
<p>No student evaluations were provided thus, the EEC finds challenging to assess the student- centred approach from a student perspective.</p>	<p>There is no evaluation process, as students are not joining the programme specified. Rather we created the distance program which, is newly accredited and operated for the first year as distance learning programme with 8 enrolled students for the AY 2023/24. For the new cohort of 24/25, we already have 8 applications ongoing and 3 completed applications and acceptances as of early July 2024 (for the distance programme). Of course, does exist a complete procedure and respective tools of students' evaluation, as is described in the ch. 11. Internal quality assurance regulations of the programme of study and the composition of the Internal Quality Committee of the Institution (See Specific Instructions) of relevant programme application form.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>To consider growing the epistemological and methodological areas of the department to better complete a picture of International Relations in the BSc.</p>	<p>The Department accepts all considerations and recommendations informing, as following: The department’s faculty consists of scholars with diverse epistemological and methodological backgrounds. More specific: Dr. Eleni Gavriil is a Lecturer in International Economic Law and Human Rights, Dr. Floros Flouros is an Assistant Professor in International Political Economy: Energy, Security and Climate Change, Dr. Katerina Papazacharia is a Lecturer in Diplomatic History and International Relations. She is also the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the University. Dr. Marios Efthymiopoulos Associate Professor is on International Security and Strategic Studies, Professor Pantelis Sklias is in Political Economy. Additionally, to address the deeply-entrenched traditionalist bias in the field of IR and to advance research and teaching under diverse epistemological approaches the Department is participating in the following research programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Diversity and Inclusivity in Security Studies” (Erasmus+ KA220-HED) (implementation stage, involving a consortium of seven partners from six countries). • “Inclusivity and Resilience in European Studies” (Erasmus+ KA220-HED) - (application submitted, results due in June 2024, involving a consortium of seven partners from six countries). • “MARLIN: Marginalised Languages In” (HORIZON-CL2-2024-HERITAGE-01-05) (application submitted, involving a consortium of nine partners from nine countries). <p>Please, see attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 13 _ Diversity and Inclusivity in Security Studies project card • Annex 12_ Inclusivity and Resilience in European Studies proposal • Annex 12a_ MARLIN: Marginalised Languages In proposal 	
<p>To consider the gender balance of the department in future appointments.</p>	<p>Done. The Department accepts the recommendation. As such, we are underline the following points:</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The faculty member Dr. Katerina Papazacharia is in charge, See Annex 13_Diversity and Inclusion policy of our University, of NUP Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Dr. Papazacharia who, along with the other members of the EDI team of the University, is responsible for administering our EDI policies, schemes and action plans and to provide direction and encouragement on diversity and inclusion. Also, Dr. Papazacharia, participates all year long to the programs of the commissioner on Gender Equality of the Republic of Cyprus. 2. As you can see on evidence Annex 13a, Dr. Marina Elefteriadou got a grant with Dr. Eleni Gavriil on the following Project from the European Union Erasmus+ Code: 2023-1-BG01-KA220-HED-000154615, Key Action: Partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices Action Type: Cooperation partnerships in higher education). This is in direct line of research on project of inclusivity and diversity in security studies, which includes also our department. 3. Dr. Elefteriadou has be hired as faculty at Neapolis University Pafos from AY 2023-24, meeting the criteria of balanced hiring of faculty based on gender you May see on Annex 13b 	
<p>To consider the appointment of visiting female scholars to add to the breadth of the learning experience.</p>	<p>The Department agrees to the EEC recommendations. Neapolis University is promoting and the department always considers and applies Gender balance policy environment, as seen at Annex 14</p> <p>As such, the department has appointed Visiting Female Scholar already to add to our visiting female Scholars from the University of Haifa, Profesor Carmela Lutmar and Dr. Victoria Pistikou from Democritus University of Thrace.</p>	

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC was not provided with information on student progression or recognition. This has made it difficult to comment directly on these points.</p>	<p>The department agrees with the comment. As we are stated in the 2.8 above, a current cohort does not exist, as we do not have enrolled students in the Conventional program.</p> <p>Of course, does exist a complete and coherent process of students' progression or recognition, as is described in the ch. 5.11 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).</p> <p>/6. Students' assessment policy and procedures for each course.</p>	
<p>That innovations and best practices in education and learning could be more transparent and celebrated in the department. Through the interview, the EEC found it difficult to identify such within the BSc.</p>	<p>The University and the Department place paramount importance in developing and best practices in education.</p> <p>To be innovative with pedagogical approaches and transparent, while celebrated in the department, through the production of regularly updated guides and the organisation of seminars under the supervision of NUP's educational technologist and instructional designer.</p> <p>For such reason the NUP has created a Unit (Pedagogical Planning and Learning Process Unit) both conventional and distance learning, dedicated to this goal, which is accessible and addressed to all NUP faculty members.</p> <p>The aim of NUP's strategy is to address on a comprehensive level the faculty capability, to increase participation, creativity in skills and interaction amongst students and tutors.</p> <p>Furthermore, to enable students and faculty to celebrate methodologies and ways to solve emerging problems.</p> <p>Most importantly enhance the student-centered teaching and experience from the faculty to the student and the student participation with the faculty in class.</p> <p>In this context the following have been organized and implemented:</p> <p>(a) A seminar on student-centered teaching, learning and assessment. The seminar was mandatory for all NUP tutors. It included 5 units and upon successful completion of the</p>	

