

Doc. 300.1.3

Date:

Feedback report from EEC experts

- **Higher education institution:** Neapolis University
 - Town: Pafos
 - **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**
 - **In Greek:** Προπτυχιακό στην Ψηφιακή Επιχειρηματικότητα (συμβατικό), 4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, (8 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα), 240 ECTS
 - **In English:** BSc in Digital Business (Conventional) 4 academic years (8 academic semesters), 240 ECTS
 - Language of instruction: Greek, English

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 and 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015 and N. 47(I)/2016].

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Fredrik Nordin	Professor of Marketing	Stockholm University
Niki Panteli	Professor of Digital Business	Royal Holloway University of London
Savvas Papagiannidis	Professor of Innovation and Enterprise	University of Newcastle
Giorgos Longinos	Student	University of Cyprus

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) and the Higher Education Institution’s response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *Below each assessment area the EEC must circle the degree of compliance.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

EEC's recommendations

All courses carry the same number of ECTS which does not reflect the amount of work expected and invested by students. It will be useful to review the course outlines and ensure consistency in terms of how ECTS are applied. This may be an opportunity to rationalize the courses offered and potentially reduce the number offered.

HEI's response

Although we understand that we could further rationalize the courses offered and potentially reduce the number of courses offered NUP would better prefer to keep the structure as it is and review the issue accordingly based upon the internal quality assurance procedures of the University, and the midterm program review procedures, after 3 years of implementation, including the feedback by the students. However, an enhanced Internship (12 ECTS) course has now been integrated into the program. The same is the case for the Dissertation course (12 ECTS), **see Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide.**

EEC's recommendations

The overall learning aims/objectives and outcomes of the programme will need to be reviewed. When doing so, the teaching team can consider reducing the number of objectives, focusing on core issues. The team can also group them to highlight key areas of interest. These will need to be mapped against the courses to ensure that all of them are met.

HEI's response

Done,

We revised programme's objectives and learning outcomes as follows and a mapping among PLOs and Courses has been realized, **see Annex 2, Programme's PLOs.**

Program objectives have to provide students with:

1. Broad foundational knowledge in finance, marketing and management adequate for a degree in business.
2. An understanding of the tectonic changes that occur in the landscape of marketing, finance and management due to disruptive technologies.
3. Capability to appreciate the Digital transformation underway for most business sectors and industries.
4. Capacity to utilize digital marketing within a larger marketing and / or media strategy.
5. Introduce students to the fundamental building blocks of the emerging landscape of cutting-edge financial technology (Fin Tech).

EEC's recommendations

The objectives list will need to include broad business and management ones that will ensure that students have the foundational disciplinary knowledge necessary to tackle more complex issues

HEI's response

Done,

There are 8 distinct areas of learning outcomes related to broad business and management ones. Upon completing the program, students are expected to be able to:

1. Attain a foundational knowledge in Marketing including consumer behavior so that they may evaluate and implement key concepts related to digital marketing, e-commerce and social media marketing.
2. Appreciate the impact of various disruptive technologies
3. Understand entrepreneurship financing.
4. Recognize stock market and platform technologies
5. Be aware of cyber-security issues
6. Appreciate issues related to Managing and analyzing big data
7. Recognize the basic philosophy behind financial engineering and risk management
8. Understand computer programming principles

EEC's recommendations

When the revised programme objectives are available, the teaching team can consider adding new courses that will better reflect the expectations of a business degree. For example, courses in supply chain and logistics or sales / retail management (that will naturally link to the ecommerce course) or human resources management that can pave the way for the digital leadership course. The teaching team can also consider introducing a course in international business.

HEI's response

Done,

NUP proceeded with the following program changes, (*see Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide*):

1. The course **BUSN306 Corporate Risk Management** became elective.
2. The course **DBA205 Trading Technologies** has been transferred from 3rd semester to 5th (in the place of Corp. Risk Management) to generate space in the 3rd semester for a more basic course, **the BUSN301 Human Resource Management**, which has now been added.
3. The course **FINA 400 International Financial Management** has been added as an elective in the 6th semester.
4. The course **CSE04 Distributed Ledger Technologies** has been added as an elective in the 6th semester.

