

Doc. Number: 300.1.1

Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education

Republic of Cyprus

External Evaluation Report Program of Study

Institution: Neapolis University Pafos

**Program of Study: Postgraduate Master in Science (MSc)
Program in Environmental Impacts Assessment and
Sustainability Management (in short EIASM)**

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INSTRUCTIONS:

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 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015].

The document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	Professor	Mälardalen University
Michalis Angelidis	Professor	University of the Aegean
Tryfon Daras	Assistant Professor	Technical University of Crete
Irena Kyprianidou	Student	University of Cyprus

INTRODUCTION:

I. The External Evaluation procedure

The application for evaluation/accreditation was provided to the committee members in hard copy. During the site visit powerpoint presentations were delivered by the faculty of Neapolis University Pafos, followed by extensive discussions with the university leadership, faculty and random undergraduate students. The committee also visited the library and computer facilities and discussed with administrative staff. Some material was also provided to the committee after the Site Visit through the representative of DI.P.A.E.

II. The Internal Evaluation procedure

The application was of good quality and completeness albeit not fully prepared with the specific evaluation criteria in mind. Some elements were not covered in the application e.g., research, viability and resourcing. The evaluation committee used some complementary information provided during and post the Site Visit through the representative of DI.P.A.E.

The internal evaluation report prepared by the University did not raise any specific weaknesses or points of further improvements for the program. From a quality assurance point of view, this casts a shadow on the institution's capacity for practicing reflection and continuously improving its educational and research activities and practices.

It should be noted that in most instances there were no justifications/descriptions in the internal evaluation report. This to some extent reflects the overall approach to quality assurance at the University, which seems to be present at the institution level, in accordance with national laws and guidelines, but less evident at the program level. Any judgment by the committee on quality assurance specific to the program is thus reserved until such procedures are fully defined, in place and/or implemented during the first year of implementation of such a program.

FINDINGS:

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

1.1.1 The specific admission requirements set are adequate. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the program, it is suggested that for students admitted with a less strong background on GIS and pollutant dispersion are offered some complementary tutorials etc as needed.

1.1.2 The class is expected to be limited to maximum of 30 students which is adequate.

1.1.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Some of the implementation material (teaching supplements, procedures, web pages) is not ready yet. There is some reasonable expectation that part of the expected material/procedures will be ready once the program starts. For coming academic years it would need to be finalized and “spiked” 9 months before the start of the academic year.

1.1.3.1 International best practices suggest this to be ready 9 months in advance – not 4 months as set in the proposal.

1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.1.11 Such processes have not been tested yet as the program has not begun. A reasonable expectation of moderate effectiveness is present.

1.1.10 and 1.1.12 During the Site Visit, based on informal discussions held with random undergraduate students it emerged that there is a friendly attitude by the faculty for dispute resolution. However, according to the information provided no specific mechanism is in place for the program at hand. We recommend that formal processes are developed and implemented in the program.

Additional notes:

The external evaluation committee cannot determine a realistic expected number of students, and country of origin. The Neapolis University Pafos has made some suggestions in their respective proposal and internal evaluation form. International best practices suggest 30 as the maximum planned number of students per class.

1.2.1 Slides, supplementary material, assignments and a written examination are suitable but do not constitute alone an excellent solution. This particularly considering that the on-site elements (lectures/tutorials) are limited to 3hr per 2-week period, whereas the expected standard for 7.5 ECTS would be 8hrs per 2-week period. Therefore, a hybrid approach - comprising traditional lecture-room based approaches as well as elements of distance learning - is expected in order to justify the expected effort of 25hrs per 1 ECTS. We would

encourage faculty to check such complementary methods to enhance student learning.

1.2.2 The approach presented (and lecture timing) is a suitable practice for adults who are in full-time regular employment.

1.2.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Based on intention alone moderate performance is expected.

1.2.4 It is reasonably clear in the present program proposal and discussions held during the Site Visit. A general 40% assignment and 60% written exam is suggested in the course plans (occasionally 50%-50% or alternative approaches are utilised).

