

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 30/05/19

Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution:**

Neapolis University Pafos

- **Town:** Pafos, Cyprus

- **Program of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

In Greek: ΠΤΥΧΙΟ ΣΤΙΣ ΔΙΕΘΝΕΙΣ ΣΧΕΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΑ, 240 ECTS, 4 ΕΤΗ, ΠΡΟΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ

In English: BSc in International Relations and Security, 240 ECTS, 4 YEARS, UNDERGRADUATE

- **Language of instruction:** Greek/English

- **Program's status**

New program: Yes

Currently operating:

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. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution based on the External Evaluation Committee’s evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the program of study in each assessment area.*

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

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

1.1 Areas of improvement and recommendations

Comment 1: The vast majority of courses are compulsory. Students are only able to specialize in their final year from a very limited number of electives, having to choose between International Development Cooperation and Practical Diplomacy in semester 7 and between Migration, IR and Security and Project Management in semester 8. The committee thought that further consideration may be given to the provision of additional electives to provide students with the opportunity for further specialization.

Done, elective courses have been added as follows: a) 5th semester: Foreign Policy in the 21st Century or Political Psychology; b) 6th semester: Foreign Policy Analysis or Peace Building; c) 7th semester: International Development Cooperation or Practical Diplomacy or Human Security; d) 8th semester: Migration, International Relations and Security or Project Management or Placement. Peace Building, (For the revised Program Structure and the Syllabi see Annex 1: Revised Program Study Guide: Sections 6 and 14

Comment 2: There is no provision for a BSc dissertation assignment through the degree and as such it is not clear as to how students will be tested with an extended piece of writing that involves engagement with more advanced sources.

Done. The program does not envisage BSc dissertation, which is fully compatible with the Cypriot education system. However, students will be tested with pieces of writing since the midterm assessment, as it has now been revised entails, among others written assignments, group projects, literature reviews as well as presentations and analysis of case studies, which ultimately involve engagement with more advanced sources. (See Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide: Section 10).

Comment 3: The assessment pattern throughout the degree program followed the same approach of 30% for a mid-term exam and 70% for an end of semester exam. There was a lack of clarity as to the exact nature of what the assessment components comprised at a course level as well as an absence of information with regard to how assessments would develop as a result of progression throughout the degree program.

Done, clarity as to the exact nature of what the assessment components comprised at a course level as well as information with regard to how assessments would develop as a result of progression throughout the degree program is provided. Midterm exams have been replaced with Midterm assessment. (All the information requested is in Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide, Section 10)

Comment 4: Although the degree programme has a good range of courses, the committee had some concern about the way in which the content of some of the courses reflected the title of the course and also the appropriate level at which it was pitched. For example, the Introduction to International Relations course that is taught in the first semester is in reality a Foreign Policy Analysis course, with the content and reading materials being more appropriate to an advanced level course as opposed to an introductory first semester course.

Done. The course entitled "Introduction to IR" has been revised and the course entitled "Foreign Policy in the 21 Century" has been introduced (For the revised Program Structure and Syllabi See Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide, Sections 6,14)

Comment 5: While the program has a focus on security studies, the course content does not reflect a holistic view of security, such as the provision of courses on human security, peace building, sustainable development goals, and gender and security. While we appreciate that are inevitable resource constraints in terms of the capacity to deliver the program, there was no sense of a vision and future direction of the program to take into consideration this wider content, or the extent to which such content could be taught within the established course offering, aside from occasional lectures.

Done. Two (new) courses in Human Security and Peace Building have been introduced (For the revised Program Structure and Syllabi See Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide, Sections 6,14)

Comment 6: While the committee recognized the contribution that a number of the core courses in the area of psychology, economics, business and law offered to the student learning experience, the committee also considered that there was a need for further clarification with regard to how these courses integrated into the overall program aims. During the visit to the University, members of staff emphasized that these courses only represented a small percentage of the overall degree program. The committee thought that further consideration was still required to ensure that student performance in classes outside of their core area would not be disadvantaged in comparison to core subject knowledge classes on International Relations.

Done, the core course “Psychology” has been replaced by a core course in “Political Sciences” to be more closely related to the subject matter. Furthermore, the Micro economy course has been replaced by Political Economy course. (For the revised Program Structure and Syllabi See Annex 1, Revised Program Study Guide, Sections 6,14)

Comment 7: During the meetings, it was communicated to the committee that the general direction and vision of the courses from psychology, law, and economics are to impart students with the ability to understand, for example, psychological aspects of security and IR, and with the expectation that this will provide students with an ability to grasp the likes of more advanced economic concepts later examined in the IPE class. However, this was not clear in the vision set out in the course documents. Equally, it is not clear why the study of migration is relegated to an elective in the very final semester, while other courses that might not necessarily feature as course components in typical IR or security courses (e.g. risk analysis and forecasting) are given compulsory status and taught earlier (5th semester in the particular case).

