## Απάντηση του Ιδρύματος στην Αναβολή Λήψης Απόφασης (ESG 2.3)

| Αρ. Φακ.: | 07.14.281.063 | **Αξιολόγηση/Πιστοποίηση** | |
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| | | Πρόγραμμα | |
| **Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών:**<br>**Τίτλος Σπουδών (Διάρκεια, ECTS, Κύκλος Σπουδών)** | Data analytics and FinTech (1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, Master (MSc), E-Learning, Joint Programme with the Hellenic Mediterranean University)<br><br>Ανάλυση δεδομένων και Χρηματοοικονομική Τεχνολογία (1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (MSc), Εξ Αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών με το Ελληνικό Μεσογειακό Πανεπιστήμιο) | | |
| **Ίδρυμα:** | Neapolis University / Πανεπιστήμιο Νεάπολις | | |

Το Συμβούλιο του Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης, κατά την 85η Σύνοδό του, η οποία πραγματοποιήθηκε στις 19/09/2022, αφού μελέτησε την αίτηση του Ιδρύματος, <u>την έκθεση της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (ΕΕΑ)</u>, <u>την Απάντηση του ιδρύματος στις παρατηρήσεις της ΕΕΑ</u> και <u>την Ανατροφοδότηση από την ΕΕΑ</u> αποφάσισε την **2η αναβολή λήψης απόφασης** ούτως ώστε να προωθηθεί από το ίδρυμα ενημέρωση για ικανοποίηση ΟΛΩΝ των εισηγήσεων της ΕΕΑ.

Παρακαλώ να τεκμηριώσετε την απάντηση /ενέργειες του ιδρύματος **στο παρόν έντυπο** και να επισυνάψετε σε παράρτημα, ό, τι είναι αναγκαίο. Το παρόν έντυπο να αποσταλεί στον Φορέα σε μορφή *.docx και με υπογραφές σε μορφή *.pdf

Η απάντηση να αποσταλεί στον/στην αρμόδιο λειτουργό εντός δύο μηνών **μέχρι 26-10-2022**.

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| | **Δεν έχουν προσκομιστεί τεκμήρια** για συμμόρφωση στα ακόλουθα σχόλια από την **ανατροφοδότησή της ΕΕΑ**. (βλέπε με μπλε (Non-Compliant) και πράσινο (Partially Compliant)). <br><br> Πέραν δήλωσης των προθέσεων **θα πρέπει να προσκομιστούν στον Φορέα συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία που να καταδεικνύουν τις σχετικές ενέργειες και πρόοδο στα σημεία (Non-Compliant) και (Partially Compliant)** μέχρι **26-10-2022**. | |
| | **1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)** | |
| 1.1. | To revise the title and the content of the program to address the needs of an interdisciplinary student intake: <br> The T&L committee is invited to think outside the box of existing courses in the institution and build up the courses that are needed for this program in order to offer an opportunity to the students to join the financial technology revolution upon graduation. Students in this program need to learn design methodology for financial technology applications and not just passively be presented case studies. They need to learn how to implement, assess and integrate these technologies with current systems. This will only be successful if they develop computational skills, understand the statistical and machine learning principles in order to later on to work on large scale projects with data analysis that are used in the data driven financial sector. To provide the support to students from both backgrounds (ICT and Finance) a recommendation is for the first trimester to have foundational courses in the two subjects and based on their background to choose the most suitable. <br> Also, it was not clear at the review meeting the process of remediation of a course. The foundation courses are normally mandatory. The 60 ECTS | **Non Compliant** <br><br> The title and content of the program should be revised. The issue EEC is addressing is the fact that the curriculum is NOT addressing the learning objectives through the courses offered, and maybe this is due to the lack of existing market analysis as well as the students the programme is trying to attract. <br> **This point has not been addressed.** <br><br><br> Furthermore, it was not clear at the review meeting the process of remediation of a course. The foundation courses are normally mandatory. The 60 ECTS taught courses should provide the students within hands on experience in data analytics (planning, running, documenting and presenting) in finance. <br> **This point has not been addressed.** |

