



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ  
THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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# Neapolis University Pafos

BSc International Relation and Security

## External evaluation report

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 and 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015 and N. 47(I)/2016].

## A. Introduction

The evaluation visit took place on Thursday 11 April 2019. The evaluation committee had a fruitful discussion with a representation of academic and professional service staff. The visit commenced with an overview presentation regarding the development, ethos, values and future direction of the University. It was evident that Neapolis University Pafos is an ambitious institution and the committee were impressed by the plans for the further development of the University, including the building of a new campus and the broader expansion plans in terms of the degree programmes under development. The University is clearly committed to supporting the student learning experience and has a very positive staff student ratio of 1:12.

During the visit we had presentations that covered the degree programme, the learning environment included the learner management systems, the use of Moodle, quality assurance, the library provision, as well as financial viability. The committee’s remit and focus was primarily concerned with the overall learning environment as opposed to the financial viability.

In terms of the structure of the day, the committee made some adjustments to the organization and running of the day so as to provide a greater opportunity for questions and answers as opposed to just receiving presentations, of which a good deal of the material had already been received in advance. The committee particularly welcomed the opportunity to meet separately with the teaching staff and to listen to students.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Prof Alasdair Blair</b>	Chair	De Montfort University
<b>Prof Knud Erik Jørgensen</b>	Committee member	Aarhus University
<b>Dr Olga Demetriou</b>	Committee member	Durham University
<b>Mr Zenonas Hadjicostas</b>	Committee member – student representative	University of Cyprus

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

## 1. Study program and study program's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

### Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the program 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*
- *The program of study:*
  - *is designed with overall program 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*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
  - *results to 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 program 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, the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program*
  - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
  - *about the program of study offered*
  - *the selection criteria*
  - *the intended learning outcomes*
  - *the qualification awarded*
  - *the teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - *the pass rates*
  - *the learning opportunities available to the students*
  - *graduate employment information*

### Findings

- The study programme is designed and intended to be launched after the process of accreditation has come to a successful conclusion. Hence, the self-evaluation report, application and findings during the onsite visit do not concern experiences with an existing programme.
- The programme runs over 4 years. The structure of the programme includes 40 courses (each 6 ECPT) totaling 240 ECTS.
- Of these, 38 courses are compulsory and two are elective. Electives are chosen from a total of four, offered in the last two semesters, two in each semester.
- The programme has an interdisciplinary component, with compulsory courses sourced from psychology, economics, law, and business.
- The only form of teaching mentioned in the application is 'lectures'. The onsite visit helped clarify the situation so that teachers actually intend to employ a variety of teaching forms, including student presentations and article reviews.

### Strengths

- The 4 years programme somewhat conforms with Bologna process standards, as well as the UK approach broadly speaking.
- The ECTS credit framework is foremost aligned to the national standards in Cyprus and somewhat to the Bologna standards.
- The programme has a strong focus on international relations and security. The teaching staff have a good range of skills, with the programme benefitting from research-informed teaching.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The vast majority of courses are compulsory. Students are only able to specialise in their final year from a very limited number of electives, having to choose between International Development Cooperation and Practical Diplomacy in semester 7 and between Migration, IR and Security and Project Management in semester 8. The committee thought that further consideration may be given to the provision of additional electives to provide students with the opportunity for further specialisation.
- There is no provision for a BSc dissertation assignment through the degree and as such it is not clear as to how students will be tested with an extended piece of writing that involves engagement with more advanced sources.
- The assessment pattern throughout the degree programme followed the same approach of 30% for a mid-term exam and 70% for an end of semester exam. There was a lack of clarity as to the exact nature of what the assessment components comprised at a course level as well as an absence of information with regard to how assessments would develop as a result of progression throughout the degree programme.
- Although the degree programme has a good range of courses, the committee had some concern about the way in which the content of some of the courses reflected the title of the course and also the appropriate level at which it was pitched. For example, the Introduction to International Relations course that is taught in the first semester is in reality a Foreign Policy Analysis course, with the content and reading materials being more appropriate to an advanced level course as opposed to an introductory first semester course.
- While the programme has a focus on security studies, the course content does not reflect a holistic view of security, such as the provision of courses on human security, peace building, sustainable development goals, and gender and security. While we appreciate that there are inevitable resource constraints in terms of the capacity to deliver the programme, there was no sense of a vision and future direction of the programme to take into consideration

this wider content, or the extent to which such content could be taught within the established course offering, aside from occasional lectures.