EEC's recommendations

The above recommendations is one that needs to be considered more widely for all courses. The programme specification needs to ensure that courses develop disciplinary knowledge and skills progressively from one term to another and from one stage to the next.

HEI's response

NUP proceeded in the above courses changes:

1. The course **ACCN101 Principles of Financial Accounting** has been transferred from 2nd semester to 3rd semester.
2. The course **BUSN203 Business Finance** has been transferred from 3rd semester to 2nd semester (in place of Principles of financial accounting)
3. The course **BUSN 306 Corporate Risk Management** has been transferred to the 5th semester as elective.

4. The course **DBA205 Trading Technologies** has been transferred from 3rd semester to 5th semester (in the place of Corp. Risk Management) to generate space in the 3rd semester for a core course in **Human Resource Management BUSN301**

EEC's recommendations

The teaching team can consider adding a small group of electives (in years 3 and 4), offering students the opportunity to undertake courses that are closer to their interest. This can help improve student experience

HEI's response

Done,

We added the following electives:

1. **BUSN 306 Corporate Risk Management** became elective
2. **CSE04 Distributed Ledger Technologies** added as a new elective
3. **FINA 400 International Financial Management** added as a new elective

EEC's recommendations

Given the institutional arrangements and the links with the parent company, opportunities to embed industry specific/practice activities into the curriculum could be explored. This can help students contextualize their theoretical training, gaining valuable practical experience. This can be a great advantage when it comes to enhancing their future employability prospects.

HEI's response

Done. An enhanced (12 ECTS) Internship elective course has been integrated into the programme.

Please circle one of the following for:

Study programme and study programme's design and development

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

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

EEC's recommendations

Although the EEC has seen evidence of formative feedback of related courses, a coherent policy should be implemented across the programme

HEI's response

Done, a policy of formative assessment is already available and students are aware before the beginning of their courses, see *Annex 6, Assessment Guidelines for Written Assignments - UNDERGRADUATE*.

EEC's recommendations

Even though the EEC was pleased to see evidence of industry sponsored dissertation topics, we encourage the teaching team that this becomes a more widespread practice, where possible.

HEI's response

Done, the comment has been noted and the teaching team will be encouraged to incorporate industry sponsored dissertation topics.

EEC's recommendations

The EEC acknowledges that the program has both a research methods course and a dissertation course. Both these courses should be mandatory, and the research methods course should precede the dissertation course. It should include quantitative, as well as qualitative methods. The dissertation should be extended to at least 12 ECTS to enable a substantial research effort, including data collection and analysis

HEI's response

Done. The Dissertation has become mandatory and has been extended to 12 ECTS. The **BUSN412 Research Methods** course has been replaced from the course **METH600 Research design and Empirical Methods** and transferred as mandatory to Semester 4th, in the place of **STAT203 Statistics II** course, *See Annex 1, Revised Study Guide*.

EEC's recommendations

Another opportunity could be to introduce more extra-curricular activities, such as a hackathon where students are brought together in multi-disciplinary teams to find solutions to problems by integrating various skills and competencies. These can offer an opportunity to achieve the same objectives that currently are served by having the programming courses which can then be removed from the curriculum

HEI's response

We will be happy to include the said proposal under the 3 years' midterm review of the programme.

Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching, learning and student assessment

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC's recommendations

To reduce the teaching load for permanent teaching staff to enable more focus on research that can in turn be reflected on the programme's content

HEI's response

Done, NUP has a **Permanent Teaching Staff workload Policy**, see Annex 3, to ensure that teaching staff can also focus on research, among other tasks

EEC's recommendations

We would recommend that the pedagogic skills and practices of existing and future teaching staff are further developed (at the point of recruiting them, but also on an ongoing basis) to prepare them for their roles

HEI's response

Done, the NUP has institutionalized a concrete mentoring program for the existing and future staff to prepare them for their roles. **See Annex 7, Academic Staff mentoring Policy, Annex 8, Interaction Working Methodology.**

The mentoring program is both at the point of initial recruiting, but also on an ongoing basis as well. It includes:

- a) Formative Assessment requirements
- b) Feedback to students
- c) Interactivity
- d) Research opportunities
- e) Administrative responsibilities.

Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching Staff

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

EEC's recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. To consider extending the opening hours of the library.

HEI's response

Done, following the above suggestions, we are extending Neapolis University library opening hours to cover all examination periods. More specific:

A week prior to each semester's examination period, the opening hours are extended to cover week **days 8:00 – 22:00, Saturday 9:00 – 19:00 and Sunday 9:00 – 17:00.**

An internal communication system has already been implemented via our learning management system (LMS) platform (Moodle) to provide students direct access to the library. This allows student access to all library relevant information such as news, announcements, events, frequently asked questions and support manuals. In addition, the LMS internal communication system allows students to interact directly (online chat) with library staff.

Furthermore, **a dedicated e-ticketing system has also been implemented** in parallel to the LMS internal communication system, which enables library staff to handle and address all inquiries and requests.

Access to online library databases is possible at all times (24/7) and has been enriched via **our virtual private network (VPN) solution.**

Finally, **separate workstations have been placed outside the library** accessible at all times (24/7) which provide direct access to online library databases.

EEC's recommendations

To clarify and standardize the admission requirements

HEI's response

Done, the admission requirements and criteria have been clarified and standardized, *see Annex 1, Revised Study Guide. Chapt 4.1.*

EEC's recommendations

Introduce an online seminar for students about time and stress management, e.g., as an extension to S.K.E.P.S.I.S.

HEI's response

Done, this is a productive comment already consulted with S.K.E.P.S.I.S to endorse an on line seminar about time and stress management, as part of their induction in the program.

EEC's recommendations

To encourage more participation to student exchange scheme such as Erasmus, which can help improve the overall learning experience students get

HEI's response

Done. A comprehensive **Training Program for Students** is envisaged whereby participation in ERASMUS program is fully incorporated. We also intend to bring in experiences from students who have already participated in the program, thus transferring positive experiences and lessons learnt, *see Annex 4, NUP Students Training manual*

Please circle one of the following for:

Students

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

EEC's recommendations

The EEC feels that the following improvements can occur:

1. It has been mentioned several times during the visit to the university that the currently small number of the academic community (i.e., student population) and the ability to sustain close connections between students and teachers can help the university address issues related to psychological or pastoral support. However considering the new programmes will increase the student population), such support should be better structured and operationalized

HEI's response

Done, the comment has been noted and upon a potential increase of student's population, such support will be further structured and operationalized

EEC's recommendations

Improvement on resources relevant to qualitative methods could be possible, by extending, for example, the available software with the addition of tools such as nVivo

HEI's response

Done, the University already proceeded in the provision of the recommended software tool, **see Annex 5, NVIVO NUP invoice**.

EEC's recommendations

The Department can consider adding a new computers cluster that is accessible 24/7.

HEI's response

Done, a **separate workstations cluster has been installed outside the library**, accessible at all times (24/7), which allows direct access to online library data bases and information.

Please circle one of the following for:

Resources

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's recommendations

HEI's response

Please circle one of the following for:

Additional for distance learning programmes

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's recommendations

HEI's response

Please circle one of the following for:

Additional for doctoral programmes

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's recommendations

HEI's response

Please circle one of the following for:

Additional for joint programmes

Non-compliant

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully compliant

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC must provide constructive conclusions and final remarks.

The EEC appreciates that the University and its staff have considered their recommendations and adopted most of them. The assessment is therefore changed to "fully compliant" throughout, except for the first assessment area ("Study program and study program's design and development") where the "substantial compliant" remains. Although the EEC appreciates that a course in Human Resource Management has been added to the programme, they would have expected a bit more extensive change in this direction so that the program had better reflected the expectations of a business degree. The EEC finds that there is still an over-reliance on finance modules that are not relevant to the Digital Business. The EEC also appreciates that a revision of the programme's objectives and learning outcomes is suggested in the HEI's response. Even these, however, carry greater weight on financial issues than would be expected in a business programme. Once again, the EEC would like to thank the University for its cooperation and wish the teaching team all the success with this programme.

A. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Nordin, F	
Papagiannidis, S	
Panteli, N	

Date: 26/09/2019