1.2.5 Based on information received during the Site Visit, specific activities are planned for enhancing active participation of students in the educational process. Taking into consideration the positive attitude of faculty on such activities, the committee encourages them to further develop their capacity through appropriate training in modern practices in Higher education and learning. For example how about flip classroom activities, to involve the students in the learning process through the concept of “learning by doing” etc.?

1.2.6 A commonly used electronic platform is present.

1.2.7 The expected teaching material appears to be appropriate and should be updated regularly.

1.3.1 The full-time personnel presented in the application has appropriate background to support the program of study.

1.3.2 The teaching personnel presented in the application has appropriate background to support the program of study. The staff have publications not only in peer-reviewed journals but have also prepared professional technical reports and opinions on topics relevant to the program of study.

1.3.3 No Visiting Professors seem to be supporting the program of study.

1.3.4 The Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have adequate work experience and qualifications to teach their respective courses.

1.3.5 According to the application, 4 out of 7 faculty are Special Teaching Personnel and/or Special Scientists which will cover 5 out of 9 of the classes to be taught (excl. dissertation).

1.3.6 According to the application, 6 out of 7 faculty hold a doctorate degree.

1.3.7 The teaching team seems to be motivated and in good collaboration with one another which can be perceived positively. However it must be noted that the ratio of full-time to part-time/external personnel (and their associated part in the teaching efforts) raises some concern and should be addressed as part of the short to mid-term planning of the program.

1.3.8 The ratio of 7 faculty for 30 (prospective) students and based on the additional budget provided this seems adequate.

1.3.9 The teaching and administrative load of some the involved faculty seems very high and does not provide opportunities for pursuing research.

1.3.10 No planning presented.

1.3.11 The program coordinator as suggested in the application (Prof Solon Xenopoulos) is the Dean of School, which suggests that administrative experience is present. However, the committee cannot further comment on whether he will efficiently coordinate the specific program of study based on the documents available (his CV was not included in the application).

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

2.1.1 This has been addressed in an adequate manner.

2.1.2 The learning outcomes are used as a guide of the design of the program of study.

2.1.3 The committee reserves judgment on this aspect as the relevant legislative framework is still under development.

2.1.4 The teaching material was not available during the Site Visit to be assessed. Whilst the committee does not raise concerns pertaining to the faculty capacity to produce the required teaching material, it must be noted that its preparation will require considerable time. The program content and methods of assessment were found adequate during the Site Visit.

2.1.5 Provided through the university on-line platforms.

2.1.6 The process presented in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was adequate.

2.1.7 Reasonable correspondence between the qualification awarded and the learning outcomes of the program was found.

2.2.1, 2.2.2 These are covered in a good manner.

2.2.3 The program progression is adequate. Depending on the admissions requirements a number of “bridge” elective courses/seminars might be appropriate in order to facilitate incoming students (such as Introduction to GIS, Introduction to Ecology, Introduction to Mathematical Modelling etc.)

2.2.4 See response to question 2.1.7 (same question in principle)

2.2.5 A number of “bridge” elective courses/seminars are suggested to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements. See response to question 2.2.3

2.2.6 The technical content of courses is appropriate.

2.2.7 The overarching learning outcomes of the program are consistent and sufficient.

2.2.8 Although the link to research is relatively weak, the link to current state of practice is appropriate.

2.2.9 Course lectures are planned to be held Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon taking into consideration the needs of those students in full-time employment.

2.3.1 According to information provided during the Site Visit, the university has an overarching quality assurance structure that seems to follow the national law/guidelines. A quality assurance implementation specific to the program was not presented.

2.3.2 This is in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.3 This may be in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.4 The quality assurance process seems to follow at university level the national law and European guidelines. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level. It was not possible for the committee to determine if there are restrictions set by non-academic factors.

2.4.1 Based on the quality assurance process, it is likely that some continuous improvement of the program will take place. A definitive process for the program was not discussed during the Site Visit. We expect that relevant processes will be implemented successfully.

2.4.2 A specific process to ensure learning outcomes are achieved was not presented. It is expected that this will be part of the program coordinator's operative role.