- While the committee recognised the contribution that a number of the core courses in the area of psychology, economics, business and law offered to the student learning experience, the committee also considered that there was a need for further clarification with regard to how these courses integrated into the overall programme aims. During the visit to the University, members of staff emphasised that these courses only represented a small percentage of the overall degree programme. The committee thought that further consideration was still required to ensure that student performance in classes outside of their core area would not be disadvantaged in comparison to core subject knowledge classes on International Relations.
- During the meetings, it was communicated to the committee that the general direction and vision of the courses from psychology, law, and economics are to impart students with the ability to understand, for example, psychological aspects of security and IR, and with the expectation that this will provide students with an ability to grasp the likes of more advanced economic concepts later examined in the IPE class. However, this was not clear in the vision set out in the course documents. Equally, it is not clear why the study of migration is relegated to an elective in the very final semester, while other courses that might not necessarily feature as course components in typical IR or security courses (e.g. risk analysis and forecasting) are given compulsory status and taught earlier (5<sup>th</sup> semester in the particular case).
- The methodology course was focused more on research design as opposed to the techniques applied to research methods. Some consideration could also be given to practical research methods and the way that students can be equipped with the necessary research skills for their writing assignments and skills which allow them to collect primary data. No consideration was given to the ethical aspect of research, which in the context of a degree programme focused on IR and security studies would be helpful.
- The programme's focus has a propensity towards to be towards issue areas, e.g. energy and conflict, as opposed to providing a more balanced level of knowledge and understanding across all areas of IR, e.g. theory and country studies. The committee considered that the programme did not have a sufficient level of taught content that focused on theories of IR, with there being no opportunity for students to take IR theory courses beyond the first year. Apart from the fact that this is not consistent with the intended learning outcomes of the programme, the committee considered that students would not be able to deploy theoretical knowledge and understanding to enable them to fully tackle some of the more advanced courses that were on offer at later stages of the degree programme.
- There was a lack of clarity with regard to the University's objectives in terms of students obtaining placements/internships and the structure of the degree programme. The panel discussions indicated that a placement/internship would result in an additional elective. However, this was not highlighted in the planning documentation. The panel were also concerned about the possible dilution of subject content with the insertion of a placement and the lack of clarity as to the linkage of the placement to the degree programme. At the same time, the discussions around the aspiration to connect to regional society and security-related authorities suggest that internships could also be enabling synergies between internships and dissertation. Further clarification is therefore required in terms of the operation of placements/internships.

1.1	Quality assurance policy defines competences and procedures for the people involved.		8
1.2	Participation in quality assurance processes is ensured for:		
	1.2.1	the members of the teaching staff	7
	1.2.2	the members of the administrative staff	8
	1.2.3	the students	7
1.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.		6
1.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.		8
1.5	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:		
	1.5.1	The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication	N/A
	1.5.2	The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching staff	N/A
	1.5.3	The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material	N/A
	1.5.4	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	8
	1.5.5	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	N/A
	1.5.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process	8
1.6	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.		8
1.7	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.		7
1.8	The following ensure the achievement of the program's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes:		
	1.8.1	The number of courses	8

	<b>1.8.2</b>	The program's content	7
	<b>1.8.3</b>	The methods of assessment	7
	<b>1.8.4</b>	The teaching material	7
	<b>1.8.5</b>	The equipment	9
<b>1.9</b>		The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff.	8
<b>1.10</b>		The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.	7
<b>1.11</b>		It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.	7
<b>1.12</b>		The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses according to the European practice.	8
<b>1.13</b>		The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	8
<b>1.14</b>		New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.	8
<b>1.15</b>		The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree.	N/A
<b>1.16</b>		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.	7
<b>1.17</b>		The learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.	8
<b>1.18</b>		The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes 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.	8
<b>1.19</b>		The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.	8
<b>1.20</b>		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
<b>1.21</b>		Program's management with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.	8

