

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 04/07/2019

Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution:**
NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY
- **Town:** PAFOS
- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**
**In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακό στη Διοίκηση
Τουριστικών Επιχειρήσεων, 90 ECTS, 20/18
ΜΗΝΕΣ – ΕΞ ΑΠΟΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ**
**In English: MBA IN TOURISM, 90 ECTS, 12/18
MONTHS – DISTANCE LEARNING**
- **Language of instruction: Greek/English**
- **Programme's status**
New programme: NEW
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 programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *All comments, observations, and recommendations of the EEC have to be answered.*
- *The structure of the response has to follow the systematic recording of the comments, observations, and recommendations of the EEC and the response of the institution after each of the EEC’s comments.*

Let us first express our satisfaction for the very positive comments of the EEC as well as the productive suggestions and recommendations. Though we, of course, recognize the fact that the ultimate decision is always taken by the CYQAA Board we nevertheless emphasize the overall EEC's attitude to have the program accredited by stating at the introduction that:

“the EEC found the proposed programme well-balanced, adequately structured and supported by a highly efficient academic and administrative staff of the University. Based on our in-depth interviews with academic staff, administrative staff and students, we can attest that Neopolis University is a highly capable academic institution that can easily run a distance learning MBA focusing on Tourism. Bearing in mind that the University already run successful distance learning programmes, we are convinced that the assimilation of the proposed programme will be a speedy, efficient and highly successful process.”

While in the conclusions it is stated:

We congratulate the team of NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY, PAFOS for initiating a distance learning programme. The proposed MBA (Tourism) distance learning programme is most likely to succeed. It is a step forward to the existing onsite provision. It offers a learning pathway to a popular, important and growing tourism sector.

The above very positive comments are also reflected in the Overall Average of the program which is 8,37. We are also glad that the Distance Learning component has been marked with an 8,61.

Since it is our belief and principle that there is always room of improving the quality of the University and the said program we hereby enclose our response to FULLY satisfy the EEC suggestions and recommendations, which we found very useful and productive.

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

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Prepare a list of potential Master dissertation research topics and the specific instructors and publish them on the website. This will facilitate the specific planning of the 30 ECTS dissertation module

Done. We have added ranges of modern topics that relate to the postgraduate students' dissertations, which our academic staff can cover. Information will be published on the website, when the program is approved. **See Annex 1:** DTOUR600 pg 2,5 and **Annex 2:** Dissertation HandBook..

- To strengthen the potential faculty – enhance scientific collaborations with other faculties within and outside the University. For example, to further develop existing partnerships within Erasmus +.

Done. There is already a co-operation with the department managing the Erasmus+ programs. The cooperation with foreign universities also exists at the Advisory Board that we have submitted with the initial application. Advisory Board will also strengthen the potential faculty and enhance scientific collaborations with tourism and hospitality market globally. **See Annex 3:** MBA in Tourism Distance Learning Revised Program Study Guide, paragraph 8. Team Advisory Meetings/Advisory Board.

- Further institutionalising research activities in the University which will enhance the quality of teaching and ensure relevance.

Done. We created the Neapolis Research Notes to enhance our students' research activities. NUP has a coherent research policy **Annex 4:** NUP Research Policy. **See also:** <https://www.nup.ac.cy/neapolis-research-notes-nrp/>.

-Reassessing the current practice of allocating equal ECTS across the programme, bearing in mind the module importance and workload varies across the programme.

Done. The two elective course “Strategic Destination Management-TOUR570”, “Tourism Policy and Planning-TOUR570” namely have been allocated 6,5 ECTS and more emphasis given to the core touristic lessons where two core “Management and Development of Hospitality Business- TOUR530”, “Tour Operating Management-TOUR520” have been allocated 8,5 ECTS. **See Annex 3:** Revised Program Study Guide, Paragraph 16. Syllabi.

-In the rationale of the proposed programme, there was an indication that the aspects of sustainability and globalisation are common threads, however these main themes are not explicit in the module documentation. Therefore, we highly recommend integrating these common threads in all relevant syllabi. We believe that by implementing this, the uniqueness of the programme and its differentiation will serve the University in promoting and positioning the programme.