2.4.3 Please see response to question 2.3.4

2.4.4 The academic hierarchy of the institution seems appropriate.

2.4.5, 2.4.6 This seems to be in line, according to information provided during the Site Visit.

2.4.7 This seems to be within reasonable standards.

2.4.8 The committee found this question as non-applicable.

2.5.1 Not applicable. This program is neither the result of an international collaboration at the institution level, nor has it entered the stage of implementation.

2.5.2 At the moment there are no international visiting professors supporting this program.

2.5.3 Whilst the opportunity exists since the university has a student exchange office, this cannot be assessed since the program has not entered the implementation stage.

2.5.4 Based on the information provided the academic profile of the program is compatible with corresponding programs of study internationally. However the committee reserves judgment until the follow-up evaluation after the full implementation of the program.

2.6.1 The teaching procedures applied in the program (analysis of real-life case studies) have an adequate and effective relationship with professional activities.

2.6.2 A detailed labor market survey and consultation with private and public sector was not conducted. However, the program profile is in-line with generally perceived current market and societal needs which suggests a satisfactory employability of graduates.

2.6.3 The training of professionals to carry out environmental impact studies is positive from a societal needs point of view.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

3.1.1 Most of the academic staff have an adequate research background, and some an active professional activity. However, this is a professional program and most of the teaching staff have an adequate professional experience on this subject.

3.1.2 There is no evidence suggesting that new research results could be incorporated in the program of study.

3.1.3 There is no explicit research component described in the program, particularly considering the professional character of the program. Therefore the discussion on adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment is not applicable here.

3.1.4 There is some ongoing research by the academic personnel, which is published in international journals and conferences.

3.1.5 External non-governmental research funding is limited and cannot be compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

3.1.6, 3.1.7 No evidence or clear policy was provided of internal faculty funding being made available for the academic personnel at the University to carry out research specific to the subject-matter of the program.

3.1.8 The participation is limited and cannot be considered satisfactory.

3.1.9 According to the information provided the participation of students in potential research activities (thesis) is very limited and the focus is set on professional skills.

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

4.1.1 There are some supportive administrative mechanisms present. Results of effectiveness of these mechanisms were not provided (satisfaction surveys) but based on informal discussions with random students it seems that personal issues are addressed adequately.

4.1.2, 4.1.3 No specific information was provided to the committee in relation to such mechanisms. This should be reviewed and addressed by university management in view of the expected future increase of the student population.

4.2.1 There is relevant material provided for each course.

4.2.2 There is an appropriate internal communication platform being used.

4.2.3 The facilities are appropriate.

4.2.4 The equipment used is appropriate (GIS laboratory).

4.2.5 The material is appropriate.

4.2.6 The committee sees no cause of concern since material discussed was up to date. However we reserve final judgment on this until the program has entered its implementation phase.

4.2.7 No training opportunities seem to be provided by the University in accordance with the oral information provided during the Site Visit. The committee strongly encourages the university to develop such opportunities and all faculty to take advantage of these; in particular not limited to the use of specific tools, but on the pedagogy of higher education and learning.

4.3.1 According to the financial projections provided after the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are reasonably adequate for the running of the program. The committee suggests that the university reviews its policy regarding the development of academic/teaching personnel in accordance with internationally accepted practices.

4.3.2 The required process is present with regard to the allocation of financial resources.

4.3.3 According to the financial information provided after the Site Visit the remuneration of academic personnel appears relatively low (1.42 FTE = 16 427Euro).

4.3.4 The suggested tuition fees level of 6000 Euro is considered up to par with current practice.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

NOT APPLICABLE

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

NOT APPLICABLE

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE¹

Overall and in light of the information provided in advance, during and after the Site Visit, the committee considers the program feasible. This is on the understanding that the academic/teaching team and university leadership work actively on addressing the issues highlighted within the external evaluation report.

Some key suggestions for improvement are presented below. Additional comments on weaknesses of the program are presented in the main body of the report, including further suggestions for improvement.