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| | taught courses should provide the students within hands on experience in data analytics (planning, running, documenting and presenting) in finance. Additionally, the eLearning design should be clear and not just involve the provision of material on Moodle platform. Online asynchronous and synchronous sessions should be defined with an exact T&L methodology justified for the need of the program. | **NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Two mandatory foundation courses have been incorporated into the curriculum, *FINA100 Finance Foundation Course* and *CS111 ICT Foundation Course*, which are both assessed on a pass/fail basis and offered prior to the commencement of the programme. FINA100 is offered to those students who do not have a finance background and CS111 is offered to those who do not have a data science background. See *Annex 1_Foundation Courses*.<br><br>In terms of **the eLearning design**, the first part of our comment is not very fortunate as indeed the university performs more in e-learning methodology than just uploading material on Moodle. The second part of the comment is still valid and relevant as the study guides (even if detailed and well presented) do not reflect what activities are designed to meet the specific needs of this program in terms of e-learning methodology. In contrast, the traditional e-learning methodology (teleconferences, discussion forums, etc.) is the same as any other e-learning programs across different disciplines, thus it does not contradict our comment as claimed by the university. In conclusion, the university should justify whether the traditional e-learning activities proposed can replace those of the conventional program from an e-learning methodology perspective.<br>**This point has been partially addressed.**<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** See *Annex 1.1_E-Learning Methodology-Activities.* |

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| 1.2. | To more clearly and explicitly incorporate the specifics/uniqueness of the "interdisciplinary collaboration" of both HMU and NUP to offer this joint program: Across Europe, we have observed a number of successful examples of collaboration between different faculties of engineering and management. Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU) has a relatively mature engineering teaching and research experience, while Neapolis University Pafos, and the School of Economics and Management Science at HMU have a relatively complete faculties for finance and management. The collaboration between the two universities is believed to be beneficial and can complement each other's strengths by providing students with relatively comprehensive resources. | **Non Compliant**<br><br>The clear and explicit complementarity of both institutions towards the new programme needs to be presented and clarified with exact courses and academics' expertise<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** See attached *Annex 1.2_Complementarity between NUP and HMU* |

| **2. Student - centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)** | | |
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| 2.1. | The program could be reviewed in terms of T&L eLearning approaches to promote confidence, which is of high importance for the market needs in this new area in Fin Tech. The students need to be exposed to Data Science platforms in different operating systems (i.e. Linux) through the available servers and desktops. | **Non Compliant**<br>2.1 referred to the T&L approach and not the facilities that are provided to the students. This point has not been addressed.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** We confirm that students are exposed to Data Science Platforms in Linux and other operating systems through the available servers and desktops. |
| 2.2. | Formal external stakeholders' board for the curriculum review should be in place to provide feedback to update the curriculum to the international standards, and inclusion of industry representatives should be mandatory | **Partially Compliant**<br>The last part of our comment was not responded. This is in line with our comments in Section 1.1 about the e-learning methodology and activities |

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| | and appropriate minutes to be taken at each meeting. Online Teaching methods are not clearly defined. | should meet the specific needs of this program. This point has been partially addressed.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** See our response in section 1.1. |
| 2.3. | The teaching and learning effectiveness is highly linked with the level of expertise of the teaching staff and although seminars on improving didactic and pedagogical practices in online teaching are available to staff, they are not compulsory. This is a good initiative in the right direction, but it is not sufficient. A minimum form of basic accredited pedagogical training should be compulsory to all new staff before they begin teaching online. | **Partially Compliant**<br>Our comment referred to the fact that the training should be compulsory to ALL teaching staff not only NEW staff. This point has been partially addressed.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** We confirm that training is compulsory for all members of teaching staff. |
| 2.4. | Overall, assessment methodology should be clear for each course online and how plagiarism will be avoided.<br>This should be standard practice for all courses and all forms of homework or examination online. | **Partially Compliant**<br>Our recommendation is that the anti-fraud rules and policy should be explicitly shown/linked to each e-learning activity, further to provide them as part of a "plagiarism policy" hidden from students' direct and easy access. This point has been partially addressed.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Our Turnitin system has been regulated accordingly. |
| 2.5. | The description and organization of the courses do not reflect an NFQ 9 lever program as the development of students' competencies and general learning experience varies. However, we advise that the college should take the necessary actions to revise the curriculum (and title of the program if it deems necessary and connect the teaching and learning with hands on data science real-life challenges and experiences in Fin Tech sector. | **Non Compliant**<br><br>This point has not been addressed.<br>Even if NFQ9 does not exist in Cyprus there is referencing process of the Cyprus Qualifications Framework (CyQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European |