Done, see response above comment 6.

Comment 8: The methodology course was focused more on research design as opposed to the techniques applied to research methods. Some consideration could also be given to practical research methods and the way that students can be equipped with the necessary research skills for their writing assignments and skills which allow them to collect primary data. No consideration was given to the ethical aspect of research, which in the context of a degree program focused on IR and security studies would be helpful.

Done. The methodology course has been revised accordingly (see Annex 1, Section 14)

Comment 9: The program’s focus has a propensity towards to be towards issue areas, e.g. energy and conflict, as opposed to providing a more balanced level of knowledge and understanding across all areas of IR, e.g. theory and country studies. The committee

considered that the program did not have a sufficient level of taught content that focused on theories of IR, with there being no opportunity for students to take IR theory courses beyond the first year. Apart from the fact that this is not consistent with the intended learning outcomes of the program, the committee considered that students would not be able to deploy theoretical knowledge and understanding to enable them to fully tackle some of the more advanced courses that were on offer at later stages of the degree program.

Done. The "Introduction to IR" course has been entirely revised accordingly to get further focused on Theories of IR, a "Political Science" course and a "Political Economy" course have also been introduced. (see Annex 1, Sections 6,14.)

Comment 10: There was a lack of clarity with regard to the University's objectives in terms of students obtaining placements/internships and the structure of the degree program. The panel discussions indicated that a placement/internship would result in an additional elective. However, this was not highlighted in the planning documentation. The panel were also concerned about the possible dilution of subject content with the insertion of a placement and the lack of clarity as to the linkage of the placement to the degree program. At the same time, the discussions around the aspiration to connect to regional society and security-related authorities suggest that internships could also be enabling synergies between internships and dissertation. Further clarification is therefore required in terms of the operation of placements/internships.

Done, a placement opportunity has been introduced in semester eight as an elective. (see Annex 1, attached Placement syllabus, Section 6,14).

1.2 Comments

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

A full and detailed set of information on Disabilities and Complaints Handling is attached. (Annex 2)

Comment 1.3: The QA and standards document that was presented for the BSc program in Annex 5 provided was for the most part the same information that was used in all of the documentation. While we appreciate that there will be an element of crossover between all of the programs within the University, we did think that more information could have been provided with regard to QA procedures and also student welfare support. For example, while there were hyperlinks to the likes of the careers service, we thought that the program could have benefited from a clearer positioning with regard to how employability skills were embedded. Elsewhere there was an absence of information relating to the likes of support for students with dyslexia or for example how broader adjustments are made to take into consideration student disability, e.g. additional time in exams.

Response: In Annex 2 see attached information on: a) welfare student support b) support to students with disabilities, see related answer in above comments.

With regard to how employability skills were embedded, a placement opportunity has been introduced (see Annex1)

Comment 1.4: It was apparent from the information presented and the supporting documentation that QA procedures are driven by academic considerations. However, more information would have been helpful to clarify the exact nature of some of the committees and structures that were referred to in the documentation and also the presentation, e.g. the

pedagogic committee (terms of reference, membership, meeting times etc). The committee did not have access to existing committee minutes, meetings, schedules which would have confirmed the operational aspects of such procedures.

Done: TOR, membership, meeting times, minutes of Pedagogical Committee are attached (see Annex 3)

Comment 1.5: The committee were not presented with specific information in relation to the academic calendar, the disclosure of information to students and web pages and is therefore unable to comment. The committee was of the opinion that students would be provided with training to complete assignments and examinations. However, there was a lack of detail in terms of the pedagogic underpinnings of these procedures. No information was provided regarding information for examinations. While information was provided with regard to the ability for students to provide feedback on their class experience, there was a lack of detail as to how this information would be analyzed, reviewed and then acted upon to close the feedback loop to students.

Response: See attached screen shots on the academic calendar, the disclosure of information to students as well as information for examinations (Annex 4).

Comment 1.6: The committee felt that while the learning outcomes of the program were broadly reflective of the undergraduate level of study that there was scope for further reflection on the linkage between the learning outcomes as set out in section B.2 of the application document and the courses taught. For example, although theoretical knowledge is identified as a key learning outcome, the program only had one theory course in the second semester of the first year of study.

Response: The theoretical knowledge component has been strongly enhanced by (See Annex 1):

- a) reforming the existent introduction to IR course;
- b) introducing a Political Science course by replacing the Psychology course;
- c) introducing a Political Economy Course by replacing Micro economic course.

Comment 1.7: The committee felt that for the most part the purpose and design of the program was satisfactory. However, the committee felt that there was scope for further information relating to how employability was embedded within the program and the extent to which students were able to build on knowledge and learning in earlier modules as their studies progressed. Although the discussions with the program team indicated that the focus was on students applying knowledge gained in one year of study to another, there was less clarity with regard to students being able to integrate the likes of theoretical understanding and or being faced with more challenging assessment tasks such as case studies and document reviews.

