



Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 07/05/2019

External evaluation report

- **Higher education institution:**
Neapolis University, Paphos, Republic of
Cyprus
- **Town:** Paphos
- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακό στα Ναυτιλιακά, 90 ECTS, διάρκεια 1 χρόνου, 3 εξάμηνα.
In English: MBA in Shipping, 90 ECTS, 1 year, 3 semester.
- **Language of instruction:** Greek, English
- **Programme's status**
New programme: Yes
Currently operating: No

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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].

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document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.

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A. Introduction

1. The External Evaluation procedure

Short description of the documents that have been studied, of the onsite visit meetings, and of the onsite visit to the infrastructures.

The visit of the EEC to the site took place on Monday 6 May 2019. The team arrived at the premises in Paphos. Andreas Charalampous, Head of Campus, welcomed us and guided the team to the meeting room, where the Rector, the Dean, The Program Director, the Program Coordinator, members of teaching staff and administrative staff were present. Following the initial welcome, a number of presentations took place regarding the University, the Distance Learning Unit, the Learning Management System (LMS), the Moodle, Quality Assurance, the Library, The Program presentation, etc.

Several questions, issues were raised during the presentations. Generally, the participants in the meeting were friendly and supportive in providing answers. However, confusion over a number of matters arose, sometimes regarding policy issues on a number of aspects, the person responsible to answer and over the right answer to the questions raised. The Rector seemed to be responding in most cases to clarify issues and intervene when answers could not be obtained from the rest of the staff. The Program Director and the Program Coordinator were also involved in the discussions to clarify issues.

The EEC met also three students studying in other programs offered by the University, one from Cyprus, one from Greece and one from Georgia. The students were friendly and pleased with their studying at the University and their overall conditions of studying and support.

Finally, and before departing, the EEC was taken around the campus, to the library and to classrooms, where the conditions were pleasant. The EEC also had the opportunity to use the food cantina. The overall environment and the facilities seemed satisfactory.

2. The Internal Evaluation procedure

Comments concerning the quality and the completeness of the application submitted by the institution of higher education (Doc. Number 300.1.1), as well as concerning the overall acceptance of and participation in the quality assurance procedures, by the institution in general and by the program of study under evaluation.

We were supplied with the document 300.1.1 and, as detailed below, several other documents on our request. We paid a productive site visit on 06.05.2019, where having been met by the Rector, we noted every effort was made to help us. We interviewed the Rector, the Dean and five members of faculty (1 permanent and 4 partially employed) and administrative staff (a quality assurance manager, the librarian, a secretary and the head of campus administration). We also met three students who provided us with useful information in the absence of faculty in order to see the fullest picture of the University.

The EEC considers the provided material as generic and not necessarily specific for the needs of the Programme under examination. Further material was provided during and after the visit, yet not all points were addressed.

Since the University is entirely dependent on a for-profit financial group, all our estimations depend on the future ability and willingness of that group to continue to support the University.

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University / Institute
Orestis Schinas	Professor	Hamburg School of Business Administration (HSBA), Germany
Rickard Bergqvist	Professor	University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Hummel Hans	Professor	OUNL-CELSTEC, Welten Institute, The Netherlands
Manolis Kavussanos	Professor	Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), Greece
Fotia Ioannou	Student	Cyprus university of Technology

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1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
 - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
 - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
 - *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
 - *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
 - *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
 - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
 - *about the programme of study offered*
 - *the selection criteria*
 - *the intended learning outcomes*
 - *the qualification awarded*
 - *the teaching, learning and assessment procedures*

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- *the pass rates*
- *the learning opportunities available to the students*
- *graduate employment information*

Findings

Based on material provided before the visit, as well as presentations delivered and discussions conducted during the visit, the following findings deserve further attention considering the required 'Standards' above:

