

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 8/12/2023

## Higher Education Institution's Response

- Higher Education Institution: Cyprus University of Technology
- Town: Limassol
- Programme of study Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

**In Greek:**

Πτυχίο στα Ναυτιλιακά

**In English:**

BSc in Shipping

- Language(s) of instruction: Greek
- Programme's status: New
- Concentrations (if any):

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



**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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
<p>The programme offers four elective courses (excluding the dissertation, however, one of them seems to be compulsory due to lack of alternative choice in the particular semester.</p>	<p>The Department is aware of this issue and new elective courses are currently under design. The Department decided to offer more electives in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester, which currently has only one (Data Analytics for Shipping, SHP475). New electives have been designed and will be included in the curriculum (not only for this specific semester).</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Any new programmes or changes to existing programs have to go through an internal process and they are subject to approval. Good practice recommendations can then be tailored to the programme as per necessary. However, we were not provided with a specific policy regarding protocols for research and data collection management.</p>	<p>The pertinent University policy on “Compliance mechanisms with International research ethics” (please see page 141 of the Departmental application) covers these issues. However, the Department of Shipping took the decision to officially adopt specific procedures and granted the responsibility to the newly established Research Ethics Committee to act as the reference point for these issues. For further details and the role of this Committee, please refer below (Establishment of Research Ethics Committee) and on page 3 of the Departmental evaluation response.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>When one considers the structure of the programme against the number of instructors involved in the delivery, it is easy to notice that there</p>	<p>The Department fully supports the view of the EEC. Indeed, the specified numbers reflect the current (as of today) situation of the Department. Additionally, four positions are currently under a recruitment process. For details, please refer to page 19 as regards the current status for each position.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>is an imbalance due to lack of sufficient number of faculty, especially in the ratio with students.</p>		
<p>The EEC was provided with past exam papers, containing only the questions and from which no feedback was discerned. Therefore, the EEC cannot make comments about the possible feedback to students.</p>	<p>Some past exams papers were provided to the members of the EEC as requested. Student feedback for mid-term exams is provided in class or at the student request individually by appointment with the relevant member of staff. Final exam feedback is provided individually by members of staff. In addition, the Council of the Department in its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December decided the following: To request all instructors to develop a rubric to include expectations, marking descriptors and marking scheme for all exams and assignments and for those to be shared with students at the beginning of each semester together with the course description.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Evidence of the effectiveness of the information collected from final feedback questionnaires from students in terms of specific measures for improvement and action plans taken by the University, need to be seen, when implemented.</p>	<p>The Council of the Department in its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December decided to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign the Student Feedback Questionnaires (SFQ) review and recommendation to be dealt by the Internal Quality Committee.</li> <li>• The Committee to examine the results of the SFQs at the end of each semester.</li> <li>• For results that indicate mediocre or sub-standard performance (i.e. score equal or less than 3/5) to be referred to the Department Chair</li> <li>• For the Department Chair to discuss with the instructor the results and require submission of written action plan for addressing the comments and action plan for improvement.</li> <li>• To inform the University Studies, Student's Life and Library Committee of the urgent need to upgrade the content of the questionnaire to include open ended questions in order to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of student's feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><b>Policy for plagiarism:</b> The relevant text in the submitted application was reviewed and while there is a policy in place on how an assessor can detect what amounts to plagiarism, there are no specific rules in ascertaining the</p>	<p>The Department takes all the necessary measures and fully adopts the procedures and guidelines as set by the University "Policy and process of preventing and dealing with plagiarism" for identifying and preventing plagiarism, which is considered a serious misconduct. Specifically, plagiarism is considered, by the University, to be a very serious case of misconduct, hence all students are made aware of the University's policy and receive training in order to avoid it. For more details, and the actions taken by the Department as regards this issue, please see page 10 of the Departmental Response on the evaluation report.</p>	