Done: A placement elective has been introduced in semester eight. The Mid Term “exams” have been replaced by Mid Term “Assessment” to integrate the likes of theoretical understandings and or to be faced with more challenging assessment tasks such as case studies and document reviews. (see Annex 1, Sections, 6,10,14).

Comment 1.8: The program offered a fixed diet of courses in the first three years of study, with electives only available in the final year. The committee considered that there might have been more room for greater levels of specialization within the degree program. The committee also considered that there was scope for further consideration to the nature of the assessment in each of the courses, with for example a clearer sense of how the assessment tasks differentiated between levels to provide an indication of the progression of student

learning. The committee considered that the level of equipment within classrooms was excellent and were impressed by the IT resources.

Done: Additional electives have been added as above already stated, while assessment tasks have been considerably enriched (see Annex1)

Comment 1.9: While the expected learning outcomes are clear, we felt that the program would benefit from a stronger alignment between the program learning outcomes and the courses on offer.

Comment 1.10: The committee considered that there was scope for further consideration of the way in which the learning outcomes were mapped against the courses within the program.

(both 1.9-1.10): Done.

1. **“Introduction to IR” course content has been substantially revised;**
2. **“Research Methodology in International Relations” has been revised;**
3. **“Political Science”, “Political Economy”, “Foreign Policy in the 21st Century”, “Peace Building”, “Human Security”, “Placement” have been introduced;**
4. **Elective courses have been added;**
5. **Mapping of program PLOs and CLOs is now incorporated into the Revised Study Guide (see Annex 1, Section 6).**

Comment 1.11: Further consideration could be given to the way in which the learning outcomes in relation to knowledge of IR theory is embedded in the degree program. It was unclear how students would be tested both orally and in writing throughout the degree program as there was an absence of information in relation to the assessment components apart from the division between mid-term and end of semester examinations. To this end, there was an absence of detail in relation to where and when students would be tested through the likes of presentations and essays.

Done:

1. **As mentioned above related IR theory courses have been added;**
2. **The Midterm Assessment component has been enriched and clarified (see Annex 1, Sections, 6,10,14).**

Comment 1.12-1.14: Although the program makes use of up-to-date materials, there is potential for a stronger alignment between the research focus of the members of staff (and their publications) and the courses on offer.

Response: As long as the program begins, the staff will further align the research focus and the courses on offer.

Comment 1.16: The content of the program might benefit from further reflection to ensure that all of the courses reflect the expected level of study, e.g. the Introduction to IR course, and the exact placing of the courses in terms of the years of study.

Response: See previous responses regarding the provided changes.

Comment 1.17-1.19: The credit system was appropriate and in conjunction with national standards.

Comment 1.21-1.22: It would have been helpful to have had additional information relating to the operation of program management, such a program leader and the extent to which academics are provided with training and development as they progress into program management duties.

Response: See NUP continuous staff development and training policy and some specific staff training cases namely: 1. GDPR staff training; 2. Staff Training on DL education; 3. Staff Awareness and Consultation on University Institution Development (Annex 5).

Comment 1.24: There is scope for greater clarity in terms of the way that the program supports employability and relates to future career opportunities. The opportunity for a placement has not been indicated within the design of the program in its present configuration. Further consideration could be given to how employability skills are embedded within the program.

Done: A placement opportunity at semester eight has been introduced (Annex 1, Sections 6,14)

Comment 1.27: It is apparent that the program would be of benefit in terms of providing a stronger level of knowledge and issues relating to contemporary events.

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

2.1 Findings

Comment 1: Neapolis University Pafos is a relatively new University that has undertaken a rapid process of expansion in terms of its portfolio of programs. The University has experience of delivering teaching and presently has in the region of 950 students studying on Bachelor's programs. We were provided with a range of information relating to the structure of the proposed BSc programme in International Relations and Security but this did not include study guides for the courses. The degree program follows a structured pathway where all students take the same courses with limited optionality.

Done: **Syllabi for all the courses were included in the initial application, as well as in the revised Program Study Guide currently attached. See Annex 1.**

Comment 2: The program is structured in a way which makes use of already existing infrastructural and human resources.

Comment 3: The degree program follows a similar path in terms of student learning and assessment, with the assessment diet being split between a 30% midterm and a 70% final exam on all courses. Academics have discretion for deciding on the exact nature of the 30% assessment component, with the pedagogic committee having responsibility for ensuring that there was no assessment duplication within the course. However, there was a lack of clarity and guidance as to the way in which the committee operated and the principles surrounding the nature of assessment and how duplication of the same assessment would be avoided. While this appears to be in keeping with the custom and practice of the Cypriot educational system, it does mean that there is an absence of information with regard to how the nature of the assessment of the degree maps against the learning outcomes. In addition, there is a lack of clarity with regard to how the assessment of the courses prepare students to undertake extended pieces of writing as well as the capacity to undertake primary research.

