

Doc. 300.1.1/3

Date: 30/03/2021

# External Evaluation Report

## (Joint - conventional - face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Neapolis University Pafos (NUP)
- **Collaborative Institution(s):**  
University of Western Macedonia (UWM)
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Economics,  
Business and Computer Sciences
  
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Business and  
Economics, Department of Accounting and Finance
  
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**In Greek:**  
Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα Εκπόνησης Διατριβών σε  
συνεπίβλεψη με το Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας (3  
χρόνια, Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα, 180 ECTS)  
**In English:**  
PhD Program with Co-Supervision (3 years, Doctorate  
Diploma, 180 ECTS)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**  
**In Greek:** Concentrations  
**In English:** Concentrations



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

Prior to the meeting, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) studied the following materials, submitted and prepared by the two Institutions:

- Cover letter 07.14.281.051 submitted to QYQAA in both English and Greek
- Application for the evaluation, Document 200.1 in both English and Greek
- Official Gazette Decision 3, 5063, Annex 1
- Guide for the PhD Thesis with Co-supervision, Annex 2
- Academic staff-Advisory Committees, Annex 3
- Template for the PhD Thesis in both English and Greek, Annex 5
- Sample of PhD Title, Annex 7
- The NUP Research Environment, Annex 8
- Presentations in PowerPoint form
- CVs of Academic Staff
- Syllabus of MFIN690 Research Methods Course
- Signatures of Institutions in both English and Greek
- Virtual tour program of Neapolis University Pafos (NUP)

The evaluation of the new joint programme took place on 17/03/2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was held virtually on the Zoom platform. After a brief introduction of the EEC, the Rector of NUP, Prof. Pantelis Sklias, and the Rector of the UWM, Prof. Theodoros Theodoulidis, both welcomed the EEC and presented their Institutions. After the initial welcome, there was a discussion around questions of the EEC regarding the University and the joint programme.

Next, there was a meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee of both institutions with presentations regarding Quality Assurance, and a discussion followed around performance evaluations of students, teaching and administration staff and quality assurance mechanisms.

The EEC later had a meeting with the Heads of the relevant departments and the programme's Coordinator, with a presentation by each professor of the School's structure, the programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programme's design and development.

Afterwards several QA sessions took place with the teaching staff, students and graduates and administrative staff separately. In addition, there was a virtual visit of the premises of the institution.

The online visit ended with a discussion between the committee and the Rectors of the two universities as well as with the Heads of the relevant departments and the programme's Coordinator with final questions and clarifications.



The willingness and cooperation of the members of the institutions within the framework provided by the procedure is noted. Several questions were raised during the presentations and generally the presenters and staff were friendly and supportive providing answers.



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Pascalis Raimondos</b>	Professor (Chair)	Copenhagen Business School and Queensland University of Technology
<b>Bjørn N. Jørgensen</b>	Professor (Member)	Copenhagen Business School
<b>Aurora García-Gallego</b>	Professor (Member)	Jaume I University, Spain
<b>Neophytos Christodoulou</b>	Student (Member)	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.*



### 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.*

The focus here will be the institutions' quality assurance procedures – a detailed focus on the programme's structure and quality will follow in the next sections.

Following the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance Guidelines, NUP has a quality assurance committee (QAC) that evaluates and endorses documents to be used in quality assurance. The committee makes sure that both students and staff are surveyed and evaluated to ensure a continuous reflection and improvement. It lies in the realm of the committee to ensure that each programme is evaluated every 3-5 years and it provides stakeholders an overview of the programme's status. In particular, the QAC has responsibility for the following areas:

1. Design and Approval of programs
2. Student – centered learning, teaching and assessment
3. Student Admission, progression, recognition and certification
4. Teaching and Administrative staff
5. Learning resources and student support
6. Information Management
7. On – going monitoring and periodic review of programs

The findings from the QACs work are submitted to the Senate of the university and as such are publicly available. The EEC is convinced of its efficient functioning.

A similar QAC exists in the UWM and the presentations made during the onsite virtual visit has reassured the EEC of its efficient functioning.

