

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: *Date*

Απάντηση Ιδρύματος Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης

- **Ίδρυμα Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης:**
Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
- **Πόλη:** Λευκωσία
- **Πρόγραμμα σπουδών Επωνυμία(Διάρκεια, ECTS, Κύκλος Σπουδών) Msc, 3 semesters, graduate**

Στα Ελληνικά:

Μάστερ στα Συμπεριφορικά Οικονομικά

Στα Αγγλικά:

Masters in Behavioral Economics

- **Γλώσσα(ες) διδασκαλίας: Αγγλικά**
- **Καθεστώς Προγράμματος: Νέο**



Το παρόν έντυπο έχει ετοιμαστεί στο πλαίσιο των αρμοδιοτήτων του Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης, σύμφωνα με τις πρόνοιες των “περί της Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης και της Ίδρυσης και Λειτουργίας Φορέα για Συναφή Θέματα Νόμων” του 2015 έως του 2021 [N.136(I)/2015 – N.132(I)/2021].

A. Οδηγίες για το περιεχόμενο και τη δομή της έκθεσης

- Το Ίδρυμα Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης βασισμένο στην Έκθεση Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (ΕΕΑ) (Έντυπο.300.1.1) πρέπει να τεκμηριώσει κατά πόσον έχουν γίνει οι δέουσες ενέργειες για τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας του υπό αξιολόγηση προγράμματος σπουδών σε κάθε τομέα αξιολόγησης.
- Συγκεκριμένα, κάτω από κάθε ενότητα αξιολόγησης, το Ίδρυμα Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης, πρέπει να απαντήσει, χωρίς να αλλάξει τη δομή της έκθεσης, στα εξής:
 - Ευρήματα, δυνατά σημεία, σημεία που χρήζουν βελτίωσης και συστάσεις της ΕΕΑ
 - Αδυναμίες που καταγράφηκαν κάτω από τους ποιοτικούς δείκτες (κριτήρια)
 - Συμπεράσματα και καταληκτικά σχόλια της ΕΕΑ
- Η απάντηση του Ιδρύματος Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης θα πρέπει να βρίσκεται κάτω από τα αντίστοιχα σχόλια της ΕΕΑ, τα οποία θα πρέπει να αντιγράφονται από την Έκθεση Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (Έντυπο.300.1.1).
- Αν υπάρχουν παραρτήματα, αυτά θα πρέπει να επισυνάπτονται και να αποστέλλονται ως ξεχωριστά έγγραφα.

Please see responses to reviewer comments in bold underneath each comment.

1. Σχεδιασμός και ανάπτυξη του προγράμματος σπουδών (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Excellent documentation is provided by the University of Cyprus in terms of all areas identified for this category.

Strengths

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

Details of high standard for quality insurance. Excellent process in place for of all areas identified for this category.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

There should be more inputs from external experts (academic and, also, perhaps industry and government in the further development of this Master in Behaviour Economics.

Thank you for this recommendation. It is already the intention, and it will now be stressed to all faculty that visiting lecturers should be included in their classes to cover this connection to industry and policy. Furthermore, all students will be required to attend the public/open lectures by visiting faculty, industry and government experts with bonus points offered as part of their courses for their attendance. A list of collaborating speakers will be gradually built, who will provide such lectures, on an annual basis (to ensure consistency across cohorts) and who will be recognized for their contribution.

When the program is operationalized, it would be useful to have student inputs to improve the robustness of the programme.

This issue will be handled the same way as for our remaining graduate programs: Students will be asked to elect a small group of representatives (2-3), attending program committee meetings and offering feedback. They will be asked to also gather information from the students on required changes and modifications. Furthermore, like in all courses, anonymous student evaluations of teaching in the end of each semester will be studied carefully to assess the feedback from students.

2. Διδασκαλία, μάθηση και αξιολόγηση φοιτητών (ESG 1.3)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Excellent documentation is provided by the University of Cyprus in terms of all areas identified for this category. Much discussion here and many of the concerns or queries of the committee was well addressed.