1. In the case that the board approves the program all teaching material must be produced in a timely manner and before the start of the academic year, in order to ensure adequate quality in the teaching process.
2. The teaching load of some of the personnel should be reconsidered in order to avoid overloading and to provide development opportunities in accordance with international practices in academic institutions. Furthermore, a transparent policy for internal faculty funding should be developed to enable academic personnel at the University to develop relevant research activities.
3. A transparent and efficient procedure for dispute resolution should be developed and implemented at program level.
4. The ratio of full-time to part-time/external personnel (and their associated part in the teaching efforts) raises some concern and should be addressed as part of the short to mid-term planning of the program. The committee finds that if the program is to be implemented the university should increase the number of permanent full-time Teaching Research Personnel by one.
5. The committee strongly encourages the university leadership to further develop staff capacity through appropriate training in modern practices in Higher education and learning.
6. A number of “bridge” elective courses/seminars are suggested to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements i.e., facilitate incoming student integration (such as Introduction to GIS, Introduction to Ecology, Introduction to Mathematical Modelling etc.)
7. The overarching quality assurance process at university level seems to follow the national law and European guidelines. Should the program be

¹ It is highlighted, at this point, that the External Evaluation Committee is expected to justify its findings and its suggestions on the basis of the Document num.: 300.1. The External Evaluation Committee is not expected to submit a suggestion for the approval or the rejection of the program of study under evaluation. This decision falls under the competencies of the Council of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of higher education.

approved the committee expects that such a process will also be implemented at program level.

Doc. Number: 300.1

Quality Standards and Indicators
External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution:
Program of Study:
Duration of the Program of Study:
Evaluation Date:.....

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The document describes the quality standards and indicators, which will be applied for the external evaluation of programs of study of institutions of higher education, by the External Evaluation Committee.

DIRECTIONS: Note what is applicable for each quality standard/indicator.

1. Applicable to a minimum degree
2. Applicable to a non satisfactory degree

3. Applicable to a satisfactory degree
4. Applicable to a very satisfactory degree
5. It applies and it constitutes a good practice

It is pointed out that, in the case of standards and indicators that cannot be applied due to the status of the institution and/or of the program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the institution's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality standard or indicator.

Members of the External Evaluation Committee

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	Professor	Mälardalen University
Michalis Angelidis	Professor	University of the Aegean
Tryfon Daras	Assistant Professor	Technical University of Crete
Irena Kyprianidou	Student	University of Cyprus

Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: 24 May 2017

Duration of the On-Site Visit: 9.30 – 18.00

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES						
1.1	Organization of teaching work	1	2	3	4	5
1.1.1	The student admission requirements to the program of study, are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.			+		
1.1.2	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.			+		
1.1.3	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:					
	1.1.3.1 The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.		+			
	1.1.3.2 The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel			+		
	1.1.3.3 The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material			+		
	1.1.3.4 The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training			+		
	1.1.3.5 The procedures for the conduct and the format			+		

		of the examinations and for student assessment					
	1.1.3.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process.	N/A				
1.1.4	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:						
	1.1.4.1	facilities			+		
	1.1.4.2	library			+		
	1.1.4.3	infrastructure			+		
	1.1.4.4	student welfare			+		
	1.1.4.5	academic mentoring			+		
1.1.5	A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.				+		
1.1.6	The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.				+		
1.1.7	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.				+		
1.1.8	Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.				+		
1.1.9	Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.				+		
1.1.10	Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load.			+			
1.1.11	The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.				+		
1.1.12	The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.			+			
1.1.3 The specific admission requirements set are adequate. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the program, it is suggested that for students admitted with a less strong background on GIS and pollutant dispersion							

are offered some complementary tutorials etc as needed.

1.1.4 The class is expected to be limited to maximum of 30 students which is adequate.

1.1.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Some of the implementation material (teaching supplements, procedures, web pages) is not ready yet. There is some reasonable expectation that part of the expected material/procedures will be ready once the program starts. For coming academic years it would need to be finalized and “spiked” 9 months before the start of the academic year.

1.1.3.1 International best practices suggest this to be ready 9 months in advance – not 4 months as set in the proposal.

1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.1.11 Such processes have not been tested yet as the program has not begun. A reasonable expectation of moderate effectiveness is present.

