

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 00/00/0000

- **Higher Education Institution:**
NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY
- **Town:** PAFOS
- **Programme of study**
Name : Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)
- **In Greek:**
Πτυχίο στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων
- **In English:**
BSc in Business Administration
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English/Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

Introduction

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the evaluation of the Department of Economics & Business at Neapolis University took place virtually via a Zoom meeting on October 8, 2020.

Prior to the meeting, we were submitted all relevant documents such as the Application for Evaluation-Accreditation of the BSc in Business Administration, the Application for Evaluation Accreditation of the Master in Public Administration, the Application-Accreditation of the Master in Business Administration, the Department of Economics & Business Handbook, and documents that include analytical information about the faculty, the infrastructure, the quality assurance mechanisms and the teaching and research procedures.

The EEC had the opportunity to meet with the Rector Professor Pantelis Sklias, the Dean of the School of Economics, Administration and Computer Science, Prof. Maria Psillaki, the Head of the Economics & Finance Department Associate Professor Christos Christodoulou-Volos, and leaders of the programs Dr Nikolaos Apostolopoulos, Coordinator of the MBA, Dr Andreas Masouras, Coordinator of BSc in Business Administration, Dr Charalampos Chrysomallidis, Coordinator of Master in Public Administration.

Furthermore, the committee interviewed members of the teaching staff, a group of undergraduate students from the various years of the BSc programme, as well as postgraduate students, administrative staff in charge of admissions, registration, library facilities, IT and other administrative support staff. Then, we had a virtual visit of Neapolis University facilities. More specifically, we were shown the impressive exterior premises, various teaching areas, the Library, meeting rooms, staff offices, student accommodation, and some open areas.

Moreover, the internal evaluation 'Application' and associated documents, which were submitted by Neapolis University and examined, were considered complete, satisfactory and informative.

Finally, the EEC has to point out its disappointment and dissatisfaction that all faculty members had their cameras turned off during the remote evaluation. Thus, the Committee had not the opportunity of a face to face discussion with all members, although it was mentioned many times by the Chairman, members of the Committee and representative of the CYQAA to turn on their cameras.

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

Findings

The documentation, presentations and discussions during the remote visit provided the committee members with a good understanding of the three programmes. The programmes recruit largely from Cyprus and Greece, though there are plans to target other regions. The teaching staff appear committed to giving students a very good learning experience, not least during the pandemic when they pivoted to new arrangements, with good support from ICT staff. Quality Assurance processes are good and embedded within the Department, School and University. There is good management oversight of the programmes. The small class sizes for some of the taught specialism present both advantages and disadvantages. The reliance upon visiting staff for considerable aspects of provision is a sign of the need for the Department to mature and develop its own capacity in line with the ambitious plans of the institution.

Findings for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

This is a good programme, supporting the intellectual and social development of students, and preparing them to work in a range of organisations. The ethos of teaching and learning is supportive, and a range of appropriate methods are used. There is a clear progression across the levels of the programme. The students were supported effectively during the pandemic. The linkages with UK universities offer additional pathways for student as part of the 3+1 system. We suggest there may be further scope to make such partnerships more active to the benefit of programme development.

Strengths for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

- Good programme design
- Possibility of additional pathways for students through the 3+1 agreements
- Committed teaching staff

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

As noted elsewhere in this Report, there is a need to support the development of the research environment so that it can drive the teaching provision and help the department to mature. There is an opportunity to involve existing and future academic partners in this process, but the aim should be developing internal capacity.

OUR COMMENTS:

Done. The University has already undertaken the following initiatives towards the said direction, further supporting the research environment:

1. **Organisation of international research oriented conferences, supported by highly ranked, SCOPUS included related publication opportunities:**
 - <http://ebeec.ihu.gr/>: The 13th International Conference of “the Economies of Balkan and Eastern European Countries – EBEEC 2021” will be held from 14 – 16.05.2021 in Pafos under the co-organisation of [Neapolis University in Cyprus](#) with the International University of Greece.