### Strengths

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

Both universities in the current collaboration are relatively new. As such, their governance structures are state of the art and there is a clear focus in making sure that their programmes are correctly monitored. Thus, while the programme is new and has never been under the QAC's scrutiny, there is nothing that indicates a potential problem – on the opposite, the fact that there are two QACs involved seems to be a strength.

### 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.*

None

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



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

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

### Sub-areas

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

#### 2.2 Practical training

#### 2.3 Student assessment

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

#### Standards

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

- *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 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.*
- 

### 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.*

As the programme under consideration is a co-supervised PhD programme, the student learning is focused on developing students' abilities to do research. Such an ability is secured through three main activities: the selection process, the coursework, and the supervision.

Since the programme is new and has not started yet, we had no practice to assess. Thus, the EEC focused on the material provided and the discussions with the faculty.

Regarding supervision, it was noted that the departments involved in this PhD programme have staff that are research active and thus can provide supervision. Moreover, the fact that students can access supervisors from two institutions was seen as an advantage. The lack of co-location in supervision could also be seen as a disadvantage and therefore the EEC tried explicitly to ask into that particular issue.

In our discussions with PhD students and graduates from a similar programme with the University of Peloponnese, Greece, there was no doubt that students were very happy about their experience. They had both access to specialised experts across two schools, and access to other students that they could share experiences and peer learning opportunities. The EEC was convinced that the co-location issue was negligible compared to the benefits that the two schools could harvest: while NUP was drawing on the expertise of an established Greek university with an innovative mindset, the UWM was drawing on the expertise of a Cypriot university that has expertise in attracting international students. Such benefits will lead to gains to both universities and to their students and thus should be encouraged. Potential problems should be dealt in different ways (more on this later).

Regarding coursework, it was noted that there will be a single obligatory course that all new PhD students will need to take, viz. Research Methods. Furthermore, the faculty reassured the EEC that more courses could be allocated to students if deemed necessary. However, it should be noted that both the Research Methods course and other potential courses were not designed to be at the PhD level and thus some attention is needed regarding students that already have had such units before. The possibility of 'course substitution' should be mentioned explicitly in the PhD

programme description. Such substitution can happen when a student goes to another university for a visit and can be allowed to follow a course there instead of the NUP course. The EEC acknowledges that a full structured PhD coursework is not possible when cohorts are small and encouraged the two faculties to consider a more flexible structure, where students can take such courses in other universities. It is important that such courses are assessed in a “pass” or “fail” manner and are explicitly included in the final study overview.

Regarding selection, it was noted that the two institutions have experience with attracting PhD students. Attracting good PhD students from third countries in the region was mentioned several times as an opportunity for NUP. The general requirements regarding admission and selection are clearly spell out in the PhD Programme description (see section 5 in the “PhD Programme and Co-Supervision” document) and it will be discussed in more detail below.

It would be good if NUP could assure that the Research Methods course is based on student-centred learning and teaching activities, as such activities play an important role in stimulating students’ motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. In particular, the student-centred learning and teaching process

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement
- regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys;
- reinforces the student’s sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff;
- promotes mutual respect in the student - teacher relationship;
- applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students’ complaints.

In addition:

- the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;
- the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;
- the 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;
- student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;
- the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances
- assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;
- a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

### Strengths

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

The co-supervision design of the programme is a strength as students can be allowed to participate in a larger variety of courses if needed and draw upon more specialised supervision that exists across the two institutions.

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 recommended that the programme was more explicit regarding coursework when students had done similar level courses prior to entering the programme. Such situations exist often, and it may be best that explicit reference to ‘course substitution’ needs to be included in the programme description. At the same time, one could also mention the uptake of more coursework if deemed necessary by the supervision team and the student. Taking PhD level courses in other universities or participating in short PhD Summer Schools around the world, can be an excellent alternative for universities with small cohorts of PhD students.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	<b>Compliant</b>
2.2	Practical training	<b>Compliant</b>
2.3	Student assessment	<b>Compliant</b>

### 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.*
- *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:*

- *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?*
- *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

*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.*

Directly taken from the application, it is clear the existence of an advisory committee that has three members. From the material shared in google drive, there is a big list of members that can be part of this committee. It is assumed that the three members are chosen from this list.

