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Date: 07.10.22

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY PAFOS

- **Collaborative Institution(s):**
NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY

- **Town:** PAFOS

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND
COMPUTER SCIENCE, NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY
PAFOS
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF
PIRAEUS

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS, NEAPOLIS
UNIVERSITY PAFOS
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
UNIVERSITY OF PIRAEUS

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
• **3-5 years, 180 ECTS**

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

In Greek:

ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΚΠΟΝΗΣΗΣ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΩΝ
ΣΕ ΣΥΝΕΠΙΒΛΕΨΗ ΜΕ ΤΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ

In English:

PhD PROGRAM WITH CO-SUPERVISION

- **Language(s) of instruction: English and Greek**
- **Programme’s status:** Choose status
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The site visit took place on 3 October 2022. It was an in-person visit. The committee is satisfied with the preparations that took place prior to the evaluation and over the course of the day's site visit. A series of very useful presentations were delivered. These were followed by a valuable set of interactions and discussions. Colleagues from across both institutions, ranging from top leadership, faculty, and support staff, engaged with the committee in a highly respectful and productive manner. The committee found the visit to be extremely worthwhile and highly informative.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Kevin Orr	Professor	University of St Andrews
Louis Brennan	Professor	Trinity College, Dublin
John K. Christiansen	Professor	Copenhagen Business Schol
Petros Efstathiou	Student Member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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

There is a formal policy for quality assurance for the proposed programme of study which was accessible to the committee. The policy elaborates the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes, and specifies the responsibilities of teaching, administrative staff and students in quality assurance. The policy encompasses academic integrity and freedom and 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, including its strategic positioning 'at the frontier of the EU.' Both the use of the partnership model and external professors ensure that the PhD programme benefits from external expertise. It is also therefore in line with the ambitions of the Council of Europe. The proposed programme is subject to a formal institutional approval process, reflected in the submission and is in line with the NQF for Higher Education. Given that this is a joint programme with participations from active researchers across the two institutions it can be expected that the latest research in the given discipline will be embedded in the programme. The Coordinating Committee will screen the PhD applications, validate the subjects for the doctoral theses, and oversee the appointment of supervisors/ advisory committee. Periodic systematic review is built into the programme through the 4-member advisory committee, reporting back to the Coordinating Committee.

1.3 Public information

Standards

Clear information was provided to the committee about learning outcomes, selection criteria, and relevant standards.

1.4 Information management

Standards

Though this is a new programme, there are existing processes in place within both institutions. There appears to be a very collaborative relationship between the two institutions which will be important in maintaining an effective approach to information management. As for other aspects of the programme, there is a need to ensure a cross-institutional approach. It will be important to ensure that students are involved in the evolution of the programme.

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 staff in both institutions expressed a great 'hunger' for the creation of a PhD programme. This was very compelling and the enthusiasm for the new programme, and relatedly for research productivity, augurs well. Both universities seem well prepared to launch the programme successfully in the context of their institutional missions.

Strengths

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

The programme appears to meet a defined market need for a PhD programme at this level. The staff enthusiasm as well as the collaborative and joint nature of the programme also offer strengths.

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.

There is an opportunity to have greater clarity around the avenues that can be pursued by students if they have difficulties or concerns during their PhD journey. Equally, given the specificities of a PhD programme, there is scope to further develop and articulate elements of quality assurance that reflect the nature of the programme. Here, if we are to offer a critical



comment, some aspects of the documentation occasionally struck us as being quite generic, and an expression of QA approaches in other programme arenas.

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	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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 proposal includes appropriate ways of orientating students to the PhD process, including research methods and the development of the thesis topic. The overall design of the PhD programme should make it possible for students to pursue their interests and build these into their doctoral journey.

In theory, having a 4-person advisory panel could be of benefit to students (and we can imagine instances where that would be the case). However, we also express some caution here. There is potential for students to receive mixed or conflicting messages. Likewise, it is important to ensure effective processes for dealing with student complaints, and to ensure that these are appropriate and consistent across both institutions.

2.2 Practical training

Standards

Students have the option of engaging in practical teaching assignments and exercises in the institutions. Since the PhD is essentially the pursuit of academic inquiry there is perhaps less rationale for inclusion of practice-related elements in the programme. There is however the opportunity for practical training in areas supportive of the pursuit of inquiry, such as databases, software packages, etc.