Done. **The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments in the form of essays, thus preparing them to undertake extended pieces of writing as well as the capacity to undertake primary research. The forms of assignments to assess students' capabilities and skills have been further enhanced and diversified to respond accordingly. (see revised Study Guide, Annex 1, Section 10)**

Comment 4: The process of marking is predominantly undertaken by one member of staff, with there not being an established practice of internal moderation of work or the sharing of marking practices among staff members. Student marks are reviewed in advance of, and at, the assessment board and where marking distributions are out of line with the student profiles further investigation is undertaken. In addition, students have the right of appeal on individual marks at which point the work is reviewed by an additional staff member. While this process is in keeping with the Cypriot higher education system, consideration might be given to stronger processes to enable the sharing of good practice among the teaching staff given the developing nature of the provision and the policy of recruiting additional occasional staff to support the teaching provision.

Done. We have incorporated stronger processes to enable sharing of good practice among the teaching staff, especially given the nature of the provision and the policy of recruiting occasional staff to support the teaching provision (Annex 6: ToR Assessment Board).

Comment 5: As far as student contribution and involvement in the research process is concerned, while the students benefit from a dedicated methodology course, the course is itself focused more on research writing techniques as opposed to the methodologies employed in undertaking research.

Done. The Research Methodology course has been adapted accordingly (Annex 1: Section 14, revised syllabus)

2.2 Areas of improvement and Recommendations

- Further consideration could be given to how the process of student assessment provides sufficient variety to test students at Bachelors level and also to prepare them for writing essay pieces.

Done. Midterm assessment and final exams now include a sufficient variety of assessment types to test students at Bachelors level and also prepare them for writing essay pieces (Annex 1, Section 10).

- It is not clear how formative assessment is built into the degree programme.
Done. Course Assessment has been modified to respond to the above recommendation. Assessment now, in case of written exams takes the form essay type questions and/or short answer questions, and/or multiple choice questions, while in the case of non-written exams form assessment may take the type of written assignment/essay, group project, literature review, or presentation and analysis of case studies. Final exams, besides the summative type of traditional written exams, may also take the form of assignment / essay, which further enlarges the scope of formative assessment within the program. Additionally, a qualitative process to further build up formative assessment in relation to students' feedback has now been incorporated. (Annex 1, Section 10).
- Further consideration should be given to how assessments are coordinated across the academic provision, particularly with regard to the 30% component that is determined by individual members of staff teaching each course.

Done. The Assessment Board coordinates assessments across the academic provision. (See Annex 6).

- Further consideration should be given to the internal marking policy to ensure the dissemination of good practice.

Done. Further consider was given to the internal marking policy to ensure the dissemination of good practice (See Annex 6).

- Further consideration should be given to developing the research level component of the programme of study at the more advanced levels of semesters 7 and 8 through the engagement with or exposure to primary materials in the taught courses and/or case studies.

Done. The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments through the engagement with or exposure to primary materials in the taught courses and/or case studies. (See Annex 1, Section 10)

2.3 Comments

Comment 2.1 ,2.2: The committee was impressed by the strong staff-student ratio and the commitment to teaching in small groups. There was, however, a lack of clarity as to the exact nature of the student learning experience in terms of the documentation that was provided. For example, to what extent are there learning environments that are student-led or more interactive, such as seminars? To what extent is the study programme designed in such a way as to enable students to have the opportunity for more research-led learning experiences in the final year of study?

Response: Although the program has not start yet, a series of IR and Security related high profile public discourse events have been realized, as well study visits of students, which demonstrate the strong commitment of the University to enhance the learning environment of the students.

The above initiatives are to developed in various forms, including seminars, after the accreditation of the program. The documentation for the above mentioned events has already been delivered to the EEA during their site visit. Additionally, NUP has a series of provisions and facilities to enhance students' interactivity including the NUP Web TV, the On Line Lecture Series and the Discussion Fora (See Annex 1, Sections: 8, 9,12 and Annex 7).

Comment 2.3: The committee considered that students would be able to engage well with academic staff. Feedback from existing students on other degree programs indicated that students valued the supportive learning environment that was on offer at Neapolis University Pafos. It was also evident from conversations with teaching staff that they prided themselves in having a student-focused approach to their teaching.

Comment 2.4: More information could have been provided with regard to the overall philosophical underpinning of the programme and the approach of the individual courses. For example, there is an absence of information relating to the methodological processes relating to the undertaking of research and a lack of detail with regard to students engaging with primary materials.

