Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 24.05.2024.

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  Neapolis University Pafos

- **Town:** Pafos

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** SCHOOL OF LAW (NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY PAFOS)

- **Department/ Sector:** DEPARTMENT OF LAW (NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY PAFOS)

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

  In Greek:

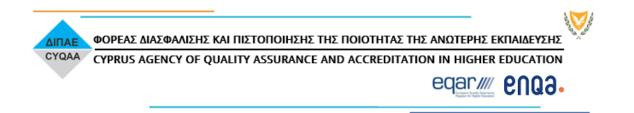 Μεταπτυχιακό (LLM) στο Διεθνές και Ευρωπαϊκό Δίκαιο των Επιχειρήσεων (Εξ Αποστάσεως)

  In English:

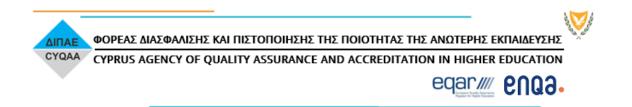 LLM in International and European Business Law (Distance)

- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**

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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].

- **Programme's status: Currently operating**

- **Concentrations (if any):**

    In Greek: Concentrations
    In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the premises of the Neapolis University Pafos (NUP) and held meetings with the Rector and Vice-Rector; the Dean of the Law School; current students and graduates of the programme; and members of the teaching and administrative staff. The visit took place on Thursday, May 23, 2024 between 9.30am–5pm. During the meeting, the EEC attended and received copies of presentations in addition to the pre-circulated material. There were several Q&A sessions which addressed questions raised by the members of the EEC and additional information. The EEC is grateful to all participants for their hospitality, warm co-operation, and openness to constructive feedback.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Panagiotis Delimatsis	Professor of Law	Tilburg University, the Netherlands
Saskia Hufnagel	Professor of Law	University of Sydney
Emmanuel Voyiakis	Professor of Law	London School of Economics
Christothea Herodotou	Professor of Learning Technologies and Social Justice	The Open University UK
Hionoulla Andreou	Student	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
    (a) *sub-areas*
    (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
    (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

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.
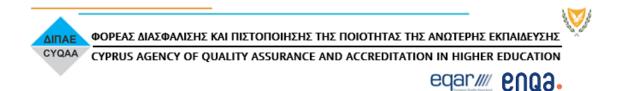
Strengths

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

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.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

1. **Study programme and study programme's design and development**
   (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

1.1 Policy for quality assurance
1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
1.3 Public information
1.4 Information management

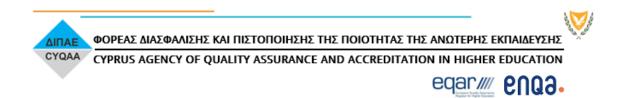**1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
   - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
   - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
   - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
   - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
   - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
   - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
   - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
   - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
   - *benefits from external expertise*
   - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
   - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*

- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
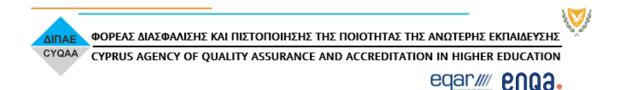
1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
    - *selection criteria*
    - *intended learning outcomes*
    - *qualification awarded*
    - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
    - *pass rates*
    - *learning opportunities available to the students*
    - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
    - *key performance indicators*
    - *profile of the student population*
    - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
    - *learning resources and student support available*
    - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*

- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*

- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*

- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*

- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*

- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*

- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*

- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*

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- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*

- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***

- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*

- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*

- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*

- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
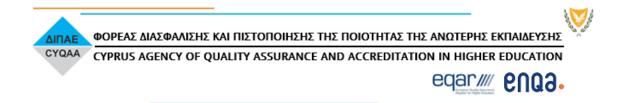
Findings

Based on the material submitted, the EEC considers that the institution has a well-thought structure of quality assurance regarding the distance learning program under review. It appears that certain processes were strengthened over the years, which is a welcome development. The support staff is well-organised in units, suggesting that the processes have a formal status and a certain protocol is followed based on distinct roles. The quality assurance and internal evaluation mechanisms appear to be functional and adequately organised, playing the expected supportive role in the tasks that the academic staff is bound to perform. NUP has the necessary mechanisms in place to monitor academic fraud on the side of students, including plagiarism check software.