	<p>assessment test a certificate of attendance was issued.</p> <p>(b) A workshop organized by the DLU and the Pedagogical Unit on the use of Artificial Intelligence tools in education, led by Professor Chatzichristofis, Vice-Rector of NUP.</p> <p>(c) Guides on the use of digital tools such as Teams and Kialo which are necessary in online teaching and can enhance interaction and engagement of students. Further guide is available dedicated to the creation of interactive activities (jigsaw, case-studies, forum discussion, peer review etc). It explains the different types of activities, what are their advantages, why to them and how to create them.</p> <p>(d) A website dedicated to the NUP distance learning unit. The website includes instructions and guidelines to support permanent teaching staff and new faculty members that teach in online programs. It contains instructions amongst others about: flipped classroom method, learning outcomes, writing study guides, educational technology tools.</p> <p>(e) Mentoring seminars to Thesis dissertation supervisors and process, to support them in navigating communication with distance learning students (this would positively affect the Bsc Thesis Track course.</p> <p>(f) Two seminars dedicated to the use of “Lumi” as a tool to enhance interaction and engagement in distance learning courses. In addition to the seminars, a Moodle course has been created with instructions and examples of interactive and engaging content.</p> <p>(g) A workshop (two hours) to train teaching staff in creating interactive activities on Moodle.</p> <p>See attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 15_DLU guides& seminars • Annex 15a_AI tools seminar • Annex 15b_ guides on the use of digital tools to use • Annex 15c_ DLU guides & coordination meetings for dissertation mentoring that includes also for faculty which want to learn e-tools to use for conventional programs) • Annex 15d_ Lumi seminars & guides 	
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC recommends that both the study guides and the student handbook be updated to include policies and best practices related to generative AI, along with academic guidance for students on the opportunities and risks these technologies present in education.</p>	<p>The Department accepts recommendations responding as following: The Department student handbook has been updated with reference to the challenges of AI and platforms such as ChatGPT in education, promoting the responsible engagement with and use of similar technologies. Furthermore, NUP's Quality Assurance Committee has initiated a deliberation process aiming to devise policy guidelines for the academic staff and students. It should be noted also that in December 2023 NUP organised an online seminar on the use of AI tools in education. We already planned, as a Department, to enrich and celebrate by similarly create such seminars within every academic year. For this reason, we attach both the 23-24 and the 24-25 Annexes, that was completed by end of June 2024. At Annex 11 (a) and (b) See attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 11a_ for 2024-25 • Annex 11b_ for 2023-24, pp. 52-3 (Student Handbook) • Annex 16_ AI tools seminar 	
<p>This advice should also be extended to faculty staff.</p>	<p>All advises are extended to faculty and staff for both physical and distance learning processes To foster the use of interactive tools by the teaching staff a series of seminars have been organised by the University.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dr Vasileios Balafas, NUP's educational technologist offered two seminars (four hours in total) dedicated to the use of "Lumi" as a tool to enhance interaction and engagement in distance learning courses. In addition to the seminars, a Moodle course has been created with instructions and examples of interactive and engaging content. b. The Pedagogical Unit has organised a workshop (two hours) to train teaching staff in creating interactive activities on Moodle and in person for interactive processes in-class. c. Guides on the creation of interactive activities is available to teaching staff. They provide guidance on the use of various kinds of interactive activities (kialo, jigsaw, case-studies, forum discussion, peer review 	



	etc). They explain what each activity is, what are its advantages, why to use it and how to create it, please, See Annexes 15, 15a, 15b, 15c, 15d, 17 (guides on the use of digital tools) for all classis's levels teaching and interactive tools in-class.	
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
 (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC found that the BSc met the conditions and standards commensurate with undergraduate degrees in International Relations. Herein, we identify innovation and best practice as well as room for further improvement.</p> <p>The EEC was impressed with the overall achievements of NUP given the short amount of time since its founding and the establishment of this degree. The EEC recognised the overall merits of the programme and were impressed with the support that was provided to staff with regards to the delivery of the BSc.</p> <p>As stated in the report the content of the BSC programme in International Relations and Security needs to expand to include more critical and contemporary research in the field. The EEC hopes that the points outlined in this report will be of value to the University as the department continues to grow and innovate.</p> <p>The EEC is grateful for the support provided by the University on the day and the materials that were distributed in advance.</p> <p>We are grateful to the contributions from staff and students and are particularly grateful for the excellent support from the CYQAA, in particular Dr. Christiana Maki.</p>	<p>Let us first express our satisfaction and warm thanks for the positive and productive comments of the EEC as well as the important specific suggestions and recommendations. Since, it is our belief and principle that there is always room of improving the quality of the University's provided services and of the said Programme as well, we have listed in the current response and the following Annexes all the important information and data in order to fully satisfy, comply and respond to the EEC suggestions and recommendations made throughout the report.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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C.



D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Date: 15.07.2024