Done. We have integrated modern tourism topics, with an emphasis on the areas we were asked for, such as sustainability, globalization, and new technologies, into all syllabi. The range of topics was included in the course description, modern research papers were added to the bibliography; we have added corresponding topics through discussion fora, and case studies for the students. **See Annex 5:** Revised Courses Study Guides: DTOUR520, DTOUR530, DTOUR550, DTOUR570, DTOUR590, DMBA550, DMBA580, DMBA620.

Quality indicators/criteria

1.3.1 = an optional module was added to the programme on the day of the EEC's visit. These were not included in the documentation provided for accreditation.

Following the approval of the program, all of the information will be posted on the University of Neapolis website, for the information of the students. We have added an additional optional course for students: “DTOUR [590]: Tourism Policy and Planning”, to offer them a broader range of research, and to cover a key research area in tourism, such as tourism policy and design, with modern bibliography and topics. See **Annex 6: Study Guide DTOUR590**.

1.8 = The bibliography in each syllabus reveals that some of the bibliographic sources are significantly outdated. The content does not appear to include the consideration of sustainability and technological advancements.

Done. We have enriched the content of all courses with new bibliography, modern research papers, so that students can learn about the latest achievements / developments in science, art, research, and technology. In addition to the research papers, articles, as well as discussion fora were selected, with cutting-edge topics in the tourism sector. **See Annex 5: Revised Course Study Guide's DTOUR520, DTOUR530, DTOUR550, DTOUR570, DTOUR590, DMBA550, DMBA580, DMBA620.**

1.9 = No evidence of new research embodied in the syllabus

Done. We have strengthened all of the courses on contemporary research issues and provide students with research papers and articles of the last 3 years, related to these areas. **See Annex 5: Revised Study Guide's DTOUR520, DTOUR530, DTOUR550, DTOUR570, DTOUR590, DMBA550, DMBA580, DMBA620.**

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

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Teaching within each module could be more explicitly linked to the research conducted by the teaching team.

Done. Course coordinators and the Teaching Team are fully subject related. We refer to relevant references from researches which they have conducted, in relation to the course subject of each professor. **See Annex 6: Teaching team – Research matching**

- The programme could consider inviting practitioners (eg. via Erasmus) to deliver guest lectures and or sessions to be pre-recorded or scheduled discussion forums and tele-conferencing meetings.

Done. Advisory Board and tourism executives – professionals proposed by the board members, will also deliver guest lectures and or sessions to be pre-recorded or scheduled discussion forums and tele-conferencing meetings. **See Annex 3:** Revised Program Study Guide, paragraph 8.Team Advisory Meetings/Advisory Board.

Quality indicators/criteria

“In time, the EEC is expecting the University to expand their pool of full-time teaching staff for the programme.”

Done. The University has already announced the position of a full time lecturer in Economics of Tourism and Hospitality

See Annex 2: Public Call for a Lecturer position in Economics of Tourism and Hospitality <https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Lecturer-in-Economics-Tourism-Hospitality.pdf>

“3.2.1 The module lead for Leadership and Organizational Behaviour appears to be highly qualified in the field of dentistry, with less evidence of specialism in leadership.”

Done. Dr Lambrou who has been indicatively included as one of the Associated Teaching Staff is holding a Ph.D. in Leadership and Organizational Behavior with emphasis on the health sector. We greatly appreciate the EEC comment and the permanent academic staff Dr. Christos Papademetriou who is also the Course Coordinator as per CYQAA regulations is now nominated to undertake the teaching of the said course.

See: https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Papademetriou_EN.pdf

“3.6 As indicated in Table 4 of Teaching personnel (Application for the Evaluation - Accreditation), there is only 1 full time member of staff, with the rest indicated as part timers.”

Done.

1. The Program Coordinator, Dr. Sotiris Varelas is a full time academic staff in NUP, which is also stated in the EEC report, and has been rated with an “8”.
2. Course coordinators are full time employed NUP academic staff as per CYQAA regulations and currently are in charge of the Conventional MBA and the Conventional MBA in Tourism. More precisely:
 1. DMBA 550: Financial and Managerial Accounting, Andreas Hadjixenofontos, Associate Professor, https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Papademetriou_EN.pdf
 2. DMBA 560: Marketing, Management and Business Communication, A. Masouras, Lecturer, https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Masouras_EN.pdf