1.22	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.	8
1.23	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
1.24	Procedures are applied so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates.	8
1.25	Indicators for the employability of graduates and the employability record of the department's graduates are described in the feasibility study.	N/A
1.26	The graduation rate for the program of study is analogous to other programs with similar content.	N/A
1.27	The program of study benefits the society.	8
1.28	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:	
1.28.1	The provisions regarding unit credits	N/A
1.28.2	The expected learning outcomes	N/A
1.28.3	The methodology	N/A
1.28.4	Course descriptions	N/A
1.28.5	The program's structure	N/A
1.28.6	The admission requirements	N/A
1.28.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment	N/A
1.28.8	The pass rates	N/A

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

1.1-1.2 The quality assurance (QA) presentation indicates that students and staff are involved in QA activities. The presentation did, however, tend to refer to further procedures and policies such as disabilities and complaints handling as opposed to the committee having access to a full and detailed set of information. As such, it was not possible to have full confidence in all of the QA procedures.

1.3 The QA and standards document that was presented for the BSc programme in Annex 5 provided was for the most part the same information that was used in all of the documentation. While we appreciate that there will be an element of crossover between all of the programmes within the University, we did think that more information could have been provided with regard to QA procedures and also student welfare support. For example, while there were hyperlinks to the likes of the

- careers service, we thought that the programme could have benefited from a clearer positioning with regard to how employability skills were embedded. Elsewhere there was an absence of information relating to the likes of support for students with dyslexia or for example how broader adjustments are made to take into consideration student disability, e.g. additional time in exams.
- 1.4 It was apparent from the information presented and the supporting documentation that QA procedures are driven by academic considerations. However, more information would have been helpful to clarify the exact nature of some of the committees and structures that were referred to in the documentation and also the presentation, e.g. the pedagogic committee (terms of reference, membership, meeting times etc). The committee did not have access to existing committee minutes, meetings, schedules which would have confirmed the operational aspects of such procedures.
- 1.5 The committee were not presented with specific information in relation to the academic calendar, the disclosure of information to students and web pages and is therefore unable to comment. The committee was of the opinion that students would be provided with training to complete assignments and examinations. However, there was a lack of detail in terms of the pedagogic underpinnings of these procedures. No information was provided regarding information for examinations. While information was provided with regard to the ability for students to provide feedback on their class experience, there was a lack of detail as to how this information would be analysed, reviewed and then acted upon to close the feedback loop to students.
- 1.6 The committee felt that while the learning outcomes of the programme were broadly reflective of the undergraduate level of study that there was scope for further reflection on the linkage between the learning outcomes as set out in section B.2 of the application document and the courses taught. For example, although theoretical knowledge is identified as a key learning outcome, the programme only had one theory course in the second semester of the first year of study.
- 1.7 The committee felt that for the most part the purpose and design of the programme was satisfactory. However, the committee felt that there was scope for further information relating to how employability was embedded within the programme and the extent to which students were able to build on knowledge and learning in earlier modules as their studies progressed. Although the discussions with the programme team indicated that the focus was on students applying knowledge gained in one year of study to another, there was less clarity with regard to students being able to integrate the likes of theoretical understanding and or being faced with more challenging assessment tasks such as case studies and document reviews.
- 1.8 The programme offered a fixed diet of courses in the first three years of study, with electives only available in the final year. The committee considered that there might have been more room for greater levels of specialization within the degree programme. The committee also considered that there was scope for further consideration to the nature of the assessment in each of the courses, with for example a clearer sense of how the assessment tasks differentiated between levels to provide an indication of the progression of student learning. The committee considered that the level of equipment within classrooms was excellent and were impressed by the IT resources.