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

In the documentation there is a clear explication of the steps involved in student assessment for the PhD. The processes are transparent and in line with sectoral norms. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved.

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 committee is satisfied that the proposed programme is appropriate and adequate in terms of student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment.

Strengths

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

The programme follows best practice in relation to student-centred teaching and assessment and is supported by a very clear set of learning objectives to be achieved by students in the programme.

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.

A formal procedure for student appeals is in place. Our recommendation here is for greater clarity around the availability of a formal procedure for student appeals, particularly in relation to supervision shortcomings or complications.

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	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

It is clear that the institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff, and use student evaluations as part of their wider processes. The teaching staff are research active and well qualified to undertake this doctoral initiative. There is clear evidence of professional development activities. We would welcome appropriate investment in ongoing training for staff in PhD supervision, as we know that the demands involved are particular and ever evolving. The visiting staff who will participate in the PhD are also experienced and accomplished academics.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

The plan to limit staff to a maximum of 5 PhD students is appropriate. There is a good range of staff in both universities who are well placed to support the PhD programme.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

The teaching staff are eager to extend their research activities into a doctoral programme and to benefit from the development of a PhD community. They are clear that this will also further stimulate existing research collaborations across the two institutions. Teaching staff are publishing actively within their areas and contributing to wider academic leadership. It is important that the new programme is reflected in and supported by the workload allocation model.

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.

In relation to research profiles and professional experience, there is good capacity across the institutions to deliver the programme. Existing linkages between the two universities and the track record of successful collaboration suggests good prospects for the PhD programme.

Strengths

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

The collaborative nature of the programme, the profile of staff, and evidently their high level of motivation suggest considerable strengths.

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.

Training and support for supervisors should be recognised as an ongoing rather than one-off need. There is scope to consider the development of thematic areas as the programme develops. This could for example be pursued through the issuing of specific calls for proposals in topics related to local/regional issues or shared staff interests.

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

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

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

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

Regulations regarding student admission are in place and these appear to be clear and appropriate.

4.2 Student progression

Standards

Students have to meet formally with their advisory committee every three months. Every year the advisory committee makes an evaluation of the students' progress.

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

Standards here are sound and appropriate, including in relation to prior learning and qualifications.

4.4 Student certification

Standards

Again, the arrangements seem to be appropriate and in line with sectoral norms.

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 committee is satisfied with the planned approaches in this area.

Strengths

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

The role of the advisory committee, if properly managed, could be a strength (but see our earlier caveats). The clarity of arrangements around student admissions, progression, recognition, and certification is also 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.

As for other aspects of the joint programme, it is important to maintain consistency of approach across both contexts.

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	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

Based on our site visit to Pafos, the teaching and learning resources appear to be adequate and fit for purpose.

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

The committee was given a tour of the library facilities. These seemed well stocked and included quiet study spaces. The committee received an excellent exposition of the IT infrastructure and allied systems. From the documentation and site visit these appear to be fit for purpose.

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

At the moment the resources seem appropriate. However in the context of predicted growth in the programme, constant attention will be needed to ensure adequacy of resources for the future. The committee were impressed with the level of commitment of the staff.

5.4 Student support

Standards

Students' mobility is promoted by the joint nature of the programme.

It did not seem fully apparent that due consideration is being given to the requirements of special needs students in terms of, for example, accessibility. More could also be done to promote and communicate such arrangements and provision.

It is important that the library provision reflects and supports the evolving and specialized needs of doctoral students.

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.

Overall, the level of learning resources and student support seems adequate. There may be a need to give greater attention to cater for special needs students.

Strengths

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

We note the ambitious plans for the upgrading of ICT provision in the university, and the commitments to invest in this area. The plans for a new campus, incorporating a medical school, is likely to be a game changer for the university in respect of resources and infrastructure.

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 committee acknowledges that there are some current issues in providing students and staff with access to the international network system, Eduroam. This is particularly relevant to PhD students, not least in supporting their ability to join in with international networks.

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

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

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

As per earlier sections of this Report, we are satisfied that specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the PhD programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined clearly and with transparency. The requirements for successful completion of the doctoral degree programme have been presented and explicated to the committee.

