ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ENQA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

4/13/2019

**Doc. 300.1.1**

# Neapolis University Pafos

MSc International Relations, Strategy and Security

# External

# evaluation

# report

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

## A. Introduction

The evaluation onsite visit took place on Thursday 11 April 2019. The evaluation committee had an informative and fruitful discussion with a representation of academic and administrative/technical staff. The visit commenced with an overview presentation regarding the development, ethos, values and future direction of the University. It was evident that Neapolis University Pafos is a relatively new yet ambitious institution and the committee were impressed by the plans for the further development of the University, including the building of a new campus and the broader expansion plans in terms of the degree programmes under development. The University is clearly committed to supporting students and their studies. It has a relatively rare and very positive staff/student ratio of 1:12.

During the onsite visit we had presentations that covered the degree programme, the learning environment including learning management systems, the use of the Moodle facility, quality assurance arrangements, library services, as well as the financial viability of the programme. While the latter was informative in terms of highlighting the positive contribution that the planned MSc programme was to make to the overall financial baseline of the University, the committee's remit and focus is primarily concerned with the overall learning environment as opposed to the financial viability.

In terms of the onsite visit agenda, the committee made some adjustments to the organization and running of the day so as to provide a greater opportunity for questions and answers as opposed to just receiving presentations, of which a good deal of the material had already been received in advance. The committee particularly welcomed the opportunity to meet with the teaching staff and to listen to students.

### External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| Name | Position | University |
|---|---|---|
| **Prof Alasdair Blair** | Chair | De Montfort University |
| **Prof Knud Erik Jørgensen** | Committee member | Aarhus University |
| **Dr Olga Demetriou** | Committee member | Durham University |
| **Mr Zenonas Hadjicostas** | Committee member – student representative | University of Cyprus |

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

- *Policy for quality assurance of the program of study:*
    - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
    - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
    - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
    - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
    - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
    - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
- *The program of study:*
    - *is designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
    - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
    - *benefits from external expertise*
    - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
    - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
    - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
    - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
    - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
    - *results to a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
    - *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the program is up to date*
    - *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program*
    - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
    - *about the program of study offered*
    - *the selection criteria*
    - *the intended learning outcomes*
    - *the qualification awarded*
    - *the teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
    - *the pass rates*
    - *the learning opportunities available to the students*
    - *graduate employment information*

*Findings*

- The study programme is designed and intended to be launched after the process of accreditation has come to a successful conclusion. Hence, the self-evaluation report, the application and the findings during the onsite visit do not concern experiences with an existing programme.
- The programme runs over 1.5 years. The structure of the programme includes eight courses (each 7.5 ECTS) plus one dissertation (30 ECTS).
- All courses are compulsory.
- The course on research methodology is designed to prepare students for the dissertation, yet focused on general issues such as research design.
- Concerning the thesis there will not be any taught content but a supervisor is available for consultation throughout the process of preparing the thesis. Before submission the supervisor and student need to reach a consensus about the viability of the thesis.
- The application provides limited information about the dissertation. However, the onsite visit provided some additional information relating to the dissertation arrangements and the process of its evaluation. It was clear that tacit understandings regarding these matters are in place yet not always fleshed out in explicit policies and procedures.
- The only form of teaching mentioned in the application is 'lectures'. The onsite visit helped clarify the situation so that teachers actually intend to employ a variety of teaching forms, including student presentations, case studies and article reviews.

*Strengths*

- The 1.5 years programme conforms with national standards in Cyprus. However, the programme is out of sync with Bologna process standards. The UK approach is a 1 year taught Masters and the European approach is a 2 years taught Masters.
- The ECTS credit framework is aligned to the national standards in Cyprus, but is similarly out of sync with Bologna standards.
- The programme has a strong focus on international relations and security. In the market of MSc prospective applicants, students can easily see the programme's distinctive offering.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