NUP has a code of conduct in place ensuring that discriminatory treatment, no matter how it is expressed, will not be tolerated. Furthermore, the institution is interested in continuously improving its social impact towards the local community, including public schools. This is a good initiative and would be great if it is further strengthened.

The programme's objectives are adequately designed and reflect the explicit intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The programme of study has a logical structure, allowing the students to follow a smooth progression and delve into materials related to business law. One would expect that there would be a mix of compulsory and elective courses that the students could benefit from, but resource constraints explain the institution's decision in that regard. The programme coordination appears to run smoothly and the study guides give extensive information as to the expected workload. The current programme is closely connected with legal and economic developments in the Eastern Mediterranean region, offering the students extensive insights into the legal and economic environment that they plan to be active in. The programme of study is clear and accurate and information to students is readily accessible about all aspects of the programme they pursue.

Both the graduation rates and the average duration of studies appear to be broadly in line with standard for DL courses.

The ECTS weighting for individual courses (7.5 ECTS) and the final-semester thesis (30 ECTS) is a little on the generous side, but it is broadly in line with the weighting for similar courses and programmes in other Cypriot institutions.

There is adequate information about opportunities to study abroad. During discussion, the EEC was informed that several NUP students have taken advantage of this opportunity, and that a smaller number of students from foreign institutions have visited NUP. Administrative staff reported that such exchanges occur between support staff too.

NUP reports very high employment rates for its graduates on the programme, with 87% in employment or further study. While the issue did not arise during our discussion with current students and graduates, NUP maintains a careers office, and an alumni network, where employment opportunities are advertised on a regular basis.
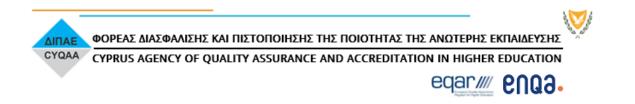
NUP has adequate protocols in place for monitoring drop-out rates and responding to situations where students find it difficult to continue with their studies. The drop-out rate for the present programme appears to be very low.

Strengths
- Very good quality and dedication of the teaching faculty.
- Very detailed and specific programme learning outcomes
- Low staff-student ratio, offering excellent possibilities for students to interact regularly with academic staff.
- Very good variety of assignments and alternative methods of grading.
- Support staff comes with a problem-solving mentality, allowing smooth student progression.
- Industry and alumni contacts can provide opportunities for internship and placement.
- The study guides follow a common format, which helps the students navigate through the programme in a more reassuring manner.
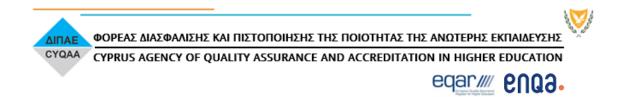
Areas of improvement and recommendations
- A more structured approach to enhancing research methods training for students at the beginning of the program, as a mandatory element and early in the programme, would be welcome. A more individualistic approach appears to be taken, which perhaps has also a relationship with the dropout rate at the moment of dissertation. Therefore, the EEC recommends that the Department put in place a distinct module or course on research methodology, instead of relying on one-to-one guidance at the dissertation stage.
- There is no study guide for the dissertation course DLLM600. This appears to be an oversight, as the documentation includes sufficient information about the learning outcomes and assessment forms for the course. Be that as it may, the EEC believes that it is important to collate the relevant information into a single study guide, together with an indicative bibliography etc.
- The regulations provide that if a student submits their assessments late and without extenuating circumstances, their work is marked as zero. The EEC believes that it would be fairer to put in place a more staggered penalty policy.
- Academic integrity and freedom appear not to be safeguarded in the Code of Conduct shared with the EEC. The current code refers to certain mechanisms to be implemented but it is unclear whether these mechanisms (such as a code of good research practice) are already in place. Additional clauses are warranted to ensure that academic staff are free from undue influence and/or external pressure and abide by high standards of scientific integrity and the principles of good research practice. The institution could take inspiration from European initiatives relating to safeguarding academic integrity, including the ALLEA code of conduct on research integrity, which could apply across NUP, not just the law school, in addition to any ethical aspects that are treated currently by the internal ethics board (notably regarding empirical research).