- There is no clear vision, strategic goal and objectives for the programme both from an academic as well as from business perspective.
- Although there is a quality assurance (QA) system in place, it is not clear if the feedback of the internal audits is fully considered in the improvement loops as the role of course director, subject-responsible, etc. are not distinct, in terms of job description and responsibilities. It seems that all relevant issues end-up to the Rector.
- As the roles of various 'actors' of the University management, such as of the rector, dean, course director, subject-responsible, etc. as well as lines of responsibilities are not clarified the point of supporting lecturers (mainly) to take on their responsibilities in QA remains vague. During the visit, practically all questions, even for module-related issues, were answered by the Rector and not by the course director, who is expected to lead the teaching staff towards better delivery and higher research visibility.
- The issues of academic fraud, such as of plagiarism, are very well known to the members of the EEC and NUP has indeed incorporated some procedures in the LMS/Moodle platform to address this issue. However, it is necessary to institutionalize the procedures and link them with standard QA procedures.
- The contribution of students and stakeholders is not evident in the design of the programme. As clearly stated during the visit, there is no market analysis and detailed analysis of the 'demographics' of expected students. Apparently, the targeted group is reasonably selected given the experiences of relevant courses in Greece and Cyprus, however larger markets, such as the European markets are not satisfactory addressed.
- In addition to the above, the design of the programme does not directly benefit from external expertise and stakeholders' feedback. There is no institutionalized channel of feedback; the Rector clearly stated that there is an advisory board, yet the suggestions of this board are subject to approval by the Council. The Council consists of 7 Members appointed by the shareholders, and 4 elected ones; therefore, other criteria may apply besides pure academic ones. The Rector clearly stated also that he is 'in direct dialog' with professional bodies and other stakeholders, yet it was understood that this 'dialog' is not formal and 'not binding'.
- In this regard, the EEC is not fully convinced that the four purposes of higher education as dictated by the Council of Europe are reflected in the structures and deliverables. The quintessence of these purposes is no other but the contribution of students, lecturers and administration in the development, and therefore in the management, of the University as whole, namely as a cluster of excellence in the society.
- Based on the feedback of faculty mainly, the employment relation refers only to 'teaching hours'; there is no clear proviso or requirement for research. Moreover, the lack of research strategy and policy, and particularly at a department/course level is reflected in the content of the subjects, as there is no formal requirement for the update of the material or a formal procedure, such as 'course conference', where the academic content is by all faculty members jointly discussed, assessed and updated. Apparently, there is no need for a 'physical' meeting as online, yet 'protocolled' meetings could also serve this purpose.
- That said, the same applies for the societal needs, see comment above on institutionalized feedback from stakeholders.

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- It is critical to develop a horizontal didactic policy or approach for the delivery of distance-courses that is interactive and intriguing rather than passive. This implies also training of the lecturers as well as support for the development of new content and material based on animations, videos, etc. instead than the passive delivery of text and links. Further comments will be provided mainly in the sixth section.
- As per the instructions of the Agency, the EEC should assess the current program of study vis-à-vis the operating model of the Cyprus Open University e-learning programs. Therefore, all teleconferences must be live, and the students must participate in real time. If for any reason students are not able to participate live in a teleconference they are consider as absentees and they are obliged to provide the professor/instructor and the institution with the necessary documentation that supports the reasons of their absence. Moreover, on the overall course grade the professor/instructor must take into account the number of live attendances. Of course, all teleconferences must be recorded and available to the students at any time. These operating features were witnessed as the DMBA-S will be offered.
- The financial plan of the programme is not fully presented; it is based on the assumption of a minimum 25 enrolments per year, but there was no clear answer given, should the break-even point (12 students) is not reached.

Apparently, many if not all of the above points refer to a higher level of governance than of the programme, however these top-down issues should be addressed for the benefit of this programme, and potentially of the University.

The above list focusses on points of concern rather than strengths, that are listed in the next section.

Strengths

- The curriculum as designed corresponds at large to the expected content of a degree in MBA-Shipping.
- The level of use of LMS/Moodle as medium is satisfactory, as generally the supply and use of IT infrastructure.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the findings the EEC recommends the following actions towards improvement of the programme:

1. Drafting of a clear strategy and vision for the programme; it is imperative for all actors involved to share the vision and the strategy, if not to contribute in its development.
2. Clarification of the role, including job description and line of responsibilities, of all actors involved in the delivery and update of the educational material. This implies also procedures in place for resolving overlapping of content among subjects, better coordination of the overall delivery, incorporation of recent research results in the delivery, etc.
3. Strengthening of the role of QA in the monitoring of the performance of the delivery (subject/module level), where students' and lecturers' feedback is focused on the content, the delivery and the achievement of the didactic goals set.
4. Institutionalizing the communication with societal and professional stakeholders for the benefit of the programme. An annual meeting with the stakeholders and incorporation of their suggestions in the curriculum could be of the benefit of all. Moreover, this provides a unique opportunity for attracting the interest of externals, especially when seeking external experts, funding and support.
5. Harmonization and streamlining with the principles and purposes of the Council of Europe on higher education.