1.1.10 and 1.1.12 During the Site Visit, based on informal discussions held with random undergraduate students it emerged that there is a friendly attitude by the faculty for dispute resolution. However, according to the information provided no specific mechanism is in place for the program at hand. We recommend that formal processes are developed and implemented in the program.

Additional notes:

The external evaluation committee cannot determine a realistic expected number of students, and country of origin. The Neapolis University Pafos has made some suggestions in their respective proposal and internal evaluation form. International best practices suggest 30 as the maximum planned number of students per class.

1.2	Teaching	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.1	The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course’s purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.			+		
1.2.2	The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.				+	
1.2.3	Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.			+		
1.2.4	The assessment system and criteria regarding student			+		

	course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.					
1.2.5	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.				+	
1.2.6	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.				+	
1.2.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.			+		
<p>1.2.1 Slides, supplementary material, assignments and a written examination are suitable but do not constitute alone an excellent solution. This particularly considering that the on-site elements (lectures/tutorials) are limited to 3hr per 2-week period, whereas the expected standard for 7.5 ECTS would be 8hrs per 2-week period. Therefore, a hybrid approach - comprising traditional lecture-room based approaches as well as elements of distance learning - is expected in order to justify the expected effort of 25hrs per 1 ECTS. We would encourage faculty to check such complementary methods to enhance student learning.</p> <p>1.2.2 The approach presented (and lecture timing) is a suitable practice for adults who are in full-time regular employment.</p> <p>1.2.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Based on intention alone moderate performance is expected.</p> <p>1.2.4 It is reasonably clear in the present program proposal and discussions held during the Site Visit. A general 40% assignment and 60% written exam is suggested in the course plans (occasionally 50%-50% or alternative approaches are utilised).</p> <p>1.2.5 Based on information received during the Site Visit, specific activities are planned for enhancing active participation of students in the educational process. Taking into consideration the positive attitude of faculty on such activities, the committee encourages them to further develop their capacity through appropriate training in modern practices in Higher education and learning. For example how about flip classroom activities, to involve the students in the learning process through the concept of "learning by doing" etc.?</p> <p>1.2.6 A commonly used electronic platform is present.</p> <p>1.2.7 The expected teaching material appears to be appropriate and should be updated regularly.</p>						

1.3	Teaching Personnel					
	1	2	3	4	5	
1.3.1	The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.					
1.3.2	The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:					
1.3.2.1	Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.					
1.3.2.2	Publications within the discipline.					
1.3.3	The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.					
1.3.4	Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.					
1.3.5	In every program of study the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.					
1.3.6	The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.					
1.3.7	In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study.					
1.3.8	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.					

1.3.9	The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.		+			
1.3.10	Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.	+				
1.3.11	The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study.		+			
<p>1.3.1 The full-time personnel presented in the application has appropriate background to support the program of study.</p> <p>1.3.2 The teaching personnel presented in the application has appropriate background to support the program of study. The staff have publications not only in peer-reviewed journals but have also prepared professional technical reports and opinions on topics relevant to the program of study.</p> <p>1.3.3 No Visiting Professors seem to be supporting the program of study.</p> <p>1.3.4 The Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have adequate work experience and qualifications to teach their respective courses.</p> <p>1.3.5 According to the application, 4 out of 7 faculty are Special Teaching Personnel and/or Special Scientists which will cover 5 out of 9 of the classes to be taught (excl. dissertation).</p> <p>1.3.6 According to the application, 6 out of 7 faculty hold a doctorate degree.</p> <p>1.3.7 The teaching team seems to be motivated and in good collaboration with one another which can be perceived positively. However it must be noted that the ratio of full-time to part-time/external personnel (and their associated part in the teaching efforts) raises some concern and should be addressed as part of the short to mid-term planning of the program.</p> <p>1.3.8 The ratio of 7 faculty for 30 (prospective) students and based on the additional budget provided this seems adequate.</p> <p>1.3.9 The teaching and administrative load of some the involved faculty seems very high and does not provide opportunities for pursuing research.</p> <p>1.3.10 No planning presented.</p> <p>1.3.11 The program coordinator as suggested in the application (Prof Solon Xenopoulos) is the Dean of School, which suggests that administrative experience is present. However, the committee cannot further comment on whether he will efficiently coordinate the specific program of study based on the documents available (his CV was not included in the application).</p>						