- The EEC appreciated the honesty of the faculty relating to the issues that certain students face in finishing the programme. In this respect, the institution may want to reflect on the possibility of also offering the programme on a part-time basis. This may add the necessary flexibility for professionals who currently work to also enrol in the programme. Thus, there may be a latent demand which will bring more students to the programme if it is advertised as such.
- The EEC would recommend that the institution undertake a benchmarking exercise which will focus on the viability of the programme and realistic options of growth, and adjust the level of its ambitions for it accordingly.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
2.3 Practical training
2.4 Student assessment
2.5 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*

- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*

- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*

- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*

- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the e-learning process.*

- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*

- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*

- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*

- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*

- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the e-learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

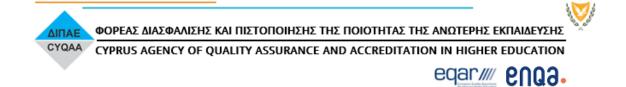## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*

- o *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
- o *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
- o ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
- o *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
- o *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
- o *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
- o *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
- o *Synopsis*

- ● *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- ● *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*

- ● *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*

- ● *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*

- ● *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*

- ● *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*

- ● *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*

- ● *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*

- ● *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*

- ● *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- ● *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*

- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***

- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*

- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***

- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*

- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

The e-learning methodology presents a total of six teleconferences offered via MS teams. Teleconferences are optional yet recorded giving each student the opportunity to watch them when needed. The structure of teleconferences is organised by each teacher and is mostly in the form of lecturing with questions and answers. Learning material and study guides are hosted on Moodle. Training and support are provided to students before they start their studies focusing on how to effectively use online tools. Training on online learning and pedagogy is also provided to teaching staff; this is compulsory for newcomers yet optional for existing staff. In addition, seminars are organised throughout the year regarding elearning and offered to all staff.

A study guide for each course has been produced and this is consistently structured across all courses, using a template provided by the Distance Learning Unit (DLU). Each guide defines a set of learning objectives, reading material, self-assessment exercises and weekly interactive activities. These activities take the form of forum discussions, case study analysis, presentations, peer reviews and group work. Such activities ensure that theoretical and practical elements of each course are interconnected. There are instructions for students on how to complete each activity yet in some cases these are not sufficiently detailed to ensure student-to-student interactions i.e. detail what students need to do in a forum, how many times to post, how many times to reply to posts of others etc. A greater variety of activities would enhance the student experience and understanding of the content such as the use of quizzes, simulations, and online games.

There is an assessment framework in place mostly aligning with the elearning methodology principles, in which 20% of the final grade is assigned to four interactive activities (5% each activity), 20% to a mid-term assignment and 60% to a final exam. Before the visit, NUP provided the EEC with access to two online courses on Moodle. Upon inspection, it became clear that, although forums are extensively embedded in the design of study guides, their actual use by students requires improvement. Student-to-student interaction is rather limited, mostly restricted to posting once (their own reply), not commenting on others work, and with no further facilitation by teachers to spark further discussion and communication amongst students. However, during the visit, the EEC was assured that there is a peer-to-peer element in some assignments and in certain courses.