- All courses are compulsory. Students are thus only able to specialise in their dissertation. The addition of electives would provide an opportunity for greater specialisation.
- Dissertations are supposed to be 12.000-15.000 words long. Given the 30 ECTS credits it carries, this can be seen to be on the low side of European standards. The committee considered that it would be helpful to have explicit criteria about the assessment of dissertation quality and the comparative standing of the dissertation vis-à-vis other assessed programme components.
- There was insufficient information on the assessment components of the eight taught courses and their linkage to the overall programme objectives and the dissertation.
- The language of the programme content tends not to reflect the MSc level, e.g. greater relevance of critical reflection, independent analysis etc. Further consideration should be given to clarifying the expected advanced level of learning at Masters level.
- While the programme has a focus on security studies, the course content does not reflect a broader perspective on security, such as the provision of courses on human security, peacebuilding, sustainable development goals, and gender and security. While we appreciate that there are inevitable resource constraints in terms of the capacity to deliver the programme, there was a limited sense of a vision and future direction of the programme to take into consideration this wider content, or the extent to which such content could be

taught within the established course offerings beyond occasional lectures in already designed courses.

- The methodology course focuses more on general research design issues as opposed to the research techniques students need to use in their applied research. Some consideration could thus be given to practical or operational research methods and the way that students can be equipped with the necessary research skills for their dissertation, for instance skills which would allow them to collect and assess primary data. No consideration was given to the ethical aspects of research, which in the context of a degree programme focused on IR and security studies would be helpful.

- The course on strategy and decision-making is in reality a business studies course and thus not adapted to serve the objectives of a security studies course. As such, the course does not reflect the remit of the degree programme and is out of sync with the learning outcomes and the expected content that the programme seeks to deliver.

- There was a lack of clarity with regard to the University's objectives in terms of students' employability particularly in regard to facilitating placements or internships. The panel discussions indicated that such possibilities might be accommodated in the undergraduate degree, but there was no such discussion concerning this programme. Further clarification is therefore required in terms of the possible operation of placements/internships.

| | Quality indicators/criteria | 1 - 10 |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | Quality assurance policy defines competences and procedures for the people involved. | 8 |
| **1.2** | Participation in quality assurance processes is ensured for: | |
| | **1.2.1** the members of the teaching staff | 7 |
| | **1.2.2** the members of the administrative staff | 8 |
| | **1.2.3** the students | 7 |
| **1.3** | The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study. | 6 |
| **1.4** | The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors. | 8 |
| **1.5** | The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration: | |
| | **1.5.1** The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication | N/A |
| | **1.5.2** The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching staff | N/A |
| | **1.5.3** The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material | N/A |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1.5.4** | The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training | 8 |
| | **1.5.5** | The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment | N/A |
| | **1.5.6** | The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process | 8 |
| **1.6** | | The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution. | 7 |
| **1.7** | | The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study. | 7 |
| **1.8** | | The following ensure the achievement of the program's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes: | |
| | **1.8.1** | The number of courses | 8 |
| | **1.8.2** | The program's content | 7 |
| | **1.8.3** | The methods of assessment | 7 |
| | **1.8.4** | The teaching material | 7 |
| | **1.8.5** | The equipment | 7 |
| **1.9** | | The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff. | 8 |
| **1.10** | | The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes. | 8 |
| **1.11** | | It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe. | 8 |
| **1.12** | | The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses according to the European practice. | 8 |
| **1.13** | | The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology. | 8 |
| **1.14** | | New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study. | 8 |
| **1.15** | | The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree. | N/A |

| 1.16 | The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts. | 7 |
|---|---|---|
| 1.17 | The learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent. | 8 |
| 1.18 | The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions. | 8 |
| 1.19 | The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the program. | 8 |
| 1.20 | The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies. | N/A |
| 1.21 | Program's management with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place. | 8 |
| 1.22 | It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions. | 8 |
| 1.23 | The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally. | N/A |
| 1.24 | Procedures are applied so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates. | 8 |
| 1.25 | Indicators for the employability of graduates and the employability record of the department's graduates are described in the feasibility study. | N/A |
| 1.26 | The graduation rate for the program of study is analogous to other programs with similar content. | N/A |
| 1.27 | The program of study benefits the society. | 8 |
| 1.28 | Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include: | |
| | 1.28.1 The provisions regarding unit credits | N/A |
| | 1.28.2 The expected learning outcomes | N/A |
| | 1.28.3 The methodology | N/A |
| | 1.28.4 Course descriptions | N/A |
| | 1.28.5 The program's structure | N/A |

| | **1.28.6** | The admission requirements | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1.28.7** | The format and the procedures for student assessment | N/A |
| | **1.28.8** | The pass rates | N/A |

<u>In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.</u>

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.