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| | | Higher Education Area (GF/EHEHA). The comment 2.5 still stands and the programme should be at the respective level of NFQ9 (Cyprus equivalent) <br><br> **NUP RESPONSE:** <br> **Done**. See point 1.1. |
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| 2.6. | With respect to the (technical) specifics of the e-learning delivery, the EEC finds that the nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study. | No action required |
| 2.7. | The university's learning management system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. <br> This is a Moodle installation with all the basic online services available. <br> The platform specifically provides synchronous (through Office365/MS Teams) and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the lecturers, the other students and with the materials. <br> The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge. The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences and skills, such as critical thinking, is also provided though was not shown the specific assessment procedures during the meetings. Each course has a minimum of 6 hours of teleconferences, which is considered an adequate number of hours of synchronous communication between teacher and students. | No action required |
| 2.8. | Collaboration among teachers and students (and among students) is conducted through the online forums of the subject and other forums that can be created ad-hoc for facing special needs. In addition, collaboration among students is promoted by collaborative activities | **Partially Compliant** <br> This point has been partially addressed. It was not shown the design, procedure, and technical support for these activities. |

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| | based on project-based learning, though it was not shown the design, procedure, and technical support for these activities. | **NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Please see attached *Annex 2_Online Forums*. |
| 2.9. | Formative assessment of the courses is based on submitted mid-term assignments and reports with provision of personalised feedback during the course counting to 20% of the final grade while summative assessment is based on a mandatory final exam counting to 60% of the final grade. Assessment procedure during the course is completed with a number of online quiz-based and other interactive activities counting to 20%. Optional formative (self-assessment) activities are included in the weekly study guides in order to self-assess student knowledge and skills of the course. | No action required |
| 2.10. | The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations, such as EDEN, is a good practice. Therefore, the university is urged to keep applying for further external accreditations (EFQUEL, EADTU, etc), to evaluate the quality of its distance learning model. | No action required |
| 2.11. | From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the assessment process. In addition, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances. | **Partially Compliant**<br>This point has been partially addressed. In this annex there is only the indication to "facilitate personalized learning as well as gamification (in our plans)", so gamification mechanisms are not yet used.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** See attached *Annex 3_Gamification strategies.* |
| 2.12. | While the EEC emphasises the benefits of any form of interaction and collaboration, the online synchronous teleconferences were perceived as problematic if in the next years the program is expanded internationally and attended by many students across different time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the | **Partially Compliant**<br>This point has been partially addressed. This action is not relevant in terms of actual interaction as recordings do not allow students to interact with other students and the instructor. Appropriate forms of interaction should be provided in this future scenario to replace |

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| | coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their distance learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous online interaction and collaboration. | synchronous interaction to allow students to interact asynchronously, such as discussion forums.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Interaction between students is promoted by asynchronous activities such as fora, peer review and jigsaws (see examples 1-4). Interactive activities are included in all study guides. Moreover, there are weekly forums to resolve questions. In these, the answers are first provided by fellow students (*Annex 4_Student Interaction, image 2*). |
| 2.13. | Finally, the EEC wants to point out that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment through the writing assignments and project-based collaborative learning during the course could be reinforced instead. | **Compliant**<br>The university should analyse a feasible and reliable solution of proctoring to fully and adequately support online exams without changing their current e-learning methodology. |