- NUP will host the 2022 International Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship <https://www.academic-conferences.org/conferences/ecie/>. The conference is generally attended by participants from more than 40 countries and attracts an interesting combination of academic scholars, practitioners and individuals who are engaged in various aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship teaching and research. The 16th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship will be hosted by Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE), Portugal and the Conference Chair will be Florinda Matos.
2. Active involvement in international research oriented networks together with high ranked institutions
 - Neapolis University in Cyprus, a Founding Member of the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE). [Neapolis University in Cyprus](https://www.neapolis.ac.cy/), is now, together with other distinguished and internationally renowned University Institutions, such as the University of Birmingham, Brunel University London, Coventry University, Liverpool University, Strathclyde University, University of Warwick and others, founding member of the International Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (<https://isbe.org.uk/>).
 3. Organisation of internal research seminars. From October to December all staff have presented their research in progress work to share experiences and enhance the research environment within the Department.
 4. Online series of seminars (e.g. webinars) have been organised by the School of Economics, Administration and Computer Science of Neapolis University, analyse the various trends in business finance, such as decentralised financing based on financial technology (FinTech). It also presents the qualifications and skills that employees must possess, and analyses how to promote products successfully. As a result, the new environment that is being created provides new challenges for entrepreneurship and creates opportunities for global and sustainable growth. <https://www.nup.ac.cy/news/webinar-new-trends-and-skills-for-business/>
 5. Research seminars addressed to NUP teaching staff have been incorporated into the University's function. <https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/277e5b1b-7c87-4d7b-a1ad-ff3a99a45e62>
 6. In the meantime, the University has continued to financially support ALL research publication requests for ranked scientific journals and participation in related international conferences.
 7. Research component is an integrated part of the teaching staff assessment and evaluation. See Appendix 6.
 8. Three full time academic staff have been hired from September onwards, namely Professor Maria Psillaki, Associate Professor Sofia Daskou and Lecturer Dimitra Dimitriou. <https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/sofia-daskou/>
<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/maria-psillaki/>
<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/demetra-demetriou/>

9. Two renowned academics have joined the Department as Visiting Professor, namely Professor Christopher Moon from Middlesex University and Professor Paul Jones from Swansea University, to further enhance the academic impact of the School and the Department as well as to further enhance the research environment of the University, the School and the Department.

<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/christopher-moon/>

<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/paul-jones/>

10. Research environment is further enhanced by additional investments NUP has realised, including the purchase of Statistical Analysis Software tools, including STATA as well as in educational platforms including:

- AIMER for Business
- AIMER for the Public Sector

and simulation games, already incorporated into the learning process, in collaboration with CESIM

<https://www.cesim.com/>. The University has already employed Ph.D. candidate Elena Polydorou for mentoring and supporting students in such simulation tools

<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/elena-polydorou/>.

Already organised:

NUP Seminars – Internals - Synergies		
Date	Presenter	Time
21-09-2020		
	Savvas Chatzichristofis	11:00
	Panayiotis Christodoulou	11:30
	Nikos Apostolopoulos	12:00
21-10-2020		
	Zairis Antonis	10:30-11.00
	Latsou Dimitra	11.00-11.30
	Meramveliotakis Georgios	11.30-12:00
	Varelas Sotirios	12:00-12.30
23-11-2020		
	Reppa Anastasia	11:00
	Giannopoulos Kostas	11:30
	Psillaki Maria	12:00
	Zagoris Konstantios	12:30
17-12-2020		
	Zinonos Zinon	11:00
	Masouras Andreas	11:30
	Siakalli Michailina	12:00

Person	Topic	Date
3. Panagiotis Tziogkidis, Assistant Professor, University of Macedonia	Identifying the optimal innovation policy direction: insights from a recently published research in European Journal of Operational Research.	4 November 11:00am

4. Professor Giovanni Barone-Adesi, University of Lugano	Estimating the pricing Kernel	17 September 2020 at 12.00 pm
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Webinars already realised:

	Date	Title	Speaker	Link
1	13/10/20	Cryptocurrency Mass Adoption – Problems and Solutions	Aggelos Hadjifillipou, Beepextra	https://www.facebook.com/126890420680422/videos/733838750556862
2	24/11/20	Entrepreneurial Mindset and Sustainability	Christopher Moon, Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Middlesex University	
3	13/11/20	Digital Transformation & New Marketing Opportunities	Yiannis Pollalis, Professor of Strategic Management & Policy in the Department of Economic Science at the University of Piraeus in Greece	https://www.facebook.com/126890420680422/videos/674733983238656
4	12/18/20	Towards Industry and Society 5.0 in the Era of the Pandemic	Elias G. Carayannis, Professor of Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the George Washington University School of Business in Washington, D.C.	https://www.facebook.com/126890420680422/videos/724071721864847

Sub-area

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3 Public information	Compliant
1.4 Information management	Compliant

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

Findings for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

In general the findings for the bachelor BA are positive. The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development. We have discussed with the professors and the students about the modes of delivery, the growth path towards academic critical thinking and concluded that the students receive good opportunities to develop their competencies in a full way of knowledge, skills and attitude. The learning processes are designed to have flexibility which was proven in the pandemic period. Professors use different modes of delivery, ranging from standard lectures and handbooks to challenges for the students directly received from (local) companies. Also interesting is the growing use of simulation. So, in several ways the students are challenged to take an active role, however, also with ample opportunity for the student to get guidance and mentoring. Students gave note of the awareness on how to act when they would have complaints.