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2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS						
2.1	Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.			+		
2.1.2	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.			+		
2.1.3	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.	N/A				
2.1.4	The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.			+		
2.1.5	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.			+		
2.1.6	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.			+		
2.1.7	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.			+		
<p>2.1.1 This has been addressed in an adequate manner.</p> <p>2.1.2 The learning outcomes are used as a guide of the design of the program of study.</p> <p>2.1.3 The committee reserves judgment on this aspect as the relevant legislative framework is still under development.</p> <p>2.1.4 The teaching material was not available during the Site Visit to be assessed. Whilst the committee does not raise concerns pertaining to the faculty capacity to produce the required teaching material, it must be noted that its preparation will require considerable time. The program content and methods of assessment were found adequate during the Site Visit.</p> <p>2.1.5 Provided through the university on-line platforms.</p> <p>2.1.6 The process presented in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was</p>						

adequate.

2.1.7 Reasonable correspondence between the qualification awarded and the learning outcomes of the program was found.

2.2	Structure and Content of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.2.1	The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.				+	
2.2.2	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions.				+	
2.2.3	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.			+		
2.2.4	The higher education qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.			+		
2.2.5	The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses.		+			
2.2.6	The content of courses and modules, and the corresponding educational activities are suitable for achieving the desired learning outcomes with regards to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which should be acquired by students.			+		
2.2.7	The number and the content of the program's courses are sufficient for the achievement of learning outcomes.			+		

2.2.8	The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.			+		
2.2.9	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.				+	
<p>2.2.1, 2.2.2 These are covered in a good manner.</p> <p>2.2.3 The program progression is adequate. Depending on the admissions requirements a number of "bridge" elective courses/seminars might be appropriate in order to facilitate incoming students (such as Introduction to GIS, Introduction to Ecology, Introduction to Mathematical Modelling etc.)</p> <p>2.2.4 See response to question 2.1.7 (same question in principle)</p> <p>2.2.5 A number of "bridge" elective courses/seminars are suggested to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements. See response to question 2.2.3</p> <p>2.2.6 The technical content of courses is appropriate.</p> <p>2.2.7 The overarching learning outcomes of the program are consistent and sufficient.</p> <p>2.2.8 Although the link to research is relatively weak, the link to current state of practice is appropriate.</p> <p>2.2.9 Course lectures are planned to be held Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon taking into consideration the needs of those students in full-time employment.</p>						
2.3	Quality Assurance of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.3.1	The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.			+		
2.3.2	Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for			+		
	2.3.2.1 the members of the academic personnel			+		
	2.3.2.2 the members of the administrative personnel			+		
	2.3.2.3 the students.			+		
2.3.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and			+		

	management of the program of study.					
2.3.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.			+		
<p>2.3.1 According to information provided during the Site Visit, the university has an overarching quality assurance structure that seems to follow the national law/guidelines. A quality assurance implementation specific to the program was not presented.</p> <p>2.3.2 This is in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.</p> <p>2.3.3 This may be in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.</p> <p>2.3.4 The quality assurance process seems to follow at university level the national law and European guidelines. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level. It was not possible for the committee to determine if there are restrictions set by non-academic factors.</p>						
2.4	Management of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.1	Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.			+		
2.4.2	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.			+		
2.4.3	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.			+		
2.4.4	The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for			+		

	academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.					
2.4.5	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:				+	
2.4.5.1	The provisions regarding unit credits				+	
2.4.5.2	The expected learning outcomes				+	
2.4.5.3	The methodology				+	
2.4.5.4	Course descriptions				+	
2.4.5.5	The program's structure				+	
2.4.5.6	The admission requirements				+	
2.4.5.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment				+	
2.4.6	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.				+	
2.4.7	The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.			+		
2.4.8	The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification.	N/A				
<p>2.4.1 Based on the quality assurance process, it is likely that some continuous improvement of the program will take place. A definitive process for the program was not discussed during the Site Visit. We expect that relevant processes will be implemented successfully.</p> <p>2.4.2 A specific process to ensure learning outcomes are achieved was not presented. It is expected that this will be part of the program coordinator's operative role.</p> <p>2.4.3 Please see response to question 2.3.4</p> <p>2.4.4 The academic hierarchy of the institution seems appropriate.</p> <p>2.4.5, 2.4.6 This seems to be in line, according to information provided during the Site Visit.</p> <p>2.4.7 This seems to be within reasonable standards.</p> <p>2.4.8 The committee found this question as non-applicable.</p>						

2.5	International Dimension of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.1	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.	N/A				
2.5.2	The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.		+			
2.5.3	Students participate in exchange programs.			+		
2.5.4	The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.			+		
<p>2.5.1 Not applicable. This program is neither the result of an international collaboration at the institution level, nor has it entered the stage of implementation.</p> <p>2.5.2 At the moment there are no international visiting professors supporting this program.</p> <p>2.5.3 Whilst the opportunity exists since the university has a student exchange office, this cannot be assessed since the program has not entered the implementation stage.</p> <p>2.5.4 Based on the information provided the academic profile of the program is compatible with corresponding programs of study internationally. However the committee reserves judgment until the follow-up evaluation after the full implementation of the program.</p>						
2.6	Connection with the labor market and the society	1	2	3	4	5
2.6.1	The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.				+	
2.6.2	According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory.			+		
2.6.3	Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant.			+		
<p>2.6.1 The teaching procedures applied in the program (analysis of real-life case studies) have an adequate and effective relationship with professional</p>						

activities.

2.6.2 A detailed labor market survey and consultation with private and public sector was not conducted. However, the program profile is in-line with generally perceived current market and societal needs which suggests a satisfactory employability of graduates.

2.6.3 The training of professionals to carry out environmental impact studies is positive from a societal needs point of view.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

3.1	Research - Teaching Synergies	1	2	3	4	5
3.1.1	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.			+		
3.1.2	New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.		+			
3.1.3	Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.	N/A				
3.1.4	The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.			+		
3.1.5	External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.		+			
3.1.6	Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.		+			
3.1.7	The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.		+			
3.1.8	The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research		+			

	activities and projects is satisfactory.					
3.1.9	Student training in the research process is sufficient.		+			
<p>3.1.1 Most of the academic staff have an adequate research background, and some an active professional activity. However, this is a professional program and most of the teaching staff have an adequate professional experience on this subject.</p> <p>3.1.2 There is no evidence suggesting that new research results could be incorporated in the program of study.</p> <p>3.1.3 There is no explicit research component described in the program, particularly considering the professional character of the program. Therefore the discussion on adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment is not applicable here.</p> <p>3.1.4 There is some ongoing research by the academic personnel, which is published in international journals and conferences.</p> <p>3.1.5 External non-governmental research funding is limited and cannot be compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.</p> <p>3.1.6, 3.1.7 No evidence or clear policy was provided of internal faculty funding being made available for the academic personnel at the University to carry out research specific to the subject-matter of the program.</p> <p>3.1.8 The participation is limited and cannot be considered satisfactory.</p> <p>3.1.9 According to the information provided the participation of students in potential research activities (thesis) is very limited and the focus is set on professional skills.</p>						
4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK						
4.1	Administrative Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.			+		
4.1.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and			+		

	supporting students are sufficient.					
4.1.3	The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.			+		
<p>4.1.1 There are some supportive administrative mechanisms present. Results of effectiveness of these mechanisms were not provided (satisfaction surveys) but based on informal discussions with random students it seems that personal issues are addressed adequately.</p> <p>4.1.2, 4.1.3 No specific information was provided to the committee in relation to such mechanisms. This should be reviewed and addressed by university management in view of the expected future increase of the student population.</p>						
4.2	Infrastructure / Support	1	2	3	4	5
4.2.1	There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.			+		
4.2.2	There is a supportive internal communication platform.				+	
4.2.3	The facilities are adequate in number and size.			+		
4.2.4	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.				+	
4.2.5	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.			+		
4.2.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.			+		
4.2.7	The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.		+			
<p>4.2.1 There is relevant material provided for each course.</p> <p>4.2.2 There is an appropriate internal communication platform being used.</p> <p>4.2.3 The facilities are appropriate.</p>						