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| 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5) | | |
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| 3.1. | To adopt a transparent workload model process for all staff members with clear admin/teaching/research activities allocation and to be shared at the beginning of each academic year to all academic staff:<br>The School has not informed the EEC of any professional development activities for teaching staff focused on the online Teaching and Learning skills which could prove impactful in the years to follow on the quality of the teaching and learning in the programme and the reputation of the programme. The panel would advise as well in the future rounds of recruitment to review the curriculum needs of the programme and the research strategy of the School in order to identify candidates with potential to progress within your institution. | **Partially Compliant**<br>This point has been partially addressed. This point has been partially addressed" since HEI provided here a sample of their training program for the professional development of the teaching staff.<br>The indicative annexes do not provide the required information though (Annex 3 provides CV information with professional development not related to e-learning professional development while annex 4 provides information about e-learning infrastructure).<br>The example provided here about a workshop on digital education could serve for the purpose to develop the e-learning skills of the teaching staff, even though this information is neither found in the application nor was mentioned during the meetings.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** A tailormade course to enhance eLearning skills has already been introduced and is compulsory for all members of teaching staff. See attached *Annex 5_Moodle Staff Training Seminar*. |
| 3.2. | The college tries to improve the teaching skills of the teaching staff through activities such as optional seminars, for instance:<br>These efforts are appreciated. As pointed out in the previous section, such efforts should be structured in a more formal way and be made compulsory to teachers, in order to ensure that no staff begins teaching online without a minimum of pedagogical training. | **Partially Compliant**<br>See comment 3.1<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Please see attached *Annex 6_Faculty & AST mentoring 2022.* |
| 3.3. | Given the interdisciplinarity of the programme it would be beneficial to consider synergies between the academics of ICT and Finance from both institutions. Furthermore, from the information provided so far on scientific publications of faculty members, it is not clear how many are | **Partially Compliant**<br>See comment 3.1<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:** |

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| | related to big data, data science or financial technology. The connection between teaching and research shall be clarified, for example, the faculty members are expected to list all the related research with respect to the underlying lecture be provided in the curriculum. | **Done.** See our response in section 1.2 and 3.1. |
| 3.4. | For some courses, the qualifications of the teachers concerned should be fully reviewed: For example, in high-frequency finance and trading, if teachers do not have either relevant teaching and research background or industrial working experience, they may not be able to either explain theoretically the microstructure of financial markets or deduce reasonable explanations from the practical trading processes. | **Compliant** |

| 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4) | | |
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| 4.1. | According to students' feedback during this evaluation process, the panel could not have a clear picture in terms of the program but only generally on the satisfaction of students from other programs that are face to face: It was noted that some students had difficulty to communicate in English although the programs are delivered in English and Greek. As a result, the panel recommends for the program review committee to revise the minimum English language requirements. | **Partially Compliant**<br>Recommendation: The comment was referring to the minimum English requirement, given that it is the same for all intake students - hence action is required for a revision of the minimum requirements.<br>This point has been partially addressed.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** Please see attached *Annex 7_Minimum English language requirements*.<br><br>4.2: See comment 3.1<br>This point has been partially addressed.<br><br>4.4: Please review the modules taught with content highly relevant with current market needs, and to actively promote and advertise the positive values and high potential of this program to prospective students and relevant stakeholders<br>This point has not been addressed. |
| 4.2. | The teaching staff could be supported from the Institution with career development skills in Teaching and Learning. | Partially Compliant<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>Done. Please see attached *Annex 8_Staff Training & Support*. |

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| 4.3. | The panel also recommends the development of a 5-10 year plan for the programme and the capacity of intake year on year, in order to plan for recruitment activities in EU and abroad and increase the number of applicants and of enrolled students over the next years (including the recommendation to consider a market research and identify other institutions that provide online programs similar to this MSc online). | Compliant |
| 4.4. | To attract larger numbers of students, it may be helpful to review the modules taught with content highly relevant with current market needs, and to actively promote and advertise the positive values and high potential of this program to prospective students and relevant stakeholders. | Non Compliant<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>Well noted. |
| 4.5. | The plans of the college are coherent (so students' admission, progression and recognition is (or is going to be) well conducted, the limited number of students and potential difficulties in recruiting new students needs to be tackled. To attract larger numbers of students, it may be helpful to review the courses taught (as advised in Section 1) with content highly relevant with the current Fin Tech industry. | Non Compliant<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done.** See our response in section 4.4. |
| 4.6. | With respect to the e-learning delivery of the program, the EEC encourages the institution to explore and use more sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures.<br><br>This is strongly recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and/or the number of online students. | Partially Compliant<br>Recommendation is noted but no details of the related process is provided.<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**Done**. Please see attached *Annex 9_Targit Business Intelligence Suite.* |