- 1.9 While the expected learning outcomes are clear, we felt that the programme would benefit from a stronger alignment between the programme learning outcomes and the courses on offer.
- 1.10 The committee considered that there was scope for further consideration of the way in which the learning outcomes were mapped against the courses within the programme.
- 1.11 Further consideration could be given to the way in which the learning outcomes in relation to knowledge of IR theory is embedded in the degree programme. It was unclear how students would be tested both orally and in writing throughout the degree programme as there was an absence of information in relation to the assessment components apart from the division between mid-term and end of semester examinations. To this end, there was an absence of detail in relation to where and when students would be tested through the likes of presentations and essays.
- 1.12-1.14 Although the programme makes use of up-to-date materials, there is potential for a stronger alignment between the research focus of the members of staff (and their publications) and the courses on offer.
- 1.16 The content of the programme might benefit from further reflection to ensure that all of the courses reflect the expected level of study, e.g. the Introduction to IR course, and the exact placing of the courses in terms of the years of study.
- 1.17-1.19 The credit system was appropriate and in conjunction with national standards.
- 1.21-1.22 It would have been helpful to have had additional information relating to the operation of programme management, such as a programme leader and the extent to which academics are provided with training and development as they progress into programme management duties.
- 1.24 There is scope for greater clarity in terms of the way that the programme supports employability and relates to future career opportunities. The opportunity for a placement has not been indicated within the design of the programme in its present configuration. Further consideration could be given to how employability skills are embedded within the programme.
- 1.27 It is apparent that the programme would be of benefit in terms of providing a stronger level of knowledge and issues relating to contemporary events.

## 2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

### Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development and respects their needs.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of 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 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.*
- *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.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and 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 learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*

### Findings

- Neapolis University Pafos is a relatively new University that has undertaken a rapid process of expansion in terms of its portfolio of programmes. The University has experience of delivering teaching and presently has in the region of 950 students studying on Bachelor's programmes. We were provided with a range of information relating to the structure of the proposed BSc programme in International Relations and Security but this did not include study guides for the courses. The degree programme follows a structured pathway where all students take the same courses with limited optionality.
- The programme is structured in a way which makes use of already existing infrastructural and human resources.
- The degree programme follows a similar path in terms of student learning and assessment, with the assessment diet being split between a 30% midterm and a 70% final exam on all courses. Academics have discretion for deciding on the exact nature of the 30% assessment component, with the pedagogic committee having responsibility for ensuring that there was no assessment duplication within the course. However, there was a lack of clarity and guidance as to the way in which the committee operated and the principles surrounding the nature of assessment and how duplication of the same assessment would be avoided. While this appears to be in keeping with the custom and practice of the Cypriot educational system, it does mean that there is an absence of information with regard to how the nature of the assessment of the degree maps against the learning outcomes. In addition, there is a lack of clarity with regard to how the assessment of the courses prepare students to undertake extended pieces of writing as well as the capacity to undertake primary research.
- The process of marking is predominantly undertaken by one member of staff, with there not being an established practice of internal moderation of work or the sharing of marking practices among staff members. Student marks are reviewed in advance of, and at, the assessment board and where marking distributions are out of line with the student profiles further investigation is undertaken. In addition, students have the right of appeal on individual marks at which point the work is reviewed by an additional

staff member. While this process is in keeping with the Cypriot higher education system, consideration might be given to stronger processes to enable the sharing of good practice among the teaching staff given the developing nature of the provision and the policy of recruiting additional occasional staff to support the teaching provision.

- As far as student contribution and involvement in the research process is concerned, while the students benefit from a dedicated methodology course, the course is itself focused more on research writing techniques as opposed to the methodologies employed in undertaking research.

### Strengths

- The programme includes courses which have a regional focus and engage with topical issues relevant to the locality.
- There are strong working relationships between academic and support staff.
- Excellent focus on the student experience, including a commitment to small group teaching.
- The programme is supported by an established provision within the University for the running and organisation of undergraduate programmes.
- The University makes good use of the Moodle platform and provides students with additional support in the form of help manuals.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Further consideration could be given to how the process of student assessment provides sufficient variety to test students at Bachelors level and also to prepare them for writing essay pieces.
- It is not clear how formative assessment is built into the degree programme.
- Further consideration should be given to how assessments are coordinated across the academic provision, particularly with regard to the 30% component that is determined by individual members of staff teaching each course.
- Further consideration should be given to the internal marking policy to ensure the dissemination of good practice.
- Further consideration should be given to developing the research level component of the programme of study at the more advanced levels of semesters 7 and 8 through the engagement with or exposure to primary materials in the taught courses and/or case studies.