4.2.4 The equipment used is appropriate (GIS laboratory).

4.2.5 The material is appropriate.

4.2.6 The committee sees no cause of concern since material discussed was up to date. However we reserve final judgment on this until the program has entered its implementation phase.

4.2.7 No training opportunities seem to be provided by the University in accordance with the oral information provided during the Site Visit. The committee strongly encourages the university to develop such opportunities and all faculty to take advantage of these; in particular not limited to the use of specific tools, but on the pedagogy of higher education and learning.

4.3	Financial Resources	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.			+		
4.3.2	The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.			+		
4.3.3	The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.		+			
4.3.4	Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.			+		

4.3.1 According to the financial projections provided after the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are reasonably adequate for the running of the program. The committee suggests that the university reviews its policy regarding the development of academic/teaching personnel in accordance with internationally accepted practices.

4.3.2 The required process is present with regard to the allocation of financial resources.

4.3.3 According to the financial information provided after the Site Visit the remuneration of academic personnel appears relatively low (1.42 FTE = 16 427Euro).

4.3.4 The suggested tuition fees level of 6000 Euro is considered up to par with current practice.

The following criterion applies additionally for distance learning programs of study.

5.	DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
5.1	Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.					
5.2	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education.					
5.3	Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.					
5.4	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.					
5.5	Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.					
5.6	The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.					
5.7	Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.					
5.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.					
5.9	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate					

	infrastructure for the support of learning.					
5.10	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.					
5.11	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.					
5.12	The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.					
5.13	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.					
5.14	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.					
5.15	The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.					
5.16	The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.					
NOT APPLICABLE						
The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.						
The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory.						
The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.						

The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.

6.	DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY	1	2	3	4	5
6.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.					
6.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.					
6.3	The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.					
6.4	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.					
6.5	The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.					
6.6	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.					
6.7	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.					
NOT APPLICABLE						

FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

Overall and in light of the information provided in advance, during and after the Site Visit, the committee considers the program feasible. This is on the understanding that the academic/teaching team and university leadership work actively on addressing the issues highlighted within the external evaluation

report.

Some key suggestions for improvement are presented below. Additional comments on weaknesses of the program are presented in the main body of the report, including further suggestions for improvement.

- 8. In the case that the board approves the program all teaching material must be produced in a timely manner and before the start of the academic year, in order to ensure adequate quality in the teaching process.**
- 9. The teaching load of some of the personnel should be reconsidered in order to avoid overloading and to provide development opportunities in accordance with international practices in academic institutions. Furthermore, a transparent policy for internal faculty funding should be developed to enable academic personnel at the University to develop relevant research activities.**
- 10. A transparent and efficient procedure for dispute resolution should be developed and implemented at program level.**
- 11. The ratio of full-time to part-time/external personnel (and their associated part in the teaching efforts) raises some concern and should be addressed as part of the short to mid-term planning of the program. The committee finds that if the program is to be implemented the university should increase the number of permanent full-time Teaching Research Personnel by one.**
- 12. The committee strongly encourages the university leadership to further develop staff capacity through appropriate training in modern practices in Higher education and learning.**
- 13. A number of “bridge” elective courses/seminars are suggested to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements i.e., facilitate incoming student integration (such as Introduction to GIS, Introduction to Ecology, Introduction to Mathematical Modelling etc.)**
- 14. The overarching quality assurance process at university level seems to follow the national law and European guidelines. Should the program be approved the committee expects that such a process will also be implemented at program level.**

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Names and Signatures of the Chair and the Members of the External Evaluation Committee:

Name:	Signature:
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	
Michalis Angelidis	
Tryfon Daras	
Irena Kyprianidou	

Date: 25 May 2017