Done. The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments through the engagement with or exposure to primary materials in the taught courses and/or case studies. (See Annex 1, Section 10). Additionally, the Research Methodology Course has been adapted accordingly (See Annex 1, Section 14).

Comment 2.5: Insufficient information was provided in relation to how formative assessment operates. There was a general absence of information in relation to the operation of formative and summative assessment.

Done. Course Assessment has been modified to respond to the above recommendation. Assessment now, in case of written exams takes the form essay type questions and/or short answer questions, and/or multiple choice questions, while in the case of non-written exams

form assessment may take the type of written assignment/essay, group project, literature review, or presentation and analysis of case studies. Final exams, besides the summative type of traditional written exams, may also take the form of assignment / essay, which further enlarges the scope of formative assessment within the program. Additionally, a qualitative process in relation to students' feedback to further build up formative assessment has now been incorporated. (Annex 1, Section 10).

Comment 2.6: The only information on assessment is the 30% / 70% assessment component weightings. More information is required to provide a full appraisal of the assessment diet. It would be useful to have been provided with information relating to how the University considers the progression of assessment learning between years of study given the consistency of the assessment pattern.

Response: Done. The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments in the form of essays, thus preparing them for longer written assignments and projects. The types of assignments to assess students' capabilities and skills have been further enhanced. A qualitative process in relation to students' feedback to further build up formative assessment has now been incorporated. (See Annex 1, Section 10).

The ToR of the Assessment Board have been modified accordingly to enhance the processes with the aim to secure coordination of assessments across the academic provision (Annex 6).

Comment 2.7: There was evidence of opportunities for undertaking study visits in terms of the existing programs within the University. However, it was not clear how and where such additional educational learning opportunities would be integrated within the degree programme as it is presently structured.

Comment 2.8: The committee considered that the courses engaged with appropriate up-to-date approaches.

Comment 2.9: The teaching materials show an appropriate engagement with relevant materials. However, there is scope for further consideration to ensure the alignment of the materials to the specific courses and the year of study.

Comment 2.10: The outlines for the courses demonstrate that students are to engage with up-to-date research materials. However, in many cases these are mainly course books, which the students follow on a chapter-by-chapter basis with little additional input in the form of critical and theoretical perspectives or discussions of specialized topics and cases.

Done. The theoretical perspective of the program has been enhanced with the introduction of related courses. Additionally, by reforming the assessment form the students will have the chance to get involved into discussions of specialized topics and cases.

Comment 2.11: It was unclear how BSc students would engage in a research environment.

Done. The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the

students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments in the form of essays, thus preparing them to undertake extended pieces of writing as well as the capacity to undertake primary research. The forms of assignments to assess students' capabilities and skills have been further enhanced and diversified to respond accordingly. (see revised Study Guide, Annex 1, Section 10)

Comment 2.12: The methodology module was more focused in how to write as opposed to an understanding of research theories, methods and approaches. For example, students were not provided with training on statistical packages, such as SPSS or R.

Done. The Research Methodology Course has been adapted accordingly (See Annex 1, Section 14). Training on SPSS is now part of the course content.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

3.1 Findings

The teaching staff at Neapolis University Pafos have a strong commitment to the subject area of International Relations and an awareness of the expected level of standards. The teaching team are aware of procedures relating to career development and staff evaluation. There was less certainty regarding the priority areas in staff recruitment, especially as relates to gender balance.

The qualifications of teaching staff are adequate. They all possess doctoral degrees and have variable numbers of publications, which on the whole conform to their rank. The output of teaching staff addresses both regional audiences (being written in the Greek language and published by national Greek presses) and international audiences (published in English in peer-reviewed journals and other presses). These publications on the whole address the teaching areas of each of the staff. On the whole they are not, however, used as teaching material, missing the opportunity to integrate research findings into teaching. On the whole, full time teaching staff belong to a two-tier system, comprising three professors, four assistant professors, and a lecturer. There is also one part-time visiting professor. Tenured staff teach 27 weekly periods, while full time untenured staff teach 24 weekly periods and the PT staff teaches 9. Only one member of staff, the PT lecturer, is female.

The program director collaborates extensively with another member of staff. Another two members of staff collaborate in the publication of collective volumes while other staff members collaborate in the co-authoring of work and in project collaboration within and outside the department to various degrees. The staff that the team met showed awareness of each other's areas of interest and exhibited a good degree of collegiality.

Assessment of the teaching staff takes account chiefly their research activity. Opportunities for mobility are provided, and there was some indication that teaching activity is appreciated.

3.2 Areas of improvement and recommendations

Comment 1: There was no indication of teaching observation taking place among staff. Teaching results and teaching skills appear to be solely assessed through student evaluations. Teaching observation could be instituted.