The EEC was impressed by the extensive, weekly guidance that the students receive through the study guides and commends the faculty for the effort they put in. The EEC noted that there were significant overlaps between some courses in the programme. For instance, internal market law appears to overlap with tourism law, whereas

International Economic Law overlaps to a certain extent with International Trade Law. Such overlaps are benign when the courses in question are elective, but they are more problematic when all courses are compulsory, as is the case for the present programme.
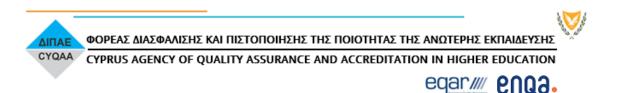
Strengths

- Study guides are consistently designed and presented using a pre-existing template.
- There is an appropriate assessment framework in place that aligns with elearning principles.
- The elearning methodology presents 6 teleconferences and weekly interactive activities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- To ensure regular student-to-student interactions, a specific plan detailing how this will be achieved is needed. For example, staff should take a stronger lead in encouraging discussions between students in the context of forum activities, while additional tools such as simulations, games and quizzes should be considered.
- There is a need for guidance on how to design teleconferences to ensure interactivity (e.g., break-out rooms) and meet principles of "flipped classroom" as already detailed in the elearning methodology guide (e.g. critically reflect and discuss material).
- To avoid overlaps, the EEC recommends that more coordination and centralized review of the study guides take place. Ideally, the program coordinator would play that role but the faculty can think of other arrangements as well. This would also ensure that certain basic elements are avoided: for instance, in the Trade Law study guide, reference is made to the journal of world trade or the EJIL as leading journals in the field. However, no reference is made to the Journal of International Economic Law, which is the flagship journal in the field. Thus, some peer screening appears to be in order and would benefit the coherence of the programme.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

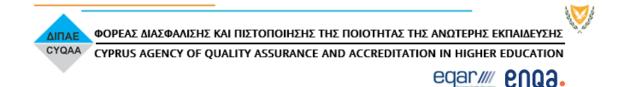| Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially compliant

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
> 3.1 **Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
> 3.3 **Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 **Teaching staff recruitment and development**

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*

- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*

- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*

- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*

- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*

- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*

- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*

- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*

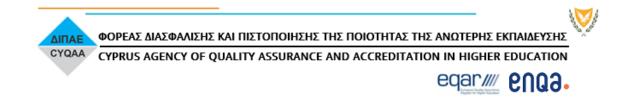- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*

- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*

- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*

- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*

- *Is teaching connected with research?*

- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*

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- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*

- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

NUP has very competent teaching staff who are charged with teaching on the programme. Hiring procedures are transparent and vacancies are advertised in a relatively broad manner. The qualifications of the teaching staff are excellent. They are involved in research, and all of them have international qualifications and/or research profiles. The teachers employed to teach on the programme all seem very capable and enthusiastic, and keen to improve their teaching and research skills as well as to respond to student feedback. The workload of individual staff teaching on the programme is intense during teaching terms but appears reasonable on the whole. Not all teachers on the programme are permanent staff. Few are adjunct staff, such as practising lawyers who teach part time, but this did not seem to impact on the quality of the teaching.

Staff have sufficient opportunities to improve their elearning teaching skills, for example, by working with the DLU on designing individual courses and assessment. Staff teaching on the programme reported that the one-on-one support provided was particularly helpful. Furthermore, research (grant applications) opportunities exist and are fostered by NUP's central university systems. For example, there are research workshops on grant writing three times a year, and there is a standing research support office.

With a view to research and research and teaching synergies, NUP has very good strategies in place to encourage research and dissemination. During the discussion, the EEC was informed that a successful grant applicant at NUP can keep the bulk of the grant, with a very limited overhead going to the University. The EEC did not find a policy to that effect in the documentation, but discussions with staff suggested that they were aware of such a policy being in place. The research dissemination is encouraged and supported with at least 2K euros for conference travel and open access publications per year.

In relation to feedback, students are sent electronic evaluation forms to fill in and submit. The closing of the feedback loop does not have a prescribed format but there is a review of the feedback by both the departmental and the university quality assurance committees who can determine responses to negative feedback. Students are also involved in these committees, which enhances the quality of the review. However, as the programme is rather small, issues with teaching are usually responded to during the teaching process, therefore negative feedback at the end of the programme appears to be rare. Students also reported that they felt comfortable directing complaints to teachers, but responses depended on the individual teacher.