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| | 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6) | |
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| 5.1. | To invest in teaching staff professional development, in order to enable growth for progress: <br> In terms of student support, a potential solution could be a "buddy coder" mentor system in order for students to reach out to students that are doing research in the area or alumni that have secured jobs in the area. | Compliant |
| 5.2. | Especially with online program delivery, attention is needed as studying in isolation it can impact the students' sense of belonging which could bring high rates of dropout. | No action required |
| 5.3. | The panel also recommends the T&L Committee to include student representation of the program and to monitor the T&L processes, curriculum review and resources for each semester needs taking into account the student and staff feedback year on year with inclusion of an official industry advisory Board and External examiner. | Compliant |
| 5.4. | It is recommended to have in place procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, for teaching personnel, to enable personnel to efficiently support the online educational process. <br> The EEC did not receive any information on the planning for online moderators and communication pedagogical strategy to have an interactive online program. | Partially Compliant <br> The EEC did not receive any information on the planning for online moderators and communication pedagogical strategy to havean interactive online program <br><br> **NUP RESPONSE:** <br> **Done.** See attached *Annex 8_Staff training and support.* |
| 5.5. | The students are provided with a departmental email account, and the department need to ensure that communications are enforced through this email, which should be imposed as the official channel of email communication with the students. | Compliant |

| 5.6. | The School should consider a rigorous process of data collection in terms of reviewing the pipeline and year on year alumni of the students through the administrative office. | Compliant |
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| 5.7. | While the online courses include a good variety of multi-format learning materials (e-books, articles, videos, audio, etc.) which are good for distance learning, the EEC suggests that the recorded teleconferences and video lectures to be usable and accessible for students by making them short, include the teacher in all the videos to provide non-verbal communication, and add subtitles for accessibility. In addition, the EEC suggest that some considerations should be taken into account to the provision of entire volumes as basic materials in order to adapt them to online part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion. | Compliant |
| 5.8. | The EEC further recommends the School to deploy external visiting staff and guest speakers to enrich teaching and connect it with the industry. | Compliant |

| 7. Eligibility (Joint programmes) (ALL ESG) | | |
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| 7.1. | The EEC was not provided with any cooperation agreement. | Compliant |
| 7.2. | The partner universities have not applied for joint internal quality assurance processes. The joint programme is offered jointly, but the EEC has the impression from the online visit that the cooperating universities are not equally involved in the design, delivery, and further development of the programme.<br><br>**COMMENT FROM EEC:** The agreement should have clear involvement of both institutions in the design, supervision and development of the programme in accordance with the compatibility of the two institutions. | Partially Compliant<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**DONE.** See attached already endorsed feasibility and sustainability studies (*Annex 10*), which prove that both cooperating institutions have been equally involved in the design, delivery and further development of the programme. |
| 7.3. | There does not exist a joint syllabus and there was no risk assessment for the collaboration. Study counselling and mobility plans are not in place for the third trimester at the Hellenic University to consider the needs of different kinds of students.<br><br>**COMMENT FROM EEC:** Please see comment above: The agreement should have clear involvement of both institutions in the design, supervision and development of the programme in accordance with the compatibility of the two institutions | Partially Compliant<br><br>**NUP RESPONSE:**<br>**DONE.** Please see response in section 7.2. |

The present document adheres to the European Standards and Guidelines, in particular Standards 2.3 (Implementing Processes) and its guidelines, which provide that "*Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution*".

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