1.3   The QA and standards document that was presented for the programme in Annex 5 provided rather vague and generalized comments in relation to the QA procedures. This state of affairs was further highlighted by the annotated comments in Appendix 5 are basically the same for the MSc and the BSc degree programmes.

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.

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 analysed, reviewed and then acted upon to close the feedback loop to students.

1.6   The committee felt that the learning outcomes of the programme needed to be adjusted to reflect the advanced nature of study at Masters level. The committee also considered that there could be a stronger linkage between the learning outcomes, the programme of study and the more applied and employability focused nature of the University.

1.7   The committee felt that for the most part the purpose and design of the programme was satisfactory. However, some elements of the courses could have had a stronger linkage to the programme's objectives, including for example courses on Strategy and Decision Making.

1.8   As the programme has a fixed structure, the committee felt that there was room for additional courses to provide greater student choice and specialization. There was an

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|  | absence of information relating to the exact assessment diet of the programme of study, e.g. the composition of the 30% component, and the timeframe of the final exam. |
| --- | --- |
| 1.9 | While the expected learning outcomes are clear, we felt that the programme would benefit from a stronger alignment between the programme learning outcomes and the course learning outcomes. |
| 1.10 | In broad terms the learning outcomes are met through the learning process. Some of the courses could be more tightly focused towards the overall programme. |
| 1.11 | There is evidence that learning outcomes are met. |
| 1.12-1.14 | The programme makes use of up-to-date materials. |
| 1.16 | The Committee thought that there might be room for changes to the structure of the programme to provide students with some more introductory courses to international relations in the first semester. As noted, the Committee considered that some courses were less aligned to the objectives of the programme. |
| 1.17-1.19 | The credit system was appropriate and in conjunction with national standards. There is scope to consider the extent to which all the learning outcomes of the programme reflect the programme alignment and course content. |
| 1.21-1.22 | It would have been helpful to have had additional information relating to the operation of programme management, such programme leadership and the extent to which academics are provided with training and development as they progress into programme management duties. |
| 1.24 | There is scope for greater clarity in terms of the way that the programme supports employability and relates to future career opportunities. |
| 1.27 | It is apparent that the programme would benefit from providing a stronger level of knowledge and issues relating to critical analysis of contemporary events. |

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

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*Standards*

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development and respects their needs.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*

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- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*

*Findings*

Neapolis University Pafos is a relatively new University that has undertaken a rapid process of expansion in terms of its portfolio of programmes. The University has experience of delivering teaching at BA, MA and PhD levels, and presently has in the region of 2100 students studying on the various programmes, 500 of whom are enrolled in campus-based postgraduate programmes. We were provided with a range of information relating to the structure of the proposed MSc programme in International Relations, Strategy and Security, which included an overview of the courses with the exception of the Dissertation. The degree programme follows a structured pathway where all students take the same courses and as such there are no elective courses.

The MSc programme is structured in a way which enables students to delve into a range of topical security-related issues.

The MSc programme has a pattern in terms of student learning and assessment, with the assessment diet being split between 30 per cent midterm and 70 per cent final exam on all courses with the exception of the dissertation. Teachers 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 customs and practices 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 onto the specified learning outcomes. In addition, there is a lack of clarity with regard to how the assessment of the courses prepare students for the dissertation both in terms of the preparedness to undertake an extended piece of writing as well as the capacity to undertake more advanced levels of research in keeping with a Masters level of study.

The process of marking is predominantly undertaken by one member of staff, without 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.