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
2.1	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication.	8
2.2	The number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	8
2.3	A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching staff and the students, is applied.	9

2.4	The methodology utilized in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	6
2.5	Formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.	5
2.6	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	6
2.7	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.	8
2.8	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.	9
2.9	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.	8
2.10	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been enlightened by research.	8
2.11	Students, teaching and administrative staff participate in research activities and projects.	7
2.12	Students are trained in the research process.	5

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

- 2.1-2.2 The committee was impressed by the strong staff-student ratio and the commitment to teaching in small groups. There was, however, a lack of clarity as to the exact nature of the student learning experience in terms of the documentation that was provided. For example, to what extent are there learning environments that are student-led or more interactive, such as seminars? To what extent is the study programme designed in such a way as to enable students to have the opportunity for more research-led learning experiences in the final year of study?
- 2.3 The committee considered that students would be able to engage well with academic staff. Feedback from existing students on other degree programmes indicated that students valued the supportive learning environment that was on offer at Neapolis University Pafos. It was also evident from conversations with teaching staff that they prided themselves in having a student-focused approach to their teaching.
- 2.4 More information could have been provided with regard to the overall philosophical underpinning of the programme and the approach of the individual courses. For example, there is an absence of information relating to the methodological processes relating to the undertaking of research and a lack of detail with regard to students engaging with primary materials.

- 2.5 Insufficient information was provided in relation to how formative assessment operates. There was a general absence of information in relation to the operation of formative and summative assessment.
- 2.6 The only information on assessment is the 30% / 70% assessment component weightings. More information is required to provide a full appraisal of the assessment diet. It would be useful to have been provided with information relating to how the University considers the progression of assessment learning between years of study given the consistency of the assessment pattern.
- 2.7 There was evidence of opportunities for undertaking study visits in terms of the existing programmes within the University. However, it was not clear how and where such additional educational learning opportunities would be integrated within the degree programme as it is presently structured.
- 2.8 The committee considered that the courses engaged with appropriate up-to-date approaches.
- 2.9 The teaching materials show an appropriate engagement with relevant materials. However, there is scope for further consideration to ensure the alignment of the materials to the specific courses and the year of study.
- 2.10 The outlines for the courses demonstrate that students are to engage with up-to-date research materials. However, in many cases these are mainly course books, which the students follow on a chapter-by-chapter basis with little additional input in the form of critical and theoretical perspectives or discussions of specialized topics and cases.
- 2.11 It was unclear how BSc students would engage in a research environment.
- 2.12 The methodology module was more focused in how to write as opposed to an understanding of research theories, methods and approaches. For example, students were not provided with training on statistical packages, such as SPSS or R.

### 3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

#### Standards

- *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 program, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *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).*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participate in teaching the study program.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Assessment of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

### Findings

- The teaching staff at Neapolis University Pafos have a strong commitment to the subject area of International Relations and an awareness of the expected level of standards. The teaching team are aware of procedures relating to career development and staff evaluation. There was less certainty regarding the priority areas in staff recruitment, especially as relates to gender balance.
- The qualifications of teaching staff are adequate. They all possess doctoral degrees and have variable numbers of publications, which on the whole conform to their rank. The output of teaching staff addresses both regional audiences (being written in the Greek language and published by national Greek presses) and international audiences (published in English in peer-reviewed journals and other presses). These publications on the whole address the teaching areas of each of the staff. On the whole they are not, however, used as teaching material, missing the opportunity to integrate research findings into teaching. On the whole, full time teaching staff belong to a two-tier system, comprising three professors, four assistant professors, and a lecturer. There is also one part-time visiting professor. Tenured staff teach 27 weekly periods, while full time untenured staff teach 24 weekly periods and the PT staff teaches 9. Only one member of staff, the PT lecturer, is female.
- The programme director collaborates extensively with another member of staff. Another two members of staff collaborate in the publication of collective volumes while other staff members collaborate in the co-authoring of work and in project collaboration within and outside the department to various degrees. The staff that the team met showed awareness of each other's areas of interest and exhibited a good degree of collegiality.
- Assessment of the teaching staff takes account chiefly their research activity. Opportunities for mobility are provided, and there was some indication that teaching activity is appreciated.