With respect to the academic/teaching staff, in the team of NUP there is a list of 17 PhD-qualified researchers (the Dean of the School, 4 professors (1 Emeritus), 3 associate professors, 3 assistant professors and 7 lecturers), with a diversified number of research areas represented in the group. In the team of the UWM, there are 7 PhD-qualified members (5 professors, 3 assistants and 2 lecturers).

### Strengths

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



The research staff is adequate in number and in experience. There are different research areas (education, political sciences, finance, public economics, business, tourism, law etc.) represented in the team, especially in the case of NUP. The participating list of members from UWM is smaller and more focused in the area of business and finance.

Although somehow heterogeneous in number and quality of the journals, the teaching staff is considered with enough experience in doing research so as to successfully achieve the goals of this application.

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.*

From the information available, although it is clear the research experience of the members of the two teams, it is not possible to single out the experience in supervising PhD students. The EEC recommends that the CV of the individuals to be presented in a homogeneous format that allows for the inclusion of information about the PhD theses supervised and defended by each team member.

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

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

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

##### Sub-areas

- 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

###### Standards

- *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

###### Standards

- *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

###### Standards

- *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*
  - *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

*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.*

Since the programme is new and has not started yet, we had no practice to assess. Thus, the EEC has focused on the material provided and the discussions with the faculty.

In general terms, regulation concerning all sub-areas is pre-defined in the application. The EEC acknowledges that the application of the PhD programme includes a quite structured admission, progression, recognition, and certification. The NUP has the full responsibility for the management and administration of the program.

Regarding admission, the programme is open to all candidates in possession of a master's degree, without restriction with respect to profiles or research areas. The application proposal includes a list of relevant content, which is important in order to assure a careful and correct admission of the best candidates.

Regarding student progression, after admission takes place, there are several components that the application briefly describes: research methods course, internal seminars, research seminars and research output. The research output obligations before completion of the doctorate are specified: to present in scientific conferences (at least twice) and to have at least one scientific conference proceeding or a peer-reviewed scientific journal. However, no details are included with respect to differentiation among research areas or quality/IF levels of the publication. The application mentions an Annual Progress Report for the PhD student, but with no details about the procedure or the content of such report.

It was noted that the two institutions have experience with attracting PhD students. Attracting good PhD students from third countries in the region was mentioned several times as an opportunity for NUP.

### Strengths

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

The two institutions involved have experience with attracting PhD students. This programme with co-supervision will be a good opportunity for NUP to attract PhD students from third countries.

The list of characteristics specified in the content of the application proposal is considered a good strategy to attract good candidates and to assure a good matching among students and supervisors.

### 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.*

We recommend to:

- Specify whether there is a limited number of admitted candidates per year. In the debate of the visit this number was around 20, but it is not specified in the version of the application presented to the EEC.
- Specify whether the programme is open to specific research areas. In the text of the application, it seems to be open to any area, which it is not realistic, given the specific areas of specialization of the staff.
- Introduce more details with respect to the extra formative courses required for the candidates whose background is not directly related to the areas of research of the programme. The application now is too open when stating that “admission is open to all candidates in possession of a master’s degree”.
- In the application proposal, it should be required a “tentative” title of the dissertation, instead of what it seems to be a final title. In the list of the content, it would be better to ask for the opinion of the candidate with respect to the significance of the research proposal, instead of asking in so absolute terms.
- Revise the text of the application with respect to the “Research Methods” course, since in a part of the text (pg. 6) it is said “Doctoral Candidates can attend...”, while in pg. 9 it is stated that “Doctoral Candidates have to attend...”. The EEC would like the applicants to consider the possibility of making this course obligatory but conditioned to each candidate’s background. The possibility of ‘course substitution’ should be mentioned explicitly.
- Attracting good PhD students from third countries in the region was mentioned several times as an opportunity for NUP. However, although the languages of the programme are English and Greek, the web page of the UWM should offer the information not just in Greek but also in English.
- Regarding students’ progression, more elaborated steps as for the monitoring of the research course, internal and research seminars should be in place. For example, there needs to be more clarity regarding the role played by the internal and research seminars for

the PhD students' progression. The student should know the frequency of the seminars and what it is expected from his/her participation, also the consequences of not participating.