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6. Clarification of employment terms with the faculty; this includes also clear terms, goals, objectives and workload for research that should be further used for the purposes of the Programme and for the benefit of the University.

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
1.1	Academic oversight of the programme design is ensured	3
1.2	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance provide the adequate information and data for the support and management of the programme of study for all the years of study.	5
1.3	Internal Quality Assurance processes safeguard the quality and the fulfillment of the programme's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:	
1.3.1	The disclosure of the programme's curricula to the students and their implementation by the teaching staff	7
1.3.2	The programme webpage information and material	8
1.3.3	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	3
1.3.4	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	7
1.3.5	Students' participation procedures for the improvement of the programme and of the educational process	6
1.4	The purpose and objectives of the programme are consistent with the expected learning outcomes and with the mission and the strategy of the institution.	2
1.5	The following ensure the achievement of the programme's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes:	
1.5.1	The number of courses	5
1.5.2	The programme's content	7
1.5.3	The methods of assessment	4
1.5.4	The teaching material	5
1.5.5	The equipment	8

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1.5.6	The balance between theory and practice	5
1.5.7	The research orientation of the programme	1
1.5.8	The quality of students' assignments	n/a
1.6	The expected learning outcomes of the programme are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff.	5
1.7	The teaching and learning process is adequate and effective for the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.	5
1.8	The content of the programme's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	2
1.9	New research results are embodied in the content of the programme of study.	2
1.10	The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree.	n/a
1.11	Students' command of the language of instruction is appropriate.	7
1.12	The programme 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.	2
1.13	The learning outcomes and the content of the courses are consistent.	5
1.14	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester.	7
1.15	The higher education qualification awarded to the students corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the programme.	3
1.16	The higher education qualification and the programme of study conform to the provisions for registration to their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of exercising a particular profession.	5
1.17	The programme's management in regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.	2
1.18	The programme's collaborations with other institutions provide added value and are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programmes of study in Europe and internationally.	2
1.19	Procedures are applied so that the programme conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates.	2
1.20	The admission requirements are appropriate.	6

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1.21 Sufficient information relating to the programme of study is posted publicly. 7

1.22 The teaching methodology is suitable for teaching in higher education. 4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

The following clarify the scores provided above (selection of key points):

- The academic oversight of the programme as well as of its development is not ensured, as the roles of faculty and directors are not fully clarified, and there is no proviso for linking research and other input in the delivery (1.1).
- Procedures for the assignments and especially for the thesis (dissertation) are not clear (1.3.3).
- There is no strategy or vision communicated (1.4).
- There is no research strategy and there is no research obligation of the faculty (1.5.7).
- No assignments of students were presented, even from other courses or from common modules (1.5.8).
- There is no feedback loop from the QA or set by internal rules meeting of the faculty and of the directors clearly focusing on the development and update of the content, as well as active feedback from stakeholders and external sources (1.8).
- See comments above (1.9).
- There is no evidence provided that the programme is avoiding overlapping among subjects and ensures learning sequence and goals. There is also no proof that the students can deal with more complex problems and concepts, especially cognitively, after graduation (1.12).
- It is not clear how these educational outcomes are reached (1.15).
- As stated above the governance of the programme should be reviewed and incorporate active participation from the faculty and feedback loops from external and internal stakeholders (1.17).
- Although the NUP seems to have in place such cooperations and experience with exchange programmes, such as Erasmus+, it is not clear how this programme and the students benefit out of them (1.18).
- This point is linked to the academic goals (as explained above) as well as to the lack of thorough market research for the needs and expectations of candidate students (1.19).
- A teaching methodology – a horizontal policy for distance learning programmes – is missing. The examples delivered imply a passive learning approach that is not streamlined with current trends and practices in distance learning programmes (1.22).

Provide information on:

1. Employability records

N/A

2. Pass rate per course/semester

N/A

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3. The correspondence of exams' and assignments' content to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS

Please circle one of the following for:

Study programme and study programme's design and development

Non-compliant
compliant

Partially compliant

substantially compliant

Fully

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

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.*
- *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

The content of the program is sufficient given the focus and level of the program. The content seems up to date and generally in the scope of what can be expected in a MBA in Shipping. The mode of delivery is distance learning with a type of traditional teaching approach of lecturing although available online via video. The material send beforehand to the external evaluators was lacking the study guide of the dissertation which created some difficulty in the evaluation but was provided during the site visit.