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.  The students have a scheduled weekly set of study classes that provide direction and focus to their studies. The absence of information means that it is not possible to comment on how the courses are meant to prepare students for the dissertation and how this links to research processes.
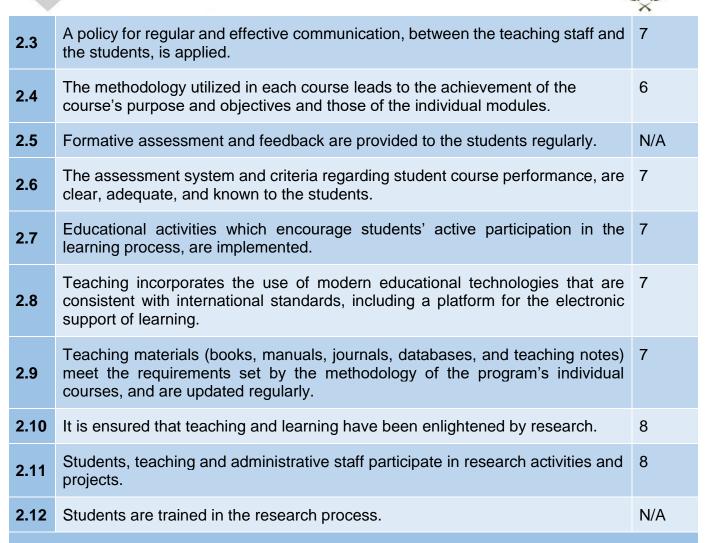
*Strengths*
- The programme is able to draw upon the experience the University has gained from running other programmes
- The University makes good use of the Moodle platform.
- QA procedures are in place in most areas and thus ready to be used.


*Areas of improvement and recommendations*
- Further consideration could be given to how the process of student assessment provides sufficient variety to test students at Masters level and also to prepare them to undertake an extended piece of writing.
- It is not clear how formative assessment is built into the degree programme.
- 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 an individual member of staff.
- Further consideration should be given to the internal marking policy to ensure the dissemination of good practice.
- Further consideration should be given to developing the research level component of the programme of study through the engagement with or exposure to primary materials in the taught courses and/or case studies.

| | Quality indicators/criteria | 1 - 10 |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication. | 8 |
| 2.2 | The number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices. | 8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2.3 | A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching staff and the students, is applied. | 7 |
| 2.4 | The methodology utilized in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules. | 6 |
| 2.5 | Formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly. | N/A |
| 2.6 | The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students. | 7 |
| 2.7 | Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented. | 7 |
| 2.8 | Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning. | 7 |
| 2.9 | Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly. | 7 |
| 2.10 | It is ensured that teaching and learning have been enlightened by research. | 8 |
| 2.11 | Students, teaching and administrative staff participate in research activities and projects. | 8 |
| 2.12 | Students are trained in the research process. | N/A |

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

2.1-2.2   The committee was impressed by the expected number of students in the classes.

2.3   The committee considered that students would be able to engage well with academic staff. However, there was no evidence of how existing practices operate within the University in terms of staff-student engagement in terms of feedback by students.

2.4   More information could have been provided with regard to the overall methodology and approach of the courses. Given the absence of information relating to assessment patterns and components it is hard to provide a judgment in terms of the pedagogical approach of the courses.

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.

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. No information was provided on the dissertation component of the degree programme.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.7 | While the design of the programme does enable student interaction in a class setting, it was not clear how broader educational activities would be available to students. |
| 2.8 | The committee considered that the courses engaged with appropriate up-to-date approaches. However, more information might have been given with regard to the integration of the likes of podcasts and other online materials to support students in their studies. |
| 2.9 | The teaching materials could have shown evidence of greater engagement with primary materials to support the more advanced level of study that is relevant at Masters level. |
| 2.10 | The materials showed an awareness of up-to-date research publications. |
| 2.11 | It was unclear how students would engage in research activities that is typical of masters level. However, the committee did notice the initiative to establish a journal, Neapolis Research Notes, designed to turn student essays into articles. |
| 2.12 | The methodology module focused on how to complete a dissertation as opposed to undertaking research and the methodologies and philosophies underpinning such approaches. The outlines for the courses demonstrate that students are to engage with up-to-date research materials.  However, 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. |

## 3. Teaching Staff (*ESG 1.5*)

*Standards*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study program, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participate in teaching the study program.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Assessment of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

*Findings*

- The staff that the team met reported that they are aware of procedures relating to career development and staff evaluation. There was less certainty regarding the priority areas in recruitment, e.g. 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 international presses). These publications on the whole match the teaching areas of each staff member. They are not, however, used as teaching material, missing the opportunity to integrate research findings into teaching yet also avoiding self-referential practices. On the whole, full time teaching staff belong to a two-tier system, comprising three professors (tenured), two assistant professors, and three lecturers (untenured). There are also four visiting professors, one at associate professor level, two at assistant professor level, and one lecturer. The only staff member which is female is the visiting lecturer.