- EEC agrees that the strong focus is maintained on quality research as proposed, and is concerned that having targets and minimum requirements in quantity of publications and quantity of conference presentations might distract from the focus on research quality. We recommend incorporating an acknowledgement that quality of publications is more important than quantity of publications and that such a prioritization should always be guiding the milestones put forward.
- Include any possibility for funding the PhDs. The EEC asked about this detail in the visit and it seems that there are possibilities for agreements with the private sector. The applicants should invest on this.

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

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

## 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

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *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 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.)?*
- *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

*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.*

A doctoral program co-hosted by two universities allows leveraging resources and becoming international. The joint doctoral program with a Greek university may become a vehicle for initiating more international collaboration among researchers and doctoral students.

### 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 learned that the graduation requirement includes presentations at two scientific conferences as well as a conference proceeding or a published article. These requirements would be reasonable in other fields of doctoral studies. The EEC expressed concerns that conference proceedings are uncommon in some academic fields within business studies, and that publication processes are long in leading academic journals and thus not likely within 3-5 years allotted without compromising quality of publication outlet. Given that publication frequency and outlets vary, the EEC recommends that graduation requirements be tailored to the fields of accounting, business, finance and economics.

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

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



## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### Sub-areas

#### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### 6.3 Supervision and committees

### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

### 6.3 Supervision and committees

#### Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*
  - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - *support for writing research papers*

- *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

### 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.*

Selection criteria: The admissions process is flexible and requirements are tailored to students' prior experience. Students without economics/business background will be required to take other preparatory courses that are relevant for their chosen fields (for example, a PhD in the area of FinTech may require different coursework). One possibility is to attract doctoral students from African nations. This is exploiting the advantage of geographic location in the South-Eastern corner of EU to bring doctoral education to countries that may struggle to educate doctoral students. The existing doctoral programs (although in different fields) have had good first placements of some of its graduates in academia.

Proposals and dissertation: Doctoral students face formal milestones of writing an annual 2-page summary of their research that is submitted to an advisory committee. Clear guidelines are laid out for doctoral students including the use of Turnitin with a plagiarism threshold.

Supervision and committees: The stated goal is to have a doctoral program with 20-25 doctoral students across 3 years of study. This seems like a sensible size that is above critical mass for each cohort. The EEC learned that faculty from NUP (as well as UWM) are excited about the opportunity to supervise and work actively with doctoral students to promote joint research.

### Strengths

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

The EEC agrees with permitting that dissertations need not be monothematic. Further, the required progress reports presented to a committee is great.

### 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.*

Since many doctoral students may want to continue in academia upon graduation, it seems worthwhile to ensure that the doctoral students learn how to present their own research most effectively, thereby preparing them for a career that involves teaching in addition to research. In addition to the written form documenting their progress, doctoral students could also be required to present their own research regularly during the program.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>6.1</b>	Selection criteria and requirements	<b>Compliant</b>
<b>6.2</b>	Proposal and dissertation	<b>Compliant</b>
<b>6.3</b>	Supervision and committees	<b>Compliant</b>

## 7. Eligibility (*ALL ESG*)

### Sub-areas

**7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement**

**7.2 The joint programme**

**7.3 Added value of the joint programme**

### **7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement**

#### Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
  - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
  - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

### **7.2 The joint programme**

#### Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

### **7.3 Added value of the joint programme**

#### Standards

*The joint programme leads to the following added values:*

- *Increases internationalisation at the institutions.*
- *Stimulates multinational collaboration on teaching at a high level and makes cooperation binding.*
- *Increases transparency between educational systems.*

- *Develops study and research alternatives in accordance with emerging needs.*
- *Improves educational and research collaboration.*
- *Offers students an expanded and innovative arena for learning.*
- *Increases highly educated candidates' employability and motivation for mobility in a global labour market.*
- *Increases European and non-European students' interest in the educational programme.*
- *Increases competence at partner institutions through cooperation and implementation of a best practice system.*
- *Increases the institution's ability to change in step with emerging needs.*
- *Contributes to tearing down cultural barriers, both personal and institutional.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