Strengths

The university has a fairly strong network in the shipping sector, high level of IT-infrastructure and attractive campus location and facilities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The main area of improvement in relation to teaching and learning is the lack of e-learning content (see 2.4; 2.8; 2.9). The university address this by stating this is a distance-learning program and not an e-learning based program. However, the external evaluators believe a mix would be greatly beneficial to the quality of the program.

Regarding content, the EEC would like to see a clearer perspective on environmental and sustainability issues integrated into all courses. Sustainability in general and environmental aspects

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shipping in particular is an increasingly important contemporary part of any academic program in Shipping and/or Logistics and should be clearly visible in the content and learning outcomes. There was also some issue of too extensive reading lists in courses (e.g. DSHIP520).

The program only contains one opportunity for a 7.5 ECTS elective/specialisation which is quite limited given a whole MBA program. Furthermore, the permanent faculty do not seem to have substantially dedicated time for research and much of the teaching activities are based on visiting/collaborative staff, which makes it difficult to assess the element of research integrated into teaching (cf. 2.10).

The assessment categories of the dissertation as described in the study guide needs clarification and explanation, especially, in connection to the Assessment form specified in Appendix 1 of the Dissertation Handbook (see 2.6). Furthermore, the research method "course-like" part of the course needs to be more clearly connected to the assessment of the dissertation course. Furthermore, elements of research method should be present through out the programme.

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 – 4: Non-compliant
- 5 or 6: Partially compliant
- 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
- 9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
2.1	The actual/expected number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication.	9
2.2	The actual/expected number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	8
2.3	There is an adequate policy for regular and effective communication with students.	7
2.4	The methodology implemented in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	7
2.5	Constructive formative assessment for learning and feedback are regularly provided to the students.	7
2.6	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	6
2.7	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process are implemented.	6
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.	5
2.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the programme's individual	6

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courses and are updated regularly.

2.10	It is ensured that teaching and learning are continuously enriched by research.	6
2.11	The programme promotes students' research skills and inquiry learning.	6
2.12	Students are adequately trained in the research process.	6

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching, learning and student assessment

Non-compliant
compliant

Partially compliant

substantially compliant

Fully

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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 programme, 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 participates in teaching the study programme.*
- *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 application material received included eleven (11) CVs of teaching staff associated with the MBA in Shipping program. One of them, Professor Pazarzis, was indicated as the Program Director and full-time member of staff. The other ten (10) were Members of Collaborative Teaching Staff.

During the visit to the Institution's premises, four (4) professors appeared as the ones immediately related to the MBA in Shipping program – the Program Director Emeritus Professor Pazarzis; Dr Panayiotis Saviolakis; Professor Samprakos; and Dr Angelos Arcoulis, who was announced to the EEC as the Program Coordinator.

The CVs of only Professor Pazarzis and Professor Samprakos were part of what was submitted in the application. It was unclear what the relationship of the other two 'staff' was with the MBA in Shipping program.

Mr Arkoulis provided a number of the answers requested by the Committee members and appeared more confident and convincing. When asked about his relationship with the program, he answered that if the program runs, he will be offered initially 6 hours of teaching and later the possibility of offering a full-time position will be considered. The association of Mr Panayiotis Saviolakis was not clear. However, he gave a presentation during the visit.

During the visit material was presented to the EEC that showed almost completely different course unit coordinators and associated teaching staff in comparison to what was submitted. The CVs of these new staff was not made available beforehand to the members of the Committee.

In what was presented, it seems that for each course unit, there is a course coordinator, but 3-4 names appear as collaborative staff. It is not clear what their role will be, and how they will split the material between them. It is felt by the EEC that the involvement of so many teaching staff in the teaching of one course unit, will make the roles unclear and will create confusion for students and staff themselves. It is suggested that no more than two professors are involved in delivering each course unit and make is clear who will be involved in which part of the syllabus.

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relation to what was received through the formal route of DIPAE:

The program Director is a Professor of Maritime Law and Insurance, he is teaching these course units. Professor Samprakos will be teaching a course unit in transportation.