- Of the 24 weekly teaching periods, 19.5 (81%) are taught by staff based at NUP and 4.5 by three of the visiting scholars. In the first group, professorial staff teaches 7.5 periods (38%).

- The programme director collaborates extensively with one member of the locally-based staff with one visiting scholar. Other members of staff 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.

- The visiting scholars on the programme are all based in Greece. They have a range of expertise among them, and publications to reflect this.

- The teaching staff is engaged in professional and teaching-skills training.

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

*Strengths*

- Members of staff predominantly teach in areas that reflect their research interests.

- There is a mix of staff across ranks and between FT and PT. Rank is on the whole consistent with qualifications.

- Student evaluations are conducted and procedures are in place so that evaluations can be taken into account.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

- There was no indication of formal teaching observation practices among staff. Teaching results and teaching skills appear to be solely assessed through student evaluations and possibly through informal peer consultations. Teaching observation could be instituted.

- 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.

- Staff could consider to occasionally draw 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 seems not to be adequately included (human security, peacebuilding), 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 and other underrepresented areas.

- Visiting teaching staff could be sourced from a wider variety of countries as well as from other HEIs in Cyprus.

| | Quality indicators/criteria | 1 - 10 |
|---|---|---|
| **3.1** | The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study. | 7 |
| **3.2** | The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following: | |
| | **3.2.1** Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline. | 8 |
| | **3.2.2** Publications within the discipline. | 8 |
| **3.3** | The program attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing. | 5 |
| **3.4** | The specializations of visiting professors adequately support the program of study. | 7 |
| **3.5** | Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study. | N/A |
| **3.6** | In every program of study the special teaching staff does not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff. | N/A |
| **3.7** | In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time staff, ensures the quality of the program of study. | 7 |
| **3.8** | The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards of the program's quality. | 8 |
| **3.9** | The teaching load allows the conduct of research and contribution to society. | 9 |
| **3.10** | Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of teaching staff safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span. | 8 |
| **3.11** | The program's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the program of study. | 9 |
| **3.12** | The results of the teaching staff's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc. | 8 |
| **3.13** | The teaching staff are provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies. | 8 |

| 3.14 | Feedback processes for teaching staff with regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory. | 7 |
|---|---|---|

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

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

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.

3.3-3.7     Visiting professors support the programme of study to an adequate degree. The programme addresses aspects of regional and national politics but seems to lack visions for long-term prospects.

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.

3.9     Staff are supported in dissemination and research activities. The teaching load allows time for research and staff engage in public activities.

3.10     The financial viability presentation indicated a strong direction of travel for the programme.

3.11     The programme 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 programme leader.

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

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.

3.14     Procedures for student feedback exist and ready to be used but there were no examples from other programmes of how teaching has been modified in relation to this.


4.  **Students** (*ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7*)

> *Standards*
> - *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place.*
> - *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
> - *Information on students, like key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analyzed.*
> - *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are*

> *essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
> - *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*
> - *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities).*
> - *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
> - *Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff.*
> - *Students' mobility is encouraged and supported.*

*Findings*
- There are not yet students enrolled in the proposed programme.
- There are pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification.
- The institution demonstrates through the operation of other courses that access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.
- Students will receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.
- A public, formal procedure for student appeals is in place.
- Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff through online surveys which the students of the programme will have to complete and submit.

*Strengths*
- The University benefits from an excellent staff-student ratio. There is a commitment to small group teaching and to applied knowledge within the degree programme.
- The programme applies a good deal of publically available norms and procedures.
- Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience.
- Online resources are available to students, including educational material, web links etc.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

- 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 submitted application.
- Further clarification could have been provided with regard to the operational procedures.

| Quality indicators/criteria | 1 - 10 |
|---|---|
| **4.1** The student admission requirements of the program of study, are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria. | 6 |

| 4.2 | The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with the European and international standards. | 9 |
| 4.3 | The program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective. | 8 |
| 4.4 | Students participation in exchange programs is compared favorably to similar programs across Europe. | n/a |
| 4.5 | There is a student welfare service that supports students with regards to academic, personal problems and difficulties. | 6 |
| 4.6 | Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective. | 7 |
| 4.7 | Control mechanisms for student performance are effective. | 5 |
| 4.8 | Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided. | 3 |

In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.