### 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.*

The two institutions are perfectly situated for this joint programme. As mentioned previously, the strength of a well-established public Greek university can be enhanced by cooperating with a newly established private Cypriot university that shares same principles and academic ambitions. The ability of the Cypriot university to offer PhD studies in English will open a potential new market attracting good candidates from third countries. Such a market will provide both revenues to NUP and research experience and assistance to NUP and UWM staff members.

The EEC is convinced that this can be an interesting cooperation and has recommended a number of small adjustments in order to strengthen the programme.

### Strengths

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

Innovation in delivering academic programmes and capturing new markets is always important and indeed very welcome. The proposed cooperation presents itself as a good idea and, with small adjustments, can really make a difference across both institutions. It may also become a model that other universities may want to copy.

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 has made several recommendations that can improve the functioning of the programme and ensure a higher quality of candidates. These recommendations address both legal (e.g. the use of the English language in UWM's web material) and academic matters that can easily be met without constituting a hindrance for the realisation of this programme.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
7.1	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	<b>Compliant</b>
7.2	The joint programme	<b>Compliant</b>
7.3	Added value of the joint programme	<b>Compliant</b>

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF (Consider also the added value of the joint programme).*

The EEC has provided several recommendations throughout this report that aim in improving the quality of this programme. In particular, the following list was mentioned under section 4 (repeated here for convenience):

- Specify whether there is a limited number of admitted candidates per year. In the debate of the visit this number was around 20, but it is not specified in the version of the application presented to the EEC.
- Specify whether the programme is open to specific research areas. In the text of the application, it seems to be open to any area, which it is not realistic, given the specific areas of specialization of the staff.
- Introduce more details with respect to the extra formative courses required for the candidates whose background is related to the areas of research of the programme. The application now is too open when stating that “admission is open to all candidates in possession of a master’s degree”.
- In the application proposal, it should be required a “tentative” title of the dissertation, instead of what it seems to be a final title. In the list of the content, it would be better to ask for the opinion of the candidate with respect to the significance of the research proposal, instead of asking in so absolute terms.
- Revise the text of the application with respect to the “Research Methods” course, since in a part of the text (pg. 6) it is said “Doctoral Candidates can attend...”, while in pg. 9 it is stated that “Doctoral Candidates have to attend...”. The EEC would like the applicants to consider the possibility of making this course obligatory but conditioned to each candidate’s background. The possibility of ‘course substitution’ should be mentioned explicitly.
- Attracting good PhD students from third countries in the region was mentioned several times as an opportunity for NUP. However, although the languages of the programme are English and Greek, the web page of the UWM should offer the information not just in Greek but also in English.
- Regarding students’ progression, more elaborated steps as for the monitoring of the research course, internal and research seminars should be in place. For example, there needs to be more clarity regarding the role played by the internal and research seminars for the PhD students’ progression. The student should know the frequency of the seminars and what it is expected from his/her participation, also the consequences of not participating.
- EEC agrees that the strong focus is maintained on quality research as proposed, and is concerned that having targets and minimum requirements in quantity of publications and quantity of conference presentations might distract from the focus on research quality. We recommend incorporating an acknowledgement that quality of publications is more important than quantity of publications and that such a prioritization should always be guiding the milestones put forward.



- Include any possibility for funding the PhDs. The EEC asked about this detail in the visit and it seems that there are possibilities for agreements with the private sector. The applicants should invest on this.

Overall, we see this new co-supervision doctoral programme as an interesting innovation, and we would like to propose some small adjustments based on our experience. We are fully aware of the contextual reality of the two universities, and we hope that our recommendations will help enhancing the product they wish to offer.





## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Pascalis Raimondos</b>	
<b>Bjørn N. Jørgensen</b>	
<b>Aurora García-Gallego</b>	
<b>Neophytos Christodoulou</b>	

**Date:** 30/03/2021