

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

Date: 03.06.2022

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Architecture, Engineering, Land and Environmental Studies
- **Department/Sector:** Architecture, Land and Environmental Sciences
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)
In Greek:
Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα "Χώρος και Εταιρική Ταυτότητα" (1.5 Έτη, 90 ECTS, 3 εξάμηνα, Μεταπτυχιακό, συμβατικό)
In English:
MSc in Space and Branded Identity (1.5 years, 90 ECTS, 3 semesters, postgraduate, conventional)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English. Greek
- **Programme's status:** New



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

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 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.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the 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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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:

1.1	Stakeholders from the private and public sector should be consulted in all future revisions of the Programme.
1.2	A breakdown of the credits into hours of student work, and the correspondence of these hours to particular tasks (lectures, home study, essays etc.) would make student workload transparent, preparing students for the course. The various course description documents would be good places to include this detail.
1.3	The Department is asked to to define the maximum number of the students who will be admitted for attending the Programme. It is noted that in the context of this evaluation it was considered that the expected number of the students in the Programme will be 15, with a foreseen increase up to 20. In case the number of the student increases further, then a re-evaluation of the Programme is considered necessary.
1.4	Given the fact that this Programme will initially accommodate a small number of students, the scenario of adding more elective courses seems to be nonviable. This recommendation, however, should be reconsidered in future revisions of the Programme, and in the case that there is an increase in student and teaching staff numbers.

HEI's response:

1.1 Done. The NUP has already established the process with an external advisory board which is comprised by both academics and other relevant stakeholders from the private and public sector in order to reflect on existing programme and provide their suggestions. Thus, this process will be done for this programme as well.

1.2 Done. In each syllabus has been introduced an additional table. Please see an example in **Annex 1**.

1.3 Done. The maximum number of students who will be admitted for attending the Programme is **30**. In case the foreseen number of students increases above 30, a new classroom will open with new academic staff under the general supervision of the programme director and the course coordinator.

1.4 Done. There is a wide array of new and already running courses that could be introduced in future revisions of the programme. In particular the electives are either from creative disciplines or from business-related disciplines so as to enhance students' choices and give to our students the possibility to select elective courses of their personal interest.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

2.1	As per the above recommendation (see section 1), the programme and course documentation should indicate more clearly the expected workload per course and for the programme overall and explain the procedure and conditions for extending the duration of the studies. Such student-facing documentation should be discussed with student representatives to ensure clarity and comprehension from the side of the student body.
2.2	Single grading is acceptable for most courses, but there needs to be a procedure of double-checking and potentially moderating course grades (e.g. confirming failed or exceptional work).
2.3	We should not underestimate the importance of the obligatory Dissertation both in terms of corresponding to 30 ECTS (i.e. one third of the total 90) and also in terms of evidence of independent student work (e.g. future employment or pursuit of PhD studies). Such a significant piece of work should be double-graded independently by 2 staff members. In addition, there should be a transparent mechanism for addressing potential disagreement in the two grades (e.g. if more than 9% difference or if one of the grades leads to a fail), through 3rd marking and/or moderation.

HEI's response:

2.1 Done. In each syllabus an additional table has been introduced. Please see an example in **Annex 1**. regarding the procedure and conditions for extending the duration of the studies, this possibility is already clearly communicated to the students in Section 4.6 “Duration for Completion of Studies” of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes* (see **Annex 12**), which is available to all students through the Moodle platform. Also, the students are provided with the necessary information during Induction Week (see Section 6.1 “Induction Week” of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes*, see **Annex 12**).

2.2 Done. There is already a **NUP Appeal Policy** for students with regards to grading issues. Please see the attached policy and procedure in **Annex 4**. All students can find all the pertinent forms online on the Moodle platform. Also, the students are provided with the necessary information during Induction Week (see Section 6.1 “Induction Week” of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes*, see **Annex 12**).

2.3 Done. The dissertation is already supervised by a three-member committee. One of two out of the Three members are external (non NUP Academics. Additionally, there is a detailed study guide for the dissertation completion that is provided as a primary general guidance aid in the context of preparing a dissertation, in addition to the relevant support by the primary supervisor. Please see this study guide in **Annex 11**.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

3.1	The institution provides a more formal programme of training for conventional (not just for distance learning) to support staff in developing and delivering innovative teaching. The institution provides a means for staff to log what training they have completed so as to support annual performance review and promotions processes.
3.2	The institution introduces more formal structures for developing a community of practice for teaching innovation. The institution develops a programme of training for new lecturers, to support their adoption of innovative teaching practices.
3.3	The Department conducts a review of research activity and puts clear provisions in place to better support and incentivise staff to collaborate more on producing good quality research outputs that are aligned to the objectives of the programme.