In the other course units, one would expect to find matching of Professors' expertise with course units. This did not seem to occur in every case.

For instance, in the course unit in 'Maritime Economics, Policy and Ship Finance', it is felt that the people that are proposed to teach it do not have the required expertise. Moreover, it is felt that the specific course unit should be split into Maritime Economics and Maritime Finance, rather than bundle everything together.

Leadership and Organization behaviour is taught / coordinated by a Dentist. The EEC finds this peculiar and feels that staff with expertise in the area should teach the course.

It was also felt by the EEC that in a lot of cases the proposed professors, even though they held PhDs, they did not have a national or international standard research record to show, as reflected by the quality (not the number) of their publications and the impact of their work as measured by a number of internationally recognized metrics, such as number of citations, h and i₁₀ index, etc.

In answering the question about recruitment, at least for Mr Arcoulis, it was described that the position was advertised, he applied and is in the process of being recruited, as described above.

Strengths

- They have experience in teaching.
- Some of them seem to have a network and connection to the business world.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. There should be program director/course coordinator with expertise closer to Business, Shipping and Management to oversee the process and guide actions. The persons should be given power to act on decisions.
2. Staff should be recruited which have expertise in the areas of each course unit.
3. They should be if possible, at least of national standard but preferably of international standard, in terms of publication record, scientific impact and teaching record.
4. There should not be more than two professors per course unit and there should be clear identification of what each will teach.

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

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 programme of study. 5

3.2 The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, including the following:

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3.2.1	Subject specialisation	5
3.2.2	Research and Publications within the discipline	5
3.2.3	Experience / training in teaching in higher education	7
3.3	The programme attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	5
3.4	The specialisations of visiting professors adequately support the programme of study.	6
3.5	Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialisation to teach a limited number of courses in the programme of study.	5
3.6	In the programme 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 programme of study.	5
3.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards the programme's quality.	7
3.8	The teaching load allows for the conduct of research and contribution to society.	6
3.9	The programme's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the programme of study.	5
3.10	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.	5
3.11	The teaching staff is provided with adequate training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	2
3.12	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Provide information on the following:

In every programme of study the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching Staff

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*Non-compliant
compliant*

Partially compliant

substantially compliant

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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 programmes, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analysed.*
- *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

The process of admission was described in the application, however, the process of evaluations was vague in the aspects of how grades and candidates will be compared to each other, how letters of recommendations are compared to elements of grades, etc. Regarding situations where English tests are required upon registration it is not clear which tests will be used nor the minimum levels students need to achieve in order to be enrolled.

The student/teaching ratio is 1:12 which is believed to be comparable with similar European institutions.

Strengths

The university seems to have a very good retention rate (around 5% according to the presentation by the CFO of Neapolis University) for students. The university also seem to have in place policies for addressing student with disabilities and student counselling. Regarding academic exchange, students have several opportunities to study a semester at a partner university. The admission process incorporates a clear policy for accreditation of prior learning.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The criteria and means for selecting students for admission should be made clearer and more explicit (see 4.1)

The use of the tool Turnitin is good tool for detecting plagiarism, however, the procedure and process for disciplinary actions as a result of plagiarism should be made more explicit and formal, e.g. decision body, appeals, grade point reduction, separation from academic program, etc. (see 4.6). Furthermore, guidelines and policy for resits, request for another examiner, etc. should be formalised

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
4.1	The student admission requirements for the programme of study are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria that are favourably compared to international practices.	5
4.2	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with European and international standards.	6
4.3	The programme's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	7
4.4	Students' participation in exchange programmes is compared favourably to similar programmes across Europe.	7
4.5	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	7
4.6	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	5
4.7	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	6
4.8	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.	6
4.9	Students are satisfied with their learning experiences.	8

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18
19
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21



Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Please circle one of the following for:

Students

*Non-compliant
compliant*

Partially compliant

substantially compliant

Fully

Q
MK
92
WA
LB

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 programme.*
* *Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.*
Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counsellors, 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 programme of study.*

Findings

The university provides a rich assortment of resources for student learning and welfare. The library has an impressive collaborative network and an impressive access to scientific sources. Classrooms and other learning environments are of high quality and contributes to an attractive learning atmosphere.

Strengths

The facilities, the location, the library and the pastoral services were all of high quality.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

In the future, when the number of students in shipping increases it might be useful to extend the resources of the library with databases, such as Lloyd's List, Clarksons'.