4.1, 4.2   The MSc programme does not specifically state the level of student performance required at undergraduate level to progress to the Master's level. The degree programme has a wide recruitment of students from a range of educational backgrounds. The committee considered that a challenge of the programme would be to ensure sufficient coherence in terms of advance learning at Masters level versus the potential for a more generalized level of entry cohort.

4.3-4.7   Although the institution has indicated by its previous experience through the operation of other postgraduate 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.

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 submitted application.

## 5. Resources (*ESG 1.6*)

*Standards*
- *Adequate and readily accessible resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, financial, physical and human support resources\*) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study program.*
  *\* Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.*
    *Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counselors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

> - *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*
> - *Teaching staff is involved in the management of financial resources regarding the program of study.*

*Findings*

- The university has invested in physical on-campus resources to support students and their studies. This includes the provision of whiteboards within classrooms and dedicated IT classes.
- The focus of the resource environment is primarily concerned with the electronic learning platforms, the access to study materials and the support provided by academic and admin & technical staff. The University uses Moodle as an e-learning platform and provided a demonstration on the effectiveness of this resource to enable student learning. For the most part, the approach to the use of Moodle is to upload presentation information that supports lectures.
- Students are also able to pose questions to academic staff and, according to the student provided information, response time is excellent.
- Students benefit from the library and its services, including access to major electronic databases, e-books and e-journals.
- It was noticeable that campus-based students there engaged in campus life, including student unions and societies.

*Strengths*

- An integrated campus environment where there is strong provision for academic teaching space and good extra-curricular social space.
- A commitment to build a new campus and the investment in resources.
- The library services are commendable.
- The library staff introduced the committee to not only the general library services but also pointed to resources that are specifically relevant to the proposed MSc course and its students.
- The University provides generous support for academic development, including attendance at conferences and support for publishing academic journals in open access format.
- Dedicated support services, including quality assurance.

*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.
- There does not appear to be a policy of early intervention, for example, to tackle under-performance by students.
- The University appears to have an informal policy of academic mentoring. However, more clarity could have been provided with regard to the support provisions for staff and the procedures in place for sharing good practice.

ΔΙΠΑΕ
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THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

| | Quality indicators/criteria | 1 - 10 |
|---|---|---|
| **5.1** | Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following: | 8 |
| | **5.1.1** Facilities | 8 |
| | **5.1.2** Library | 9 |
| | **5.1.3** Infrastructure | 8 |
| | **5.1.4** student welfare | 7 |
| | **5.1.5** academic mentoring | 7 |
| **5.2** | Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient. | 7 |
| **5.3** | Suitable books and reputable journals support the program of study. | 9 |
| **5.4** | An internal communication platform supports the program of study. | 9 |
| **5.5** | The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate. | 9 |
| **5.6** | Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students. | 9 |
| **5.7** | Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications. | 9 |

<u>In the following section clarification is provided on the numeric scoring provided above.</u>

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 and/or the implications of potentially having dedicated postgraduate teaching space.

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. Further information could be provided with regard to the lessons that the University has learned through existing courses.

5.1.5    The University appears to have an informal policy of academic mentoring. However, more clarity could have been provided with regard to the support provisions for staff and the procedures in place for sharing good practice.

| | |
|---|---|
| 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. |
| 5.3-5.7 | The library and the general resource provision appears strong. |

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

The committee enjoyed the opportunity to review the MSc programme. The programme offers an innovative approach for students who want to specialize in security studies. This focus on security studies offers a unique positioning within the market. The committee enjoyed the discussion with members of staff and were grateful for the time and energy that they devoted and the materials that had been prepared in advance.

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 programmes 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 in the context of progression agreements. 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.

On the whole the committee is of the opinion that the programme had good design elements and took confidence from the University's existing programmes. In the above sections the committee has noted areas that they consider are worthy of further elaboration and review. In many instances, this is likely to include the provision of policies and procedures that already exist. The committee does think that there is scope to consider the alignment of some of the courses to the programme and that there could be benefits from the provision of electives as well as clearer guidance for students as to how they progress through their studies to the dissertation and the degree.

## C. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|---|---|
| **Prof Alasdair Blair** | |
| **Prof Knud Erik Jørgensen** | |
| **Dr Olga Demetriou** | |
| **Mr Zenonas Hadjicostas** | |

Date: April 13, 2019