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the PhD proposal and the doctoral thesis are set out clearly. As part of how the submission process is specified, all PhD theses will be checked electronically to avoid plagiarism. There is clear evidence of supervisors being aware of sectoral norms in relation to expectations about thesis structure and length.

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

As recorded in prior sections of this Report, the architecture and processes for supervision and committees are clearly specified. Requirements around student progress and targets are set out in a transparent ways. The responsibilities and roles of the advisory and evaluation committees are well specified. The number of doctoral students that each faculty member supervises is determined, and limited to 5 students. Doctoral students are not only encouraged to participate in conferences, but required to do so.

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.

This is an ambitious programme, driven in part by the desire of faculty to develop a PhD community and to do so in a collaborative way across the two partner institutions. The programme holds out the promise of developing further the research ecosystem across the collaborating institutions.

Strengths

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

The milestones to be met by the students are well articulated. These include 3 outputs which structure the PhD journey and provide a basis for feedback and development. The ambition of the programme (e.g. a conference paper and two published outputs) is high.

In addition, there is convincing evidence that new programme fulfils a market need and is in line with the strategy of the two institutions.

There is evidence that the programme has been designed and developed with a great deal of care and consideration.

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.

Overall the committee are happy with the selection criteria and requirements and the detailing of the proposal and the dissertation. In relation to supervision and committees, the committee is generally happy with the proposed arrangements but as in our earlier comments we insert a note of caution in relation to the supervisory arrangements. In particular we suggest that the student advisory committee might have one of its members nominated as primus inter pares so that any differences among the members of the committee can be resolved thus ensuring that the student journey is not negatively impacted.

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

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

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 appears to be offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems. There is a wider cooperation agreement in place reflecting longstanding collaboration between the two universities. Terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid out to include coverage of the issues pertaining to the programme and the collaboration.

7.2 The joint programme

Standards

The programme is offered jointly between the partner universities with commitment to apply joint internal quality assurance processes. There is evidence of collaboration in the design, delivery and development of the new programme.

7.3 Added value of the joint programme

Standards

Pages 70-71 of the application clearly articulate the added value of the programme and this was also discussed during the visit. There is a good fit with the international and research strategy of the universities. It has high potential to increase research collaboration and further develop the research communities in the partner universities.

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 committee were impressed with this joint proposal which they feel holds much promise for the future and will likely benefit the collaborating institutions, the academic faculty members, and their students. It may have a catalytic effect on the fortunes of the region.

Strengths

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

Clearly the major strength of the proposed programme lies in the fusing together of two collaborating institutions and their staff. We found that the staff were hungry for this programme and highly committed to the programme's success.

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.

There are elements of risk built into the planned supervision arrangements, specifically the 4-member advisory committee (see earlier comments). It is highly advisable that one member of the committee be *primus inter pares*.

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	Compliant
7.2	The joint programme	Compliant
7.3	Added value of the joint programme	Compliant

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).

This is an ambitious programme that is driven by the laudable vision of the partner institutions and their cooperating academic faculty members.

There appears to be warm and constructive relationships in place between researchers across the two universities, which provides a strong basis for the successful development of the PhD programme.

In delivering the programme it will be important that a student-centred perspective is maintained and reinforced at all stages of the PhD journey. Here we note that the institutions have considerable experience in other areas of learning and teaching, but that a doctoral programme creates specific demands on faculty and administrative staff. It is therefore important that appropriate ongoing investments are made in the training and development of academic staff with regard to PhD supervision.

Looking to the future, there is a potential opportunity to nurture the emergence of focused thematic areas that would be valuable in developing further the research ecosystem across and beyond the two universities.

There is a good fit with institutional strategy and in particular the ambitions around internationalisation. There are many positive potential benefits arising from the new programme. These may include, for example, collaborations with industry and key sectors of the economy around research projects, and instilling a motivation for greater international labour mobility.

We thank the institutions for their documentation, as well as for their engagement during the site visit. We also wish to record our appreciation to the CYQAA officers for their exemplary support.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Kevin Orr	
Louis Brennan	
John K. Christiansen	
Petros Efstathiou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: October 7th 2022