

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Μηχανική Πετρελαίου και Φυσικού Αερίου (4 Έτη,
240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BSc))

In English:

Oil and Gas Engineering (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor
of Science (BSc))

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek:

In English:

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)

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their positive comments regarding the BSc study programme, design and development. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>For the Bachelor level courses, care should be taken, that the course description reflects the actual course content. Care should also be taken that introductory courses are compulsory, when more advanced courses are compulsory (focus: geology).</p>	<p>We have carefully checked one by one all course descriptions and we ensure that they reflect the actual content. Furthermore, we have in place, where applicable, prerequisite courses to ensure the students can follow the level of difficulty from introductory to advance courses. (e.g. Physical Geology followed by Petroleum Geology etc)</p>	
<p>The absence of mandatory fundamental courses such as thermodynamics and heat and mass transfer in the curriculum raises concerns regarding the comprehensiveness of engineering education. These fundamental subjects provide crucial knowledge and skills necessary for understanding energy transfer, system behavior, and designing efficient systems. Omitting these courses could result in graduates lacking proficiency in these key areas and hinder their ability to tackle real-world engineering challenges.</p>	<p>We have fully adopted the suggestion of the EEC. The courses MENG-260 Thermodynamics (6 ECTS) and MENG-290 Heat and Mass Transfer (6 ECTS) are now required (major) courses. As a result of this, the number of ECTS of Section A: Major Requirements is increased from 134 to 146. (Annex 1A Program Pathway B1 Recommended Semester Breakdown),</p> <p>In order to fill the gap and further enrich the Engineering Electives courses (section C in the program pathway), we have included the following two courses: OGEE-436 Finite Element Analysis (6 ECTS), and OGEE-466 Environmental Impact Assessment (6 ECTS). Also, we have included from the Mechanical Engineering program the course MENG-486 Alternative Energy Systems (6 ECTS). (Annex 1A & 1B)</p>	

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

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their comment on the student’s centred learning, teaching and assessment. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>External examiners for grading of students in order to ensure good and international level of graduates and of teaching.</p>	<p>At the University of Nicosia we follow a different system were not external examiners are assigned for examinations. As explained during the visit, the Department has established a quality assurance committee that is responsible for reviewing the final exams. Furthermore, we have established an Internal Program Evaluation Process where a number of externals reviewers from academia and industry evaluate the programme and all the procedures followed as well as the quality of examinations.</p> <p>According to the university regulations, there is currently no provision for external examiners as stated by the ECC. Therefore, an allocated budget is not currently in place for the suggested procedure of the utilization of external examiners.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the Department of Engineering is willing to adopt such a process if the university regulations change. The Dean of our School will bring the issue to the University Senate and Council. Until the materialization of this policy, we believe that the Quality Assurance Committee of the Department of Engineering, as discussed during the EEC visit, has well established procedures, which can ensure to a great extend the quality of the assessment methodology as well as the consistency across the various courses offered in the Department.</p>	

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their comments regarding the teaching staff. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The link to an electronic class, showed a not so optimally executed lecture. More pedagogical education of teaching staff is recommended.</p>	<p>The University adopted the suggestions from CYQAA and regularly offers faculty training leading to the award of the Faculty Professional Development Certificate. All faculty members (both FT & PT) are required to attend this training. This training, leading to a certificate, includes 12-week 36-hour seminars offered by the Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU) and the eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit (e -PSU) in collaboration with the School of Education and the Technology Enhanced Learning Centre. The structure and topics of this training may be found here:</p> <p>https://www.unic.ac.cy/psu/training-and-development-for-faculty/</p> <p>Furthermore, there is an internal knowledge base with prerecorded tutorial videos for all the teaching tools that are provided by the university. All faculty members, including newly hired and part-time lecturers have access to this material for receiving appropriate training.</p>	
<p>A teaching staff more diverse with respect to ethnicity and gender would make it easier for all students to identify with role models.</p>	<p>The University has a clear policy for ethnicity and gender equality. For all new positions either for full- or part-time teaching, applicants of different ethnicity and gender are encouraged to apply.</p> <p>However, the Department of Engineering is willing to revise its policy by following specific practices in all future faculty recruitment calls in order to improve diversity, gender and</p>	

	<p>nationality among the permanent staff. Few of these steps include:</p> <p>(a) Add a footnote with the following: <i>“The University adopts an equal opportunity policy at recruitment and encourages both genders to apply for all levels of Academic and Administrative Staff. The University does not discriminate in any way based on gender, religion or belief, ethnicity, national or social origin, age, physical ability, marital status, or sexual orientation.”</i></p> <p>(b) Explicitly announce in international venues such as academic sites, conferences, research communities, as well as female-oriented communities such as Society of Women Engineers (SWE).</p> <p>(c) Include in search committees for full- and part-time lecturers a female member. The member can be from a related field either from another department of the university (if such faculty member exists)</p>	
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their comment regarding students' admission, progression, recognition and certification. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
A strategy for attracting female students could be considered.	<p>In order to address this suggestion, first we will have to ask for budget allocation from the Department of Engineering, following approvals from the School of Sciences and Engineering and by the University Senate and Council.</p> <p>Our proposal will be for three (3) scholarships explicitly for female applicants for each admission period. Having in mind that the BSc in Oil and Gas Engineering program accepts applications in both Fall and Spring semesters this sums up to a total of six (6) scholarships for BSc studies annually to be granted explicitly to female applicants.</p>	

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their comment regarding the learning resources and student support. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>International norms with respect to laboratory safety should be adhered to.</p>	<p>We have reconsidered and updated our current Laboratory Health and Safety regulations manual to adhere with international norms.</p> <p>In order to address the EEC's recommendation:</p> <p>Safety Manual (Annex 2) will be provided to all students in their first laboratory course followed by the equipment induction.</p> <p>(b) In consultation with the university's Health and Safety Officer, we have added all required signs to our Oil and Gas Engineering laboratories. (Annex 3)</p> <p>(c) We have removed any incompatible equipment from the laboratories (e.g. microwave oven & coffee machine). (Annex 3)</p> <p>(d) We have created storage located outside the building for safety reasons for all materials and expendables. (Annex 3)</p>	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)




Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY

B. Conclusions and final remarks

We would like to thank the members of the ECC for their overall comments on the assessment of the BSc programme in oil and gas Engineering. Please see below for point-to-point response.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Teaching staff appears well educated and well selected, although with low diversity with respect to gender and ethnicity.	Please see response in section 3.	
It is a concern that teaching load is high and could counteract up to date research-based instruction.	<p>The Department of Engineering will adopt the following strategy for reducing the teaching load at the BSc in Oil and Gas program.</p> <p>(a) Reduce the teaching load of the faculty members (with the limit of the minimum teaching hours required by their contracts and the collective agreement in force) by keeping open calls around the year for part-time lecturers holding a PhD to assist in both teaching and research.</p> <p>(b) Take advantage of the recently established university policy for paid Teaching Assistantships by PhD candidates.</p>	
A program of sabbaticals could provide more focused research time and facilitate international collaboration.	The University already has in place a well-established procedure for sabbaticals in order to help faculty members with research time and international collaborations.	
Safety instructions are given in the laboratories, but a stricter adherence to international space and safety norms is recommended.	Please see response in section 5.	

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
George Gregoriou	Dean, School of Sciences and Engineering	
Stelios Neophytou	Head, Department of Engineering	
Ernestos Sarris	Coordinator, BSc in Oil and Gas Engineering program	

Date: 21/09/2023