### Strengths

- Members of staff largely teach on areas closely connected with their research.
- There is a mix of staff across ranks. Rank is on the whole consistent with qualifications.
- Student evaluations are conducted and taken into account.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There was no indication of teaching observation taking place among staff. Teaching results and teaching skills appear to be solely assessed through student evaluations. Teaching observation could be instituted.
- Staff promotion, and the ranking of incoming staff, and therefore remuneration, appears to be based chiefly on publications. Formal criteria on assessing teaching quality could be instituted and included in the parameters for staff evaluation.
- Staff could draw more on their research for teaching, by integrating their work into reading lists. While their teaching connects closely with their research interests, there is a downside to this close correlation, in the sense that major aspects of IR and security are not adequately addressed (critical IR, human security, peace building), possibly because they lie outside the comfort zone of teaching staff. Future recruitment

drives might focus on the provision of more substantial teaching on these areas. Plans to address the current gender imbalance could also be integrated in such drives.

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
3.1	The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.	8
3.2	The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:	
	3.2.1 Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline	8
	3.2.2 Publications within the discipline	8
3.3	The program attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	N/A
3.4	The specializations of visiting professors adequately support the program of study.	N/A
3.5	Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.	7
3.6	In every program of study the special teaching staff does not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.	8
3.7	In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time staff, ensures the quality of the program of study.	8
3.8	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards of the program's quality.	8
3.9	The teaching load allows the conduct of research and contribution to society.	9
3.10	Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of teaching staff safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.	8
3.11	The program's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the program of study.	9
3.12	The results of the teaching staff's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.	8

3.13	The teaching staff are provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	8
3.14	Feedback processes for teaching staff with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	7

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

- 3.1 The staff, as described above, have adequate expertise to teach the course.
- 3.2 The staff have a range of expertise and teach courses suitable to their interests. In discussions with the team they exhibited collegiality and enthusiasm for the courses they teach and the institution they serve. The programme addresses aspects of regional and national politics but seems to lack visions for long-term prospects, including in areas of social development.
- 3.3-3.4 Although the University has experience of engaging with visiting professors and while there is commendable practice in terms of having an advisory board, it was not exactly clear to the committee how and where visiting professors would fit in terms of the overall delivery of the degree programme and as such the committee did not feel that it was fully able to provide a numeric value to this aspect of the evaluation. However, the committee did recognize the commitment of the University to engage in this area of development.
- 3.5-3.7 Staff are supported in dissemination and research activities. In the case of a PT visiting lecturer, it was unclear whether she is classified as a visiting professor or special teaching staff. In any case, it is assumed that the special teaching staff do not exceed the 30% standard. If indeed she is classified as special teaching staff, the time allocation for her teaching is 15% (9 of 60 weekly hours).
- 3.8 The student-staff ratio is commendable. Examples were provided of detailed feedback on students' work, indicating also an in-depth engagement with students' overall performance.
- 3.9 The teaching load allows time for research and staff engage in public activities.
- 3.10 The financial viability presentation indicated a strong direction of travel for the programme.
- 3.11 The programme coordinator has a great deal of experience. However, it was not quite clear what the local operation of the programme management was in terms of the role of the University Rector versus say the role of programme leader.
- 3.12 Teaching staff publish research in relevant journals and academic publishing houses.
- 3.13 Staff appear to be supported in terms of the level of training to undertake their role. However, the committee were not presented with a staff development and training policy in relation to the level of support provided. Basic training opportunities are provided, which could be bolstered.
- 3.14 Student feedback exists and is taken into account but there were no examples of how teaching has been modified in relation to this.

#### 4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
- *Information on students, like key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analyzed.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities).*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff.*
- *Students' mobility is encouraged and supported.*

### Findings.

- The student learning experience is typified by small teaching classes with close working relationships with the academic members of staff.
- There appears to be a clear policy in terms of the admissions requirements for the degree programme.
- We were not provided with progression information with regards to the University as a whole or on comparative programmes. As such, it is difficult to be able to provide judgement on the University's existing experience with regard to student retention. We were not provided with information regarding progression calculations or the expected level of courses to be completed before a student can progress from one year to another.
- Student resit appear to take place in September. It is possible for a student to fail the first assessment component and pass the course if they achieve an overall mark of 50% for the course through the grade in the final assessment. This raises a question as to whether all the learning outcomes can be met depending on the extent to which the specific assessment components in the first assessment component are different from the second assessment component.
- Students receive detailed feedback on their work. It is not clear as to the role of formative versus summative feedback in terms of the student learning experience.
- Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff through a form that they have to complete in class.
- There are statutory mechanisms for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff.