<p>type and gravity of an act of plagiarism and how it will be sanctioned (i.e. the percentage of mark deduction according to the committed act). The same should be introduced in the Student Handbook.</p>		
<p>Establishment of Research Ethics Committee</p>	<p>The Department in its 14<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 established the Departmental Research Ethics Committee comprised by the three (at the time) Faculty members. Coordinator of this Committee is Dr Thalys Zis. The role of this Committee is to act as the reference point for the students who engage in research and need to collect data (personal or other) via questionnaires for the needs of their studies, assignments and projects. The Committee has the mandate to examine and evaluate the proposals/ applications submitted by the students for that purpose and provide recommendations, guidance and rectifying actions in case this is warranted before approving the data collection method and all the following actions with this data. Furthermore, the Committee must ensure that any collection of microdata, analysis and research is conducted according to and fully compliant with the rules and protocols set by the CUT's Research Ethics Committee, including the management, storage and destruction of data collected after the completion of research. The role and terms of references for the Departmental Research Ethics Committee and the pertinent procedures and protocols will be clearly reflected in the students' handbook.</p> <p>The CUT Ethics Committee was established in 2014 and has an advisory and monitoring role to the research staff of the Cyprus University of Technology.</p> <p>The Ethics Committee consists of nine (9) Members of Academic and Administrative Staff, representing all the Faculties/Departments of the University.</p> <p>The pertinent legally competent research Committee is the National BioEthics Committee of Cyprus:  <a href="http://www.bioethics.gov.cy/moh/cnbc/cnbc.nsf/dmlrec_en/dmlrec_en?OpenDocument">http://www.bioethics.gov.cy/moh/cnbc/cnbc.nsf/dmlrec_en/dmlrec_en?OpenDocument</a></p> <p>The "Code of Practice" was adopted by CUT in 2016 and includes provisions regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The regulation of the freedom and independence of researchers for conducting their research,</li> <li>2. Resolution in cases of conflict of interest, personal responsibility and accountability,</li> <li>3. Responsible processing and management of personal data and</li> <li>4. The protection of intellectual property.</li> </ol>	

	<p>In cases where there is a need to examine ethical matters in research, involving humans or animals and personal data, it is possible to submit a request to the National Bioethics Committee, or the Personal Data Officer of the CUT, (and if necessary, the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection), for guidelines on the procedures to be followed.</p> <p>The CUT Ethics Committee is responsible for the compliance of the CUT’s research policy/practices with international research ethics practices, using the following practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of a research information document by postgraduate students and academic research staff</li> <li>• Evaluation of electronically submitted applications by the Ethics Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Please refer to page 141 of the Depart. Evaluation for further details.</p>	
<p>Appeal process</p>	<p>Please refer to our response in the Departmental evaluation for the detailed procedure which was approved by the Council of the Department in its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 8 December 2023 (page 11).</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
From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if formative assessment provides feedback based on rubrics and whether these rubrics (i.e. marking descriptors) are shared with students.	Please refer to our response in the Departmental evaluation for the detailed procedure which was approved by the Council of the Department in its 14 <sup>th</sup> meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023.	Choose an item.
The University, as per the students input, should increase field study trips (e.g. visit to vessels and port facilities), which will enhance the learning experience at undergraduate level.	The Council of the Department in its 14 <sup>th</sup> meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023, decided to officially organize at the minimum two educational trips, which is also a current practice.  This will be communicated to the students and will be included in the Students' Handbook.	Choose an item.
The allocated weight (e.g. final exam) of the assessment forms should be standardized for reasons of consistency, which is desirable at undergraduate level.	The Department adopts the recommendation/announcement <sup>1</sup> of the CYQAA for maximum 50% of the final exam, dated 15 November 2023 ( <i>Αξιολόγηση Φοιτητών/Φοιτητριών – Κριτήρια, Μεθοδολογία, Μαθησιακά Αποτελέσματα</i> ). The weights allocation for each type of assessment to be included in the course description that is communicated to the students at the beginning of each semester.	Choose an item.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/el/nea-ekdiloseis/anakoinoseis-el/733-15-11-2023-axiologisi-foititon-foititron>

Για τα προγράμματα σπουδών επιπέδου πτυχίου είναι, κατά κανόνα, απαραίτητη η διεξαγωγή τελικής γραπτής εξέτασης η οποία έχει βαρύτητα 30% - 50% του τελικού βαθμού.



### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Based on the discussion with the faculty and research students, it seems that the current research resources are sufficient but we would recommend that, when the new room is fully functional, expansion of the resources is pursued for specialized research in shipping. This would also strengthen the delivery of the various modules (e.g. data analytics in shipping).	We fully agree with the recommendation and we do envision that the new room at the library will play a pivotal role in strengthening the delivery of our more quantitative and/or software-based modules. In addition, we consistently evaluate new software systems and databases to enhance the student's learning experience. One such database resource under examination currently is Perlego.	Choose an item.
Certain training courses on the improvement of the conventional programmes should be offered to all faculty and that should form an element in their promotion track	As a good practice the Department of Shipping encourages the Faculty to seek and attend relevant training courses and the Department has committed to fund such courses for all its Faculty members.	Choose an item.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>While the University will gather all the above mentioned data, effective use of it, in terms of specific measures for improvement, should be ensured. Despite the positive function of the admission board a policy with criteria according to which the board selects students should be in place as a matter of good practice.</p>	<p>For undergraduate programs of study the selection criteria is based on the results of the students in the Pancyprian exams.</p> <p>The Department of Shipping requires for this program (BSc Shipping) students to enter via the scientific domain number 22 (which includes advanced mathematics). Historically, the trend shows that students admitted in the shipping direction (as per statistics for admission of the Department of Commerce, Finance and Shipping) scored high, having an average score of 17,35.</p> <p>The Department's Council in its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> December decided to develop policy guidelines for the admission board. The guidelines will include the formal consultation and evaluation of the admission scores and trends every year and, in addition, the dissemination of the information to other bodies with relevant responsibility in its effort to continuously improve the standards of applicants and students admitted into the programme.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>From the discussion with the students, it seems that the final questionnaires should be more meticulously prepared, as in some cases data infelicities appeared (e.g. the name of the instructor remained the same, when the course was delivered by another person).</p>	<p>The Council of the Department in its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December took the decision to inform the University Studies, student's life and Library Committee of the urgent need to upgrade the content of the questionnaire to include open ended questions in order to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of student's feedback, as well as the process for collecting and corrections of specific fields in the feedback questionnaire.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>There was a comment to the effect that the course notes should be updated in terms of statistics and diagrams to reflect the current developments.</p>	<p>The Council of the Department in its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December took the decision to request all the instructors to take on board the recommendations of the EEC and update accordingly the courses notes with more visualized means.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
The Student Handbook should make clear distinction in the activities included in an ECTS pertaining to the conventional as opposed to the distance learning LLM, because they encompass different activities.	The Department decided to include in the student Handbook information that clearly distinguishes the activities between online and conventional programs of study.	Choose an item.
The University is encouraged to organise meetings on a term basis between teaching faculty of the programme and representatives of the class, where the latter can express any issues of concern for the whole class as well as recommendations for the improvement of the learning experience.	The Department in its 14 <sup>th</sup> meeting on the 8 <sup>th</sup> of December 2023 decided to formally organize two meetings per semester with students' representatives to discuss pertinent issues. This will continue until the Department becomes autonomous when students' representatives will participate in the Department's official Council meetings (with one representative).	Choose an item.
The syllabus per course should ideally include recommended study time for the proposed activities.	The recommended study time for the proposed activities will be clearly reflected in each course description.	Choose an item.
The EEC recommends the University to reconsider the number of hours for learning activities per 1 ECTS, as the current number of 28 seems to be high for undergraduate studies. The breakup should be lucidly reflected in the subject delivery plan and in the programme handbook.	In the General Rules of Studies, both for undergraduate and postgraduate programs, adopted by the University, it is stated that the number of total hours for learning activities per 1 ECTS, is 25-30 hours. The University adopts the provisions of the 1999 Bologna Declaration. It is noted that the 28 hours for total learning activities include teaching, lectures, tutorials, preparation for midterm and final exams, individual study, quizzes, individual and group projects, assignments and presentations.	Choose an item.



## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	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
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C.



#### D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Dr Photis Panayides</b>	Professor	
<b>Dr Thalys Zis</b>	Assistant Professor	
<b>Dr Christoforos Andreou</b>	Lecturer	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

**Date:** 11 December 2023