- DMBA 580: Leadership and Organizational Behavior, Christos Papademetriou, Lecturer, https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Papademetriou_EN.pdf
4. DMBA 620: Quantitative Business Analysis, Michailina Siakalli, Lecturer, https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Siakalli_ENG.pdf
5. DTOUR 520: Tour Operating Management, S. Varelas, Lecturer, <https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Varelas-S-CV-EN.pdf>
6. DTOUR 530: Management and Development of Hospitality Business, Sotiris Varelas, Assistant Professor, <https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Varelas-S-CV-EN.pdf>
7. D TOUR 550: Economics of Tourism and Hospitality: G. Galanos, Assistant Professor, Piraeus University, <https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/en/galgeorg.html>
8. DTOUR 570: Strategic Destination Management, Sotiris Varelas, Lecturer, <https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Varelas-S-CV-EN.pdf>
9. DTOUR 590: Tourism Policy and Planning, Georgios Maris, Lecturer, https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CV_Maris_EN.pdf
10. DTOUR 600: Dissertation, Nikos Apostolopoulos, Assistant Professor, <https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Apostolopoulos-cv-en.pdf>

Thus, out of the 10 offered courses 9 are coordinated by full time academic staff of Neapolis University (90%).

Let us also stress that the EEC during their visit met with 7 permanent staff (only Dr. Apostolopoulos was missing due to the fact that he is currently moving from Plymouth University to Pafos).

See Annex 7: Permanent academic staff contracts for the MBA in Tourism and Course Coordinators for the MBA in Tourism DL Program.

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- To provide clearer admission criteria including acceptance thresholds

Done. Clearly refer to the process and admission criteria, as they are stated. **See Annex 3:** Revised Program Study Guide, paragraph 3 Admission Criteria.

4.1 : Lack of english proficiency tests

Done. English Proficiency tests have been incorporated into the admissions criteria and written exams measuring the minimum level of B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) English proficiency/ skills have been incorporated with an interview, which is the current mode of practice.

See Annex 3: Revised Program Study Guide, paragraph 3 Admission Criteria.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

-To ensure the continued development of the existing research lab and reference to the research findings found within it.”

NUP has a continuous and standing commitment in developing research activities, which is also stated by the EEC itself. In the same page 15 of the Report the EEC states that “There appears to be a continuing commitment to the investment of resources.”

Additionally, NUP has a coherent research policy which we attach.

See Annex 4: NUP Research Policy

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- *The EEC recommends the improvement of the structure of the course, resource and activities in the Moodle platform on a weekly basis in order to reflect on the progress of the course.*

Done. Resource and activities in the Moodle platform will be on a weekly basis once the program is accredited.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

- Prepare a list of potential Master dissertation research topics and the specific instructors and publish them on the website. This will facilitate the specific planning of the 30 ECTS dissertation module

Done. We have added ranges of modern topics that relate to the postgraduate students' dissertations, which our academic staff can cover. Information will be published on the website, when the program is approved. **See related response above.** DTOUR600 pg 2,5 and Dissertation HandBook..

- To strengthen the potential faculty – enhance scientific collaborations with other faculties within and outside the University. For example, to further develop existing partnerships within Erasmus +.

Done. There is already a co-operation with the department managing the Erasmus+ programs. The cooperation with foreign universities also exists at the administration council we have submitted. Advisory Board will also strengthen the potential faculty and enhance scientific collaborations with tourism and hospitality market globally. **See related response above** MBA in Tourism Distance Learning Study Program, paragraph 8. Team Advisory Meetings/Advisory Board.

- Further institutionalising research activities in the University which will enhance the

quality of teaching and ensure relevance.

Done. See related response above..

-Reassessing the current practice of allocating equal ECTS across the programme, bearing in mind the module importance and workload varies across the programme.

Done. See related response above.

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Done. See related response above.

- Teaching within each module could be more explicitly linked to the research conducted by the teaching team.

Done. See related response above.

-To consider inviting practitioners (eg. via Erasmus) to deliver guest lectures and or sessions to be pre-recorded or scheduled discussion forums and tele-conferencing meetings.

Done. See related response above.

- To provide clearer admission criteria including acceptance thresholds

Done. See related response above.

-To ensure the continued development of the existing research lab and reference to the research findings found within it.”

Done. See related response above.

- *The EEC recommends the improvement of the structure of the course, resource and activities in the Moodle platform on a weekly basis in order to reflect on the progress of the course.*

Done. See related response above

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Dr. Georgia Christou	Head of Quality Assurance Department	

Date: 04/07/2019