### Strengths

- The University benefits from an excellent staff-student ratio. There is a commitment to small group teaching and to applied knowledge within the degree programme.
- There are opportunities for students to participate in exchange programs across Europe. However, clarification could be provided with regard to the particular year/semester when the exchange is likely to happen.
- Student evaluation procedures exist for teaching classes.
- There are indications that student mobility exists.
- Online resources are available to students, including educational material, web links etc.
- The digital education platform (Moodle) supports many services of synchronous and asynchronous communication, education, teaching and more generally learning process.
- There is a focus on providing students with placement/internship learning opportunities. However, this is not scheduled in the current planning document for the BSc degree.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The student admission requirements of the programme of study have to be specifically described in the relevant documents in order to be more useful and suitable for prospective candidates.
- There is a need for greater clarity with regard to the handling of student appeals.
- There is a lack of clarity with regard to the way students with learning support needs are provided with additional support during their studies. There was an absence of written documentation relating to the likes of sheltered exams.
- Although there are student evaluation forms for teaching experiences, further clarification could be provided with regard to the monitoring and report of these forms and how students are informed of outcomes.

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
4.1	The student admission requirements of the program of study, are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria.	6
4.2	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.	9
4.3	The program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	7
4.4	Students participation in exchange programs is compared favorably to similar programs across Europe.	8

4.5	There is a student welfare service that supports students with regards to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
4.6	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	7
4.7	Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.	5
4.8	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.	7

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

- 4.1. The student admission requirements of the programme of study are not specifically described. Further information is required with regard to the specific student grade performance and subject areas at advanced secondary level. The existing entry requirements only stipulate English and Maths at grade C at First Certificate level. Given the lack of the request for more specific academic performance, it is likely that the student cohort will come from a broad educational background. Further consideration could be given to how the University will support students in their transition to Higher Education given the absence of more defined entry requirements.
- 4.3,4.6-4.7 Although the institution has indicated by its previous experience through the operation of other undergraduate courses that the programme's evaluation mechanism by the students, the statutory mechanisms for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff are effective, further clarification could have been provided with regard to the operational procedures of these mechanisms.
- 4.5 More information could have been provided in relation to the operation and provision of welfare and broader pastoral care to students. The supporting information refers to documentation and policies that were not provided in the submission.
- 4.8. There was an absence of specific information regarding the support provided to students. The supporting documentation needs to be clearer with regard to the policies that underpin the support provided to students. The discussions with staff did not provide sufficient clarification in this area for the committee to have full confidence.

## 5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

### Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, financial, physical and human support resources\*) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study program.*  
\* Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.

*Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counselors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff*

- *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.*
- *Teaching staff is involved in the management of financial resources regarding the program of study.*

### Findings

- The overall resource environment for the student learning experience is positive. Students benefit from good physical teaching infrastructure, including the provision of social and break-out spaces as well as extra-curricular facilities such as sports.
- The University has invested in physical on-campus resources to support the student learning experience. This includes the provision of whiteboards within classrooms and dedicated IT classes.
- The University uses Moodle as an e-learning platform which provides students with additional resources including study information.
- The University has a dedicated library with academic librarian specialist support. The library contains a good range of hard copy resources and an excellent range of electronic resources.
- The University has dedicated IT teaching spaces and study spaces for students.
- The University has a plan to support the development of the teaching programme in terms of staffing resources and has dedicated administrative support.
- The University provides students with generous printing credits and facilities to print.
- The overall resource environment of the University is positive, with good social and sport facilities to support the learning experience.
- The University has dedicated support services such as a careers service.

### Strengths

- An integrated campus environment where there is strong provision for academic teaching space and good extra-curricular social space.
- A commitment to build a new campus and the investment in resources.
- A strong library provision with an extensive range and number of e-books, e-journals and resources.
- The University is equipped with the first and only private academic Library in Cyprus with electronic repository, a web platform consisting of academic staff publications, and student dissertations.
- The University provides generous support for academic development, including attendance at conferences and support for publishing academic journals in open access format.
- There is a clear plan to support the academic delivery of the programme through the hiring of additional staff.