HEI's response:

3.1. Done. NUP has already an established **policy for academic staff development**. Please see the policy in **Annex 6**. In this context, the previous years NUP has provided training seminars and mentorship programmes for all the academic personnel (both permanent and adjunct teaching staff) with various subjects (i.e dissertation tutors, moodle and teams, library etc.). The detailed list with all the activities and dates can be found in **Annex 8**. Additionally, NUP has an already established policy for staff promotion which states that the academic staff should submit to the selection body all times they participated in University activities (i.e trainings, mentorships and other activities) and this will be taken into account for their promotion. Please see the policy in **Annex 5**. We already make use of NUP funds as well as external funding sources, such as ERASMUS+ to support the implementation of the policy.

3.2. Done. NUP has already an established policy for academic staff development which ensures the development of a community of practice for teaching and innovation. Please see the policy in Annex 6. In this context, the previous years NUP has provided training seminars and mentorship programmes for all the academic personnel (both permanent and adjunct teaching staff) with various subjects (i.e dissertation tutors, moodle and teams, library etc.). The detailed list with all the activities and dates can be found in **Annex 8**.

3.3. Done. NUP has already an established research **policy and procedure that ensures the delivery and support of research** at the University. Please see the policy in **Annex 7, Specific Guidelines I.5&I.6**.



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

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

4.1	The list of documents provided by foreign students who apply for the programme should include The Recognition of their higher education Title of Studies by The Cyprus Council of Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications
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HEI's response:

- 4.1. **Done.** The provisions that are applied for the overseas' students are clearly described on the Republic and thus applied by NUP.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

5.1.	Induction activities for new students should be mandatory, as induction can have a positive impact on long term support.
5.2.	The Department should consider offering students a part-time version of the MSc, a step that would widen the applications' spectrum. In this case, the MSc's duration should be expanded accordingly.
5.3.	In the context of blended learning, the NUP course benchmarking tool could be adapted to be used to evaluate the online environment of each course of the conventional programme. A suggestion would be to create a version of the benchmarking tool which addresses 1. Minimum requirements for all courses and 2. Good practice for e-learning in the blended learning environment of the courses (applicable to the conventional programme).
5.4.	We recommend a further alignment between the programmes (the conventional and the e-learning) in terms of design and delivery. This will benefit both cohorts. Approaches that could achieve this would be adopting a flexible approach in terms of student workloads with clear signposting about workloads at the start of the course and allowing the students to move from the conventional to the e-learning programme and vice versa.

HEI's response:

5.1 Done. Nup has a particular policy for Induction activities (NUP 07.100) for all new students which is operated by the Students' affair office that indeed positively impacts students since it provides them with information such as study handbook, study procedures, university's clubs, procedure for appeals and complains etc. However, these cannot formally be presented as mandatory, but the University places great emphasis on student participation. Specifically, induction activities are included in the yearly Academic Calendar and all students are notified to participate in the activities of the induction week. Also, after the completion of induction activities NUP provides all students with all the informative documents and presentations done during the induction week in order to benefit all students.

5.2 Done. All postgraduate courses upon NUP regulation can be extended by 12 months. Thus, in total a student can attend a postgraduate course for 30 months (18 months full time + 12 months extension). Regarding the procedure and conditions for extending the duration of the studies, this possibility is already clearly communicated to the students in Section 4.6 "Duration for Completion of Studies" of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes* (see **Annex 12**), which is available to all students through the Moodle platform.

5.3 Done. NUP already uses the Prose benchmarking tool the description of which can be found in **Annex 9**.

5.4 Done. The very detailed planning of the e-learning programme has enabled the programme director to have a holistic image of the courses that are taught in both formats of the programme. In particular, the alignment of the two formats of the programme is achieved by having a similar framework for evaluation, same content of knowledge with no overlaps between courses and lastly similar but still flexible enough workload breakdown per course. This alignment does indeed gives the possibility to a student at the beginning of his or her studies to move from one format of the postgraduate programme to the other.



6. Additional for doctoral Programmes (ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

The External Evaluation Committee wishes to thank the University and the Department for the documentation provided in advance of our visit. We also wish to thank all the staff and students we spoke to during our visit for the open engagement throughout all our meetings. Additionally as regards the final remarks provided by the external evaluation committee the University as regards the various points mention would like to state the following:

1. Policy for Quality Assurance

NUP response: Please refer to answer 1.4

2. Student recognition of higher education qualifications

NUP response: Please refer to answer 4.1

3. Student Support and flexible modes of learning

NUP response: Please refer to answer 5.2., 5.1, 5,3 and 5,4.

4. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review of the Programme

NUP response: Please refer to answer 1.3, 1.2, 1.5, 1.1.and 5.5

5. Students-centered learning, teaching and assessment

NUP response: Please refer to answer 1.3., 2.3 and 2.2.

6. Support for staff development

NUP response: Please refer to answer 3.1

7. Community of practice for teaching innovation

NUP response: Please refer to answer 3.2 and 3.1.

8. Support for research outputs

NUP response: Please refer to answer 3.3.

We would like to thank all members of the External Evaluation Committee for their time, effort and attention, the full compliance rating as well as for their constructive and productive comments, which have contributed and achieved in considerably improving the Programme.

We believe that all the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee have been considered and led to corresponding modifications.



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION





C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

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