Done. Teaching observation has been instituted (Annex 8: Staff Evaluation)

Comment 2: Staff promotion, and the ranking of incoming staff, and therefore remuneration, appears to be based chiefly on publications. Formal criteria on assessing teaching quality could be instituted and included in the parameters for staff evaluation.

Done. Formal criteria on assessing teaching quality have been instituted and included in the parameters for staff evaluation (see Annex 9: Staff Promotion Policy)

Comment 3: Staff could draw more on their research for teaching, by integrating their work into reading lists. While their teaching connects closely with their research interests, there is a downside to this close correlation, in the sense that major aspects of IR and security are not adequately addressed (critical IR, human security, peace building), possibly because they lie outside the comfort zone of teaching staff. Future recruitment drives might focus on the provision of more

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

Done. Related courses have been introduced into the programme. Under the CYPQAA provisions we had to submit the staff for the first two years of the program. Future recruitment will reflect the said recommendation accordingly.

3.3 Comments

Comment 3.1 The staff as described above, have adequate expertise to teach the course.

Comment 3.2: The staff have a range of expertise and teach courses suitable to their interests. In discussions with the team they exhibited collegiality and enthusiasm for the courses they teach and the institution they serve. The programme addresses aspects of regional and national politics but seems to lack visions for long-term prospects, including in areas of social development.

Done. New related courses have been introduced (see Annex 1).

Comment 3.3-3.4: Although the University has experience of engaging with visiting professors and while there is commendable practice in terms of having an advisory board, it was not exactly clear to the committee how and where visiting professors would fit in terms of the overall delivery of the degree programme and as such the committee did not feel that it was fully able to provide a numeric value to this aspect of the evaluation. However, the committee did recognize the commitment of the University to engage in this area of development.

Response: Based upon the CYQAA regulations the University had to submit the staff for the first two years of the program. NUP will follow CYQAA regulations for the remaining two years, as well.

Comment 3.5-3.7: Staff are supported in dissemination and research activities. In the case of a PT visiting lecturer, it was unclear whether she is classified as a visiting professor or special teaching staff. In any case, it is assumed that the special teaching staff do not exceed the 30% standard. If indeed she is classified as special teaching staff, the time allocation for her teaching is 15% (9 of 60 weekly hours).

Response: She is a visiting Lecturer.

Comment 3.8: The student-staff ratio is commendable. Examples were provided of detailed feedback on students' work, indicating also an in-depth engagement with students' overall performance.

Comment 3.9: The teaching load allows time for research and staff engage in public activities.

Comment 3.10: The financial viability presentation indicated a strong direction of travel for the program.

Comment 3.11: The program coordinator has a great deal of experience. However, it was not quite clear what the local operation of the programme management was in terms of the role of the University Rector versus say the role of program leader.

Comment 3.12: Teaching staff publish research in relevant journals and academic publishing houses.

Comment 3.13: Staff appear to be supported in terms of the level of training to undertake their role, However, the committee were not presented with a staff development and training policy in relation to the level of support provided. Basic training opportunities are provided, which could be bolstered.

Response: See attached NUP Continuous Staff Development and Training policy (Annex 5)

Comment 3.14: Student feedback exists and is taken into account but there were no examples of how teaching has been modified in relation to this.

Indicative examples of how teaching and academic environment has been modified in relation to student feedback:

- Academic staff has developed additional case studies at the BSc in Business Administration Program.
- The network of enterprises for placement has further been enhanced and strengthened to support the increasing demand from students.
- Additional reading student space has been provided at the library to the students during Public Holidays and summer vacation.
- Additional Plotters have been purchased at the School of Architecture, Engineering and Land and Environmental Sciences to meet increasing students demand for lab work.
- Teaching hours have been modified to better respond to mature student needs, especially in the case of the DL programs.
- Participation of Law School students into the ELSA (European Law Students Association) has been supported by the University.

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

4.1 Findings.

The student learning experience is typified by small teaching classes with close working relationships with the academic members of staff.

There appears to be a clear policy in terms of the admissions requirements for the degree programme.

We were not provided with progression information with regards to the University as a whole or on comparative programs. As such, it is difficult to be able to provide judgement on the University's existing experience with regard to student retention. We were not provided with information regarding progression calculations or the expected level of courses to be completed before a student can progress from one year to another.

Done: See attached policy (Annex 10: ToR Assessment Board)

Student resit appear to take place in September. It is possible for a student to fail the first assessment component and pass the course if they achieve an overall mark of 50% for the course through the grade in the final assessment. This raises a question as to whether all the learning outcomes can be met depending on the extent to which the specific assessment components in the first assessment component are different from the second assessment component.

Done. The said issue has been adapted accordingly. Passing the first assessment component is now obligatory (Annex 1: Section 10)

Students receive detailed feedback on their work. It is not clear as to the role of formative versus summative feedback in terms of the student learning experience.