Strengths

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

It is quite clear that this Master is well served by excellent researchers and that the courses will be research informed. Moreover, the mix of economics and psychology is unique and will benefit students. There is student input in terms of being engaged in the determination of projects and also in presenting their results. One should also point out that the academics are very well trained internationally and maintain active research relationships internationally. There are excellent lab facilities in economics and psychology pertinent to this Masters. Also, the fact that students devote one semester to write their theses under supervision is excellent from the perspective of ‘training’ and the student experience in a research-based Masters.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Students mentioned the importance of introducing internships even in a research-intensive degree. This should be considered.

Thank you for this suggestion, which was well-received. Indeed, our program allows for a variety of empirical thesis designs, including ones that are based on hands on experience. We will make clear to the students that the thesis can also take the form of a technical report, based on a problem tackled by the student-intern from a Behavioral Economics perspective, at a public authority or industry where they completed an internship. The specific conditions of each case will have to be approved by the program committee to ensure quality control, and to establish a formal collaboration with the setting, and all kinds of thesis will be evaluated using the same criteria of academic rigour and originality.

Consideration should also be given to the skill sets required to realize employment as behavioural economics. Also, students were not aware of the process that does exist to address problems which students might have with academics. Perhaps a better job can be done with making sure that students are well aware of this process.

The formal process, as described during the visit, is that students first speak with their academic advisor (member of the program committee) and if the problem is not resolved they can address the problem with one of the department chairs. Perhaps the students are not formally aware of the process, because it is self-evident given the small sizes of the departments and happens by default. However, we will make sure to provide a description of this process in the program description and to address it during orientation of incoming students.

Also, it would be useful for students to be made quite aware that behavioural economics is not the same thing as experimental economics and that they can use data from different sources of data to do their research project. Thought might also be given to a more blended approach to course delivery. However, some of this is already in place.

There are multiple other approaches in place. Faculty from both departments are well-versed in multiple methods. Courses from both departments will expose students to a wide-variety of these. For instance, in the courses from Psychology, students will have the ability to learn from experts’ methods that include qualitative



approaches, surveys and field studies, ecological momentary assessments etc. In courses from economics, students will learn how to use theoretical analysis, estimate structural models of behaviour using observational data, analyse field and survey data, design lab and field experiments, as well as randomized control trials (RCT's). We will ensure that the option to use these research methods is made clear in the program description.

One of the most important points that we believe should be addressed is the preparation of students to take the modules being offered given that these students originate from different disciplines. For example, psychology students are expected to take Econ courses and economics students are expected to take psychology courses. And, there might be students from other disciplines in the programme with no background in either economics or psychology. This would be less of a programme if the courses did not require pre-requisites. There should be a clear and explicit process (understood by applicants) of what is required of them to be successful in this Masters programme. This needs to be carefully thought through. One possibility would be basic core courses in econ for psychology students and basic core courses for economics students. Exemptions would be given for students with adequate backgrounds. Another point is that courses thought to all students (core courses) must be carefully designed so that they are not too difficult given the background of incoming students. One would not want to set-up the students to fail. We think that this programme has much potential and needs to be structured most appropriately to be a great success.

Thank you for stressing this point during the visit. We plan to take several measures in response. First, we plan to ensure that Introductory courses in both disciplines are offered during the summer term. These are regular introduction courses taken by beginning undergraduate students. They are offered during the summer term as open electives to all students. Students missing one or both of the respective backgrounds will be required to take one or two courses during the Summer term before they begin. This will be made explicit during the intake interview and in their offer letter. Second, faculty teaching first semester course in the Masters program will be requested to add introductory material to help orient students, and provide extra literature during the first 2 weeks of each course. Third, students during the first semester will also have the opportunity to sit in some undergraduate economics and psychology courses if needed to acquire some background knowledge. Last but not least, all first-semester core courses are designed to smooth out the heterogeneity across the two disciplines rather than

3. Διδακτικό Προσωπικό (ESG 1.5)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Once again excellent documentation is provided to demonstrate compliance, and questions were well answered.

Strengths

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

Excellent staff have been recruited, but not specifically for this programme. But this is a new programme. However, an expert in experimental economics, who is quite excellent is in place. Eventually, there could be another behaviouralist hired in economics and psychology.