Strengths
- NUP has very competent and enthusiastic teaching staff involved in both teaching and research and all of them have international qualifications and/or research profiles.
- Opportunities to improve online teaching skills at NUP are excellent. There is a mandatory training seminar on distance learning method and practice once a year and various non-compulsory seminars and workshops on the production of online teaching content and activities.
- With a view to research-teaching synergies, NUP has good strategies in place to encourage research and dissemination.
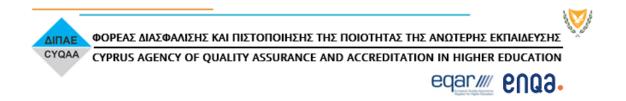
Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The EEC would urge NUP to consider making the allocation of teaching load sensitive to the research productivity of staff, giving research-active faculty an appropriate dispensation from teaching duties.
- The Erasmus+ opportunities for teaching staff exchanges appear to be relatively unused. This could strengthen staff's skills but also their international visibility and exposure. The office in charge of Erasmus could help staff arrange such short stays in other European universities.
- The closing of the feedback loop does not have a prescribed format but there is informal response to feedback. The EEC recommends that NUP considers publishing a summary of major points arising in student feedback and a statement of what actions are to be taken in response.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>
- 4.1 **Student admission, processes and criteria**
- 4.2 **Student progression**
- 4.3 **Student recognition**
- 4.4 **Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

<u>Standards</u>

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
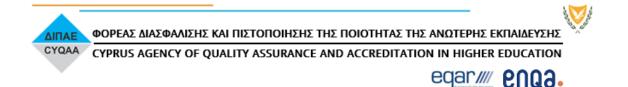
4.2 Student progression

<u>Standards</u>

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

<u>Standards</u>

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*

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> ○ *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*
>
> **4.4 Student certification**
>
> *Standards*
>
> - *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
> - *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*
>
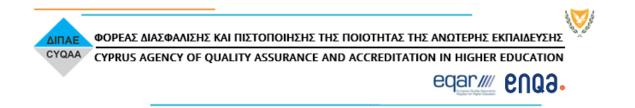> *You may also consider the following questions:*
>
> - *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
> - *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
> - *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

NUP has reasonably clear admissions criteria. Students must have a first degree, append a personal statement, and two letters of recommendation. NUP may also take into account social criteria (e.g., family situation, military service) and the candidate's practical or informal experience in reaching a decision about admissions. The documentation was ambiguous as to whether the first degree must be in law or a cognate discipline but the EEC was advised during discussion that this is indeed the case. Overall, the admissions criteria are appropriate to the level of study and align with the NUP's social mission.

There are clear regulations in place regarding student progression. At course level, students who fail in one of the assessment components (assignments, mid-term exam, final exam) are required to re-sit that component. With regard to the four-part assignment component, students who fail one of the four assignments must resit all of them. At programme level, students are allowed to carry up to two course failures when they progress to the thesis in the final semester.

NUP has a clear policy regarding recognition and accreditation of prior learning. Credit may be given for practical and informal experience e.g., extensive experience in legal practice. In all cases, the credit for prior learning shall not normally exceed 50% of the credits for the course. Overall, NUP's policies appear to be in line with international standards regarding recognition.

On graduation, students are supplied with a diploma and a detailed statement of their grades and credits per course. NUP's protocols in that regard seem to be fully in line with European and international standards.

While the distance learning unit (DLU) seemed to be informed about the existence of Moodle learning analytics, there was no policy in place detailing how the teaching staff should access, interpret and use this information to enable ongoing and proactive student monitoring and support such as how often to check these e.g., at least once a week, how to identify and what actions to take to support less engaged students.