Done. The assessment structure has been modified and further developed in order to address the issues raised by the EEA, enhancing the critical and analytical skills of the students, as well as their capacity to develop their arguments in the form of essays, thus preparing them for longer written assignments and projects. The types of assignments to assess students' capabilities and skills have been further enhanced. A qualitative process in relation to students' feedback to further build up formative assessment has now been incorporated. (See Annex 1, Section 10).

Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff through a form that they have to complete in class.

There are statutory mechanisms for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff.

4.2 Areas of improvement and recommendations

The student admission requirements of the programme of study have to be specifically described in the relevant documents in order to be more useful and suitable for prospective candidates.

Done. The student admission requirements of the programme of study have been specifically described (Annex 1, Section 4).

There is a need for greater clarity with regard to the handling of student appeals.

Done. (See Annex 11: Student Appeals Policy)

There is a lack of clarity with regard to the way students with learning support needs are provided with additional support during their studies. There was an absence of written documentation relating to the likes of sheltered exams.

Done. (See Annex 12: Support to Students).

Although there are student evaluation forms for teaching experiences, further clarification could be provided with regard to the monitoring and report of these forms and how students are informed of outcomes.

Response:

Students are informed on the outcomes both formally and informally, as follows:

- Regular meetings at the level of the University academic and administrative hierarchy with the Students' Union;
- Ad hoc meetings of the University hierarchy with students' representative groups of separate Schools;
- Regular Meetings of the Deans of the Schools with the students' representative groups at the School level;
- Institutional presence of the Student Union's representatives at the Senate of the University;
- Institutional representation of the students' representative to the GA of the School;
- Institutional representation of the Students' Union to the Internal Evaluation Committee of the University;
- Institutional participation of the Representative Body of the DL students to the Pedagogical Planning Committee;
- Ad hoc electronic communications to students' community.
- Regular communication of students with the academic staff in predefined office hours publicly announced.
- The Individual Academic Tutor assigned to each separate student (see also Annex 13: Academic Tutor).

4.3 Comments

Comment 4.1: The student admission requirements of the programme of study are not specifically described. Further information is required with regard to the specific student grade performance and subject areas at advanced secondary level. The existing entry requirements only stipulate English and Maths at grade C at First Certificate level. Given the lack of the request for more specific academic performance, it is likely that the student cohort will come from a broad educational background. Further consideration could be given to how the University will support students in their transition to Higher Education given the absence of more defined entry requirements.

Done: The students' admission requirements have been adapted accordingly. (See Annex 1, Section 4).

Comment 4.3,4.6,4.7: Although the institution has indicated by its previous experience through the operation of other undergraduate courses that the program's evaluation mechanism by the students, the statutory mechanisms for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff are effective, further clarification could have been provided with regard to the operational procedures of these mechanisms.

Response:

Indicative operational procedures of these mechanisms are as follows (also previously stated):

- Regular meetings at the level of the University academic and administrative hierarchy with the Students' Union;
- Ad hoc meetings of the University hierarchy with students' representative groups of separate Schools;
- Regular Meetings of the Deans of the Schools with the students' representative groups at the School level;
- Institutional presence of the Student Union's representatives at the Senate of the University;
- Institutional representation of the students' representative to the GA of the School;
- Institutional representation of the Students' Union to the Internal Evaluation Committee of the University;
- Institutional participation of the Representative Body of the DL students to the Pedagogical Planning Committee;
- Ad hoc electronic communications to students' community.
- Regular communication of students with the academic staff in predefined office hours publicly announced.
- The Individual Academic Tutor assigned to each separate student (see also Annex 13: Academic Tutor).

Comment 4.5: More information could have been provided in relation to the operation and provision of welfare and broader pastoral care to students. The supporting information refers to documentation and policies that were not provided in the submission.

For more information in relation to operation and provision of welfare and pastoral care to students see Annex 12: Support to Students

Comment 4.8: There was an absence of specific information regarding the support provided to students. The supporting documentation needs to be clearer with regard to the policies that underpin the support provided to students. The discussions with staff did not provide sufficient clarification in this area for the committee to have full confidence.

For more information in relation to operation and provision of welfare and pastoral care to students see Annex 12: Support to Students and Annex 13: Academic Tutor.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

5.1 Areas of improvement and recommendations

There is scope for further clarification with the regard to welfare and pastoral support. There was a lack of clarity with regard to the University's position with regard to providing support to students with specific learning needs.

Done: See Annex 12: Support to Students

There is a tendency for the teaching programme to be delivered in lecture format. Further thought could be given to the way in which students are engaged in a more discursive educational experience through the likes of seminars.

Response:

Although the program has not start yet, a series of IR and Security related high profile public discourse events have been realized, as well study visits of students, which demonstrate the strong commitment of the University to enhance the learning environment of the students.