We plan to lobby with the University for a faculty line specific to this course. Also, in future hires in any specialization, we will be mindful to give special consideration to applicants with expertise that fits this master's program.

Strong research support is also provided by the university at a high standard compared to other comparable universities. Also, there now strong efforts towards significant collaboration between economists and psychologists, especially that they now housed in the same building. It is also clear that there will be strong synergies between research and teaching as well as research being informed by international collaboration.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Students asked that teaching should also be more informed praxis (industry/government). This should be given some thought. Also, there is a very poor gender balance, especially in economics which should be credibly addressed over time.

All instructors plan to use problem-based learning approaches, and will enrich their courses with visiting lectures as described above. We are aware of the gender imbalance and we hope that we will have suitable candidates in future hires to help address the issue. As a first step, this topic will be discussed at the faculty meetings of both departments to ensure that the problem is noted and understood by everyone involved in future hires. We also intent to have this concern as an important criterion for the selection of instructors when they need to replace core faculty who will be on leave or unable to teach the required courses.

4. Φοιτητές

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on University. The findings from the onsite visit.

Once again, excellent documentation is provided and panel members' questions were well-addressed such to support confirmation in all areas.

Strengths

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

The University and the programme is compliant consistent with other comparable universities and programme—all good practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

We don't any gaps in this area.

Thank you for the positive evaluation.

5. Πόροι (ESG 1.6)

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Given covid constraints and no on site visit the information provided was very good (better video of facilities would have been useful). This info supports the determination of compliance in all areas.

Strengths

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

Library resources and of a very high standing easily matching that of comparable universities or even above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Does not appear to be any given our Cloud visit.

Thank you for the positive evaluation.



6. Επιπρόσθετα στοιχεία για τα εξ αποστάσεως προγράμματα (Όλα τα ESG)

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7. Επιπρόσθετα στοιχεία για τα διδακτορικά προγράμματα (Όλα τα ESG)

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8. Επιπρόσθετα στοιχεία για τα διαπανεπιστημιακά προγράμματα (Όλα τα ESG)

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Β. Συμπεράσματα και καταληκτικά σχόλια

Overall, this is an excellent proposal with strong support from the University and from the Departments of Economics and Psychology.

Areas of improvements are elaborated in detail above.

Below is a summary of key recommendations.

1. Our biggest concern is that a clear process needs to be implemented so that students from different disciplines have the capabilities to succeed. We are concerned that students will not have such capabilities upon entry. Also, the courses must be structured such that the level of difficulty will not exceed the capabilities of students.
2. Students must be made aware of the process to address problems/issues that they might have with academics. This information should be easily accessible to students.
3. Consideration should be given to the introduction of internships and, also, to projects that combine both high levels of research and praxis.
4. Depending on the success of the programme, consideration should be given to hiring additional specialists in 'behavioural economics' in economics and in psychology.
5. A protocol should be introduced to address the gender imbalance, especially in economics.
6. Students should be aware that behavioural economics makes use of a wide array of data. Experimental economics (decision-making experiments) provides only one such source. Also, there are different types of experiments, not all falling within the parameters on the Vernon Smith methodological approach.
7. There should be more external inputs into further programme development, both from academia and from the community of practice.
8. When the programme is operationalized student input should be operationalized as one important pillar of programme development.

Thank you very much for summarizing your points. See responses to each specific comment in the corresponding sections above.

Γ. Ακαδημαϊκοί εκπρόσωποι Ιδρύματος Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης

Όνομα	Θέση	Υπογραφή
Όνοματεπώνυμο	Θέση	
Δημήτριος Ξεφτέρης	Αναπληρωτής Καθηγητής – Επιτροπή Προγράμματος Μάστερ	
Γεωργία Παναγιώτου	Καθηγήτρια – Επιτροπή Προγράμματος Μάστερ	
Όνοματεπώνυμο	Θέση	
Όνοματεπώνυμο	Θέση	
Όνοματεπώνυμο	Θέση	

Ημερομηνία: 08/03/22