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant



5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources are available to the students.	7
5.2	The library includes the latest books and material that support the programme.	9
5.3	The library loan system facilitates students' studies.	9
5.4	The laboratories adequately support the programme.	N/A
5.5	Student welfare services are of high quality.	9
5.6	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	9
5.7	Suitable books and reputable journals support the programme of study.	9
5.8	An internal communication platform supports the programme of study.	9
5.9	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc.) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	9
5.10	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.	8
5.11	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.	9

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Please circle one of the following for:

Resources

*Non-compliant
compliant*

Partially compliant

substantially compliant

Fully

8
MK
SI
AA
ES

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Standards

- ***The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.***
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to ensure student interactions with each other, with the teaching staff, and the study material.*
- *Teacher training programmes focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning are offered.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*

Findings

The added value for starting this new program is the market potential seen by the institute for offering the MBA in Shipping through a distance learning mode. To offer programs in both presential and distance modes (dual education) is an ambition the committee supports.

Offering a program as distance education imposes the institute to guarantee some additional requirements, amongst which most important are:

- It is more important to have a clear model (horizontal policy) that explains what is the learning approach, what are the ways students are supported in their self-guided study (instructional methods), and how supervision is provided and supported by technology.

Q AA
MK EB

- It is more important to have clear course outlines designed in advance, because there is less room for improvisation during the course execution
- It is more important to have alternative interactive media (e-learning) for the application of knowledge, communication, judgement, critical thinking beyond presential media (teaching, readers)
- Teaching staff should be professionalised in DL. More importantly, the DL unit should have the expertise and resources to support teaching staff.

If these requirements are not met, DL delivery is merely “old wine into new vessels” (substitution) and no real added value (innovation).

The committee has come to conclude that some of these additional requirements were (partially) met where others are still (largely) lacking.

- the pedagogical model provides a general setup of 9 courses (semesters 1 and 2) and thesis research (semester 3) but does not provide a clear description of how these components build up in order and complexity, nor how they contribute to the competence areas and levels for the program.
- The Moodle environment is potentially a LMS enabled to support socio-constructivist learning, but mainly used here as electronic blackboard to provide digitised content (syllabi, articles/books) with virtual classes with the teacher explaining content and students asking questions. There are existing examples from other programs where courses contain case-based material and/or explanatory animations/video on which students need to apply their knowledge.
- The 9 course outlines mention, with just one exception (DMBA580), understanding and awareness of concepts as main learning objectives. Only DMBA580 mentions (without specifying) using case studies, ‘personal application papers’ and small group exercises as components.
- Regarding the thesis support from Moodle, no other information about the methodology of supervision and evaluation criteria is available than the dissertation policy received.
- Especially for DL programs, controls for fraud should be in place. This is an ongoing development of which the program is aware and takes measures (like Turnitin).
- It was mentioned that all staff are ‘certified DL experts.’ However, following a yearly seminar (mentioned in the application) will not be sufficient. During the site visit it appeared that the DL unit mainly consist of (about 12) people working a small percentage of their time for the centre and consists mainly of technical support in using Moodle.

We heard that Neapolis University was founded 2010 and offers DL from 2014 onwards (currently 650 students in about 15 programs) and recognizes some of the concerns expressed by the committee during the site visit. The uptake for resolving seems somewhat delayed and is not very assuring.

Strengths

To use the LMS for sending out questionnaires (PROSE system) about quality, and to provide students free library access to the most important databases are already strong points of this approach (although we did not see any info on satisfaction results and usage of the library resources).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

What are the competence areas (related to the QF-EHEA, Qualification Framework for the European Higher Education Area on the second, master level cycle of qualification, using Dublin descriptors), especially regarding communicative, critical thinking and investigative skills?

We did not encounter any examples of project-based, collaborative or research-driven activities through Moodle. We did not encounter any e-learning in the sense of dedicated interactive media

92
AA
MK RB



designed by the faculty, that for instance support students to apply their knowledge in a simulated professional environment. This finding is confirmed by the overview that states 0 hours total for practice. The interaction which is so highly stated as important is therefore limited to consuming books and powerpoints, listening to teachers, and some occasional application task. There are no real interactive e-learning programs where students experience content, are active and apply knowledge in authentic contexts.