- Dedicated support services, including quality assurance.
- There is a commitment to support research activity through the likes of the Neapolis Research Notes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is scope for further clarification with the regard to welfare and pastoral support. There was a lack of clarity with regard to the University's position with regard to providing support to students with specific learning needs.
- There is a tendency for the teaching programme to be delivered in lecture format. Further thought could be given to the way in which students are engaged in a more discursive educational experience through the likes of seminars.
- Although the library resource environment is a positive one, particularly with regard to electronic resources, further consideration could be given to the range of resources in relation to the variety of courses and the impact of demand on resources at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:	
	5.1.1 Facilities	8
	5.1.2 Library	9
	5.1.3 Infrastructure	8
	5.1.4 student welfare	7
	5.1.5 academic mentoring	7
5.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	7
5.3	Suitable books and reputable journals support the program of study.	9
5.4	An internal communication platform supports the program of study.	9
5.5	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	9
5.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.	9
5.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.	9

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

- 5.1.1-5.1.3 Students have access to a good range of library resources, including electronic databases. The overall infrastructure of the University is sound in terms of the resource environment, such as the provision of IT resources, Wifi access, and classroom teaching space. Consideration may be given to the development of additional space for group work.
- 5.1.4 More detail could have been provided with regard to the provision of welfare support services, including the availability of services to support the likes of dyslexia.
- 5.1.5 Further clarity could be provided with regard to the way that students can be supported and mentored in their studies. Reference was made to the role of academic counsellor in the discussion with staff. It was not clear if students were provided with an academic counsellor or personal tutor who would provide support throughout their studies.
- 5.2 Student monitoring appears to take place in the context of attendance and academic performance at assessment boards. There does not appear to be a policy of early intervention, for example, to tackle under-performance by students.
- 5.3-5.5, 5.7. A strong library provision with an extensive range and number of e-books, e-journals and resource. The aforementioned infrastructure is available also for teaching materials.
- 5.6. Students benefit from a library provision that includes access to major electronic databases, e-books and e-journals. While this resource supports the student learning experience, there are not enough available hardcopies of books for students. In terms of teaching materials, students face difficulties, having to wait for the return of the limited number of existing hardcopies available to them and afterwards can take the books they need for their studying.

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

The committee were impressed by the overall provision of Neapolis University Pafos and the dedication shown by staff to supporting the student learning experience. The University has a clear sense of focus and the plans for the development of a new campus were particularly impressive. The University has experience of delivering degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level, including distance learning. It also has experience of working with academic partners, notably Middlesex University and the University of Hull. Neapolis University Pafos is also part of a variety of academic and professional networks which provide opportunity for staff development and engagement with latest practice.

The committee considered the design of the degree programme to be satisfactory and noted that it represented in a number of places some excellent practice. At the same time, however, the degree programme does have a number of courses where the committee

thought that further consideration is needed with regard to the course content and also the overall placing of the degree programme in terms of the semester and year of study. In part, this was about the level of progression that a student would have throughout their studies. But at the same time, the committee did think that the programme did not provide as clear a linkage to delivering on the entire programme learning outcomes, such as in relation to the development of students' knowledge of theory. The committee also thought that there might be scope for electives in the programme to assist with student choice.

While the committee appreciated that the higher education landscape in Cyprus shaped and influence the assessment weightings of the courses, they did consider that further thought could be given to clarifying the type of assessments to be found in the programme and that thought be given to the way in which some assessments might be better placed at introductory or advanced level. This is important in being able to clarify the opportunities for students to test their written and oral communication skills, which is noted as a learning outcome.

The committee considered that further clarification should be given to the way in which students are supported in terms of their welfare and given the general educational background of students coming onto the programme, that consideration be given to how students are supported in terms of their engagement with a wide range of courses.

The committee was impressed by the University's commitment to develop the International Relations subject area with the commitment to new degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. This, however, potentially raises questions about the way in which staff and students will be supported in the transition to the running of the new degree programmes at the same time. The committee felt that there was opportunity to further develop the bespoke offering of the BSc programme, particularly with regard to the more applied nature of the subject content and the linkage to courses in the areas of law, psychology, business and economics. At present the rationale for these courses is not fully developed in terms of the programme outline and the committee considered that the University could benefit from a reflection on this in developing their marketing strategy.

#### E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Prof Alasdair Blair</b>	
<b>Prof Knud Erik Jørgensen</b>	
<b>Dr Olga Demetriou</b>	
<b>Mr Zenonas Hadjicostas</b>	

Date: ...13 April 2019....