Strengths
- Clear policies regarding admissions, and appropriate weighting of social criteria.
- Clear rules on student progression both at course and programme level.
- Appropriate rules regarding accreditation for prior learning, including informal and practical experience

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- A policy about the use of learning analytics should be produced and shared with the teaching staff to enable ongoing monitoring of student progress.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	udent admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Partially compliant
4.3	udent recognition	Compliant
4.4	udent certification	Compliant

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

Sub-areas
5.1 **Teaching and Learning resources**
5.2 **Physical resources**
5.3 **Human support resources**
5.4 **Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*

- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*

- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose.*

- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*
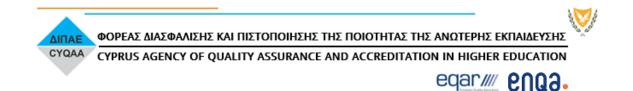
5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*

- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*
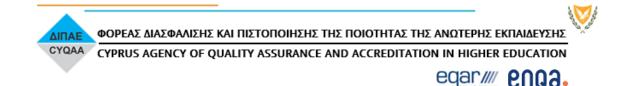
5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*

- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*

- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*

- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*

- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*

- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*

- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*

- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*

- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*

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- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*

- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

There is a distance learning unit (DLU) in place responsible for the online implementation of the programme. As stated during the visit, there are plans to recruit a learning designer to review online course implementations, provide staff training, and ongoing staff support on how to enhance students' interactions by using innovative e-learning tools. As detailed in Section 2, there are weekly interactive activities in place, yet these should be enhanced to safeguard interactions amongst students, and students and teaching staff, and use a greater variety of elearning tools such as simulations, games and other related to the subject area of each course.

NUP maintains a hybrid library which provides both hardcopies and electronic materials. There are subscriptions with major editors and databases, for students to access extended and updated articles and books. The library can accommodate students' requests for additional material when needed. A VPN service allows students and all university members to access library materials remotely. Subsequently, distance learning students can access materials in a satisfactory manner.

The IT infrastructure and support appears to be adequate to support the study programme.

There is sufficient human support in place including tutors/mentors, counsellors, and other advisers, as well as access to the Counseling Center for Research and Psychological Services (SKEPSI) and the Center for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. As stated in the material provided to the EEC, Center's services are usually offered in-person, but special arrangements can be made for students that cannot attend in-person meetings.

Strengths
- There is a DLU in place that supports the elearning implementation of the programme.
- There are weekly interactive activities planned across all modules.
- The library includes all major publishers. NUP appears to be willing to increase budget and extend the subscriptions, if needed, to ensure that students will have all necessary literature they need for their studies.
- NUP has certain collaborations with other libraries in both Cyprus and Greece, ensuring that resources that are not currently available can still be reached by students in an efficient manner.
- Positive feedback from students, which shows that the library staff appears to be resourceful with a problem-solving mentality in the cases of any issues/ problems that may arise.
- Moodle appears to be a well-developed platform that allows the distance learning students to have uninterrupted access which meets the requirements that NUP envisions.
- The staff is competent to design and develop specific, new Moodle modules when requested, extending the services available.
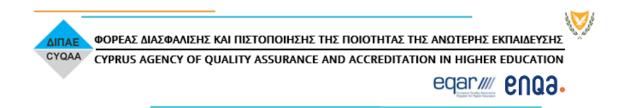
Areas of improvement and recommendations
- Weekly interactive activities should give specific instructions to students on how to interact with each other and be enhanced with a greater range of tools.
- The email address and phone number of SKEPSI need to be added to both the NUP website and each course on Moodle to enable easy access by online students (this can now be found only in the study guides).

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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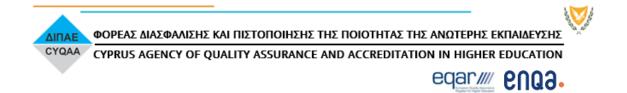
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D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC is grateful to the Law School and the NUP as a whole for their gracious hospitality, the thoroughness of the documentation they put before us, and their openness in discussing every aspect of their application. We are also grateful to participants who were with us online during the day of the visit, and were ready to respond to our questions.

We have found the proposed programme to be well designed, with good quality assurance mechanisms and delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues.

On the whole, the EEC recommends that the programme be accredited. The few points that we have raised in the 'areas of improvement' sections are meant as recommendations, which we believe will help strengthen the programme and make it even more attractive to its target market.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof Panagiotis Delimatsis	
Prof Saskia Hufnagel	
Prof Emmanuel Voyiakis	
Prof Christothea Herodotou	.
Hionoulla Andreou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: Friday, May 24, 2024