It is therefore the committee's impression that the first two semesters will be mainly knowledge-driven. We doubt if this is sufficient level for achieving the higher competence levels (Dublin, Bloom, or any categorisation). If teaching staff is not made aware of this deficiency in traditional teaching, and not supported in designing alternatives, this will not be improved and innovated.

This policy regarding dissertations is a procedural description of the process, but unfortunately lacks clear steps / tasks for setting up and executing research, supported by the LMS, as well as clear rubrics for assessing the quality of that research.

In respect to checking for fraud, we recommend to look for improvements, taking into account recent technologies (pattern/handwriting/iris recognition).

The DL unit should contain more substantial and more dedicated expertise for instructional methods and interactive e-learning, in order to design and develop a more active and experiential program, needed to achieve some of the higher order competences in HE (see other comments).

Mark from 1 to 10 the degree of compliance of each quality indicator/criterion

- 1 – 4: Non-compliant
- 5 or 6: Partially compliant
- 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
- 9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 10
6.1	The pedagogical planning unit for distance learning supports the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment.	2
6.2	The institution safeguards the interaction:	
6.2.1	Among students	6
6.2.2	Between students and teaching staff	6
6.2.3	Between students and study guides/material of study	6
6.3	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of teaching staff ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for distance learning education.	2
6.4	Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff through appropriate procedures.	4

92
AA
MK
CB
27

6.5	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.	8
6.6	Adequate mentoring by the teaching staff is provided to students through established procedures.	8
6.7	The unimpeded distance learning communication between the teaching staff and the students is ensured.	6
6.8	Assessment consistency is ensured.	6
6.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the distance learning education methodology and are updated regularly.	4
6.10	The programme of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of distance learning.	2
6.11	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.	8
6.12	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.	8
6.13	Procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are set.	6
6.14	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to corresponding university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.	4
6.15	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and the teaching staff.	8
6.16	The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the programme, the level, and the method of teaching.	4
6.17	Students' weekly assignments are appropriate for the level of the programme.	4
6.18	Feedback on students' assignments is regular through concrete and published procedures.	6
6.19	The quality of students' final exams is ensured and evidenced.	6
6.20	The teaching e-learning material has been sufficiently enriched with electronic sources, updated research publications and other electronic learning resources that support students' work and learning.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Please circle one of the following for:

Q
SZ
AA
RB

Additional for distance learning programmes

*Non-compliant
compliant*

Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

Fully

Q
MK
EZ
HA
EB

C. Conclusions and final remarks

Considering all the comments, remarks and marks provided in the previous sections the EEC would like to highlight the following points as concluding remarks:

1. Issues related to the governance of the Programme, potentially affecting also procedures and governance structures of the NUP, should be reviewed, harmonized and streamlined with wider policies, such as of the Council of Europe, and formally implemented. This implies also active involvement of the faculty members in the management of the academic delivery as well as enhancement of quality assurance procedures.
2. Issues related to the vision and strategy of the Programme should be reviewed and streamlined with the motto of the NUP 'excellence, innovation, research, experience'. It is strongly suggested that every single word of the motto is reflected in the all documents, policies and deliverables of the Programme.
3. Issues related to the 'distance' nature of the Programme, and especially the didactic approach should be reviewed and improved. It is important to offer 'e-learning' and interactive learning material, rather than 'repackaged' content of 'physical' programmes on a Moodle platform.
4. Research by faculty members should be encouraged and current research should be incorporated in the learning material.
5. It is important the Programme Director and the faculty engaged in this Programme to get actively involved in the delivery, update and development of the content and of the programme. Their passive attitude during the meeting and the fact that almost all questions were replied by the Rector during the visit, signals their weak role, and potentially, commitment in the design and development of this Programme.
6. A thorough market research focusing on the background, needs, expectations and demographics of candidate students is required to support decisions of the management of the NUP regarding this programme.
7. Provided resources are generally satisfactory.

The EEC would like to thank the Agency and the NUP for the warm hospitality. The EEC envisages all comments, remarks and suggestions to be considered as 'constructive criticism' and assist further NUP in the development of a successful D-MBA in Shipping.

D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>
Profesor Orestis Schinas
Profesor Rickard Bergqvist
Profesor Hummel Hans
Profesor Manolis Kavussanos
Ms Fotia Ioannou

Date: 07/05/2019