The above initiatives are to developed in various forms, including seminars, after the accreditation of the program. The documentation for the above mentioned events has already been delivered to the EEA during their site visit. Additionally, NUP has a series of provisions and facilities to enhance students' interactivity including the NUP Web TV, the On Line Lecture Series and the Discussion Fora (See Annex 1, Sections: 8, 9,12 and Annex 7).

Although the library resource environment is a positive one, particularly with regard to electronic resources, further consideration could be given to the range of resources in relation to the variety of courses and the impact of demand on resources at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Done. See Annex 14 (Short loan policy section in the library)

5.2 Comments

Comment 5.1.1-5.1.3: Students have access to a good range of library resources, including electronic databases. The overall infrastructure of the University is sound in terms of the resource environment, such as the provision of IT resources, Wifi access, and classroom teaching space. Consideration may be given to the development of additional space for group work.

Comment 5.1.4: More detail could have been provided with regard to the provision of welfare support services, including the availability of services to support the likes of dyslexia.

Response: See Annex 12: Support to Students.

Comment 5.1.5: Further clarity could be provided with regard to the way that students can be supported and mentored in their studies. Reference was made to the role of academic counsellor in the discussion with staff. It was not clear if students were provided with an academic counsellor or personal tutor who would provide support throughout their studies.

Response: It is already institutionalized and operational. Each one of the existent and future students is provided with an academic counsellor/ personal tutor who provides support throughout their studies., see Annex 13: Academic Tutor.

Comment 5.2: Student monitoring appears to take place in the context of attendance and academic performance at assessment boards. There does not appear to be a policy of early intervention, for example, to tackle under-performance by students.

Response: See attached Policy of Early Intervention (Annex 15).

Comment 5.3-5.5, 5.7: A strong library provision with an extensive range and number of e-books, e-journals and resource. The aforementioned infrastructure is available also for teaching materials.

Comment 5.6. Students benefit from a library provision that includes access to major electronic databases, e-books and e-journals. While this resource supports the student learning experience, there are not enough available hardcopies of books for students. In terms of teaching materials, students face difficulties, having to wait for the return of the limited number of existing hardcopies available to them and afterwards can take the books they need for their studying.

Although the program has not started yet the University has already purchased all books and hard copy academic material stated in the totality of the syllabus for both the undergraduate and postgraduate courses under accreditation. In the case of already running an accredited programs a multiple purchase policy already exists and is implemented in the University to cover extra needs of the students. The same policy is related to the IR program. See also Annex 14: Library Short Loan Policy

6. Additional for distance learning programs (*ALL ESG*)

7. Additional for doctoral programs (*ALL ESG*)

8. Additional for joint programs (*ALL ESG*)

B. Conclusions and final remarks

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

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

Response:

- a) **The development of students' knowledge of theory PLO has further been strengthened by: i) reforming the Introduction to IR course enhancing its theoretical perspective; ii) introducing a Political Science course and a Political Economy course; iii) eliminating the Microeconomics course and the Psychology course.**
- b) **Electives have been added.**

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

Response: The assessment types have been reformed to address the critical and analytical skills of the students and the revised modalities have been incorporated into the Study Guide.

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

Response: The University already has strong welfare, pastoral and academic support mechanisms for the students. More clarification and documentation has been provided.

The committee was impressed by the University's commitment to develop the International Relations subject area with the commitment to new degree programs at undergraduate and

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

Response: This issue has been addressed by removing the Microeconomics course and the Psychology course and by introducing a Political Science course and a Political Economy course. The Introduction to IR has been modified, more electives have been added and courses on Human Security and Peacebuilding have also been incorporated. The revised Study Guide has been attached.

C. Annexes:

Annex 1: Revised Program Study Guide

Annex 2: Disabilities and Complaints Policies, Regulations and Handling

Annex 3: TOR, membership, meeting times, minutes of Pedagogical Committee

Annex 4: Screen shots on the academic calendar, the disclosure of information to students as well as information for examinations

Annex 5: NUP Continuous Staff Development and Training Policy and specific staff training cases namely: 1. GDPR staff training; 2. Staff Training on DL education; 3. Staff Awareness and Consultation on University Institution Development

Annex 6: ToR Assessment Board

Annex 7: screen shots, NUP web TV, online series

Annex 8: Academic Staff Evaluation Process

Annex 9: Academic Staff Promotion Policy

Annex 10: ToR Assessment Board

Annex 11: Students Appeal Policy

Annex 12: Support to Students with learning support needs

Annex 13: Academic Tutor

Annex 14: Library short term loan Policy

Annex 15: Early intervention Policy

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Professor Georgios Georgis	Dean of School of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities	
Dr. Georgia Christou	Head of Quality Assurance Department	

Date: 30/5/2019