Assessment procedures have been discussed by checking a number of exam questions, it was clear that the assessment system is adequate, however some improvements are possible in the academic nature of discussion of theory and methods, although we think that this is part of the development of students over years. Exams in year 3 and 4 can have more of this academic nature.

The collaboration with a number of UK universities seem to have helped in organizing the educational system. However, the committee is a bit critical on the level of those role model universities, but for this phase of development it seems to work.,

Strengths for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Good connections to industry 14

Well-developed technological infra structure of IT for the online teaching

Students well supported in pandemic

Ample teaching staff, also some with more than sufficient research background

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Although in general the program is of adequate level the committee asks attention for ensuring that critical academic thinking is well enough trained and assessed in exams.

OUR COMMENTS:

This dimension has been taken into consideration and is now part of the internal quality assurance procedure within the Department. It has also been incorporated into the staff assessment and evaluation procedures. See Appendix 6.

Sub-area

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and studentcentred teaching methodology Compliant

2.2 Practical training

Compliant

2.3 Student assessment

Compliant

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

We met with all teaching staff involved with the programme. In their majority, members of the teaching staff have a PhD title as well as research work. There are members of the teaching staff that hold doctoral degrees awarded mainly by UK institutions. The members of staff we interviewed seemed to be engaged, professional and with good English language skills.

Moreover, they seemed to be pleased with their working conditions and the overall University working environment. They appeared to take teaching seriously and to be supportive of the initiatives regarding research (i.e. they all seemed to be doing some research and acknowledge the value of doing research for an educational institution and they committed to make a good effort to this direction).

Also, teaching staff seems to be in favour of participating in exchanges through the Erasmus plus mobility program. Referring to the BSc program, Neapolis University has an agreement with Middlesex University and Hull University. In addition, the involvement of the teaching staff with research activities implies travelling abroad and interacting with the relevant academic communities.

How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?

It appears that feedback on teaching activities is provided via the existing quality assurance processes. Special seminars are organised by the University for training in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.

How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?

Teaching performance is assessed via student feedback questionnaires for each course. The link between teaching performance and related remuneration of academic staff is not clear however.

Is teaching connected with research?

The subject specialization of the faculty members is almost related to the courses to be delivered. The members of the teaching staff appear to have sufficient publications in their field of expertise. The number of courses taught by the faculty members is claimed to be adapted to international academic standards and follows the guidelines of the CYQAA so that the quality of the studies is guaranteed and the teachers have sufficient time to conduct research, communicating the results of their research via conferences and publications, and disseminating their findings through lectures.

Overall, the committee recommends and encourages the inclusion of related research academic papers in the reading lists of the courses, as well as updating of the textbooks used across courses very often, if not already done.

Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?

There seem to be regular instances of communication and visits between Neapolis University faculty and other Erasmus plus partner institutions. We recommend an expansion of similar collaborations and mutual visits with other HEIs both domestically and abroad.

What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?

They assured us that each faculty member teaches maximum 4 courses per semester.

16 faculty members are assigned at the BSc Program. From these 16 faculty members, 13 are full timers and 3 are visiting professors/part timers.

The committee finds that the teaching load is relatively heavy and the faculty members do not have enough time to develop their research in top listed journals.

Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?

Both from our review of the internal evaluation report of the program as well as from our discussions with faculty such evaluations take place and are taken into account in the quality assurance processes of the University. The committee asked for more evidence about how student feedback further informs program development. Findings for Public Administration.

Strengths for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Although Neapolis University Pafos is a relatively new university, (founded in 2010), the Department of Economics & Finance is well staffed and there is some research culture as evidenced by research seminars and publications in international journals by the academic staff.

We found it very promising that there is a mix of senior and junior faculty teaching on the program with diffusion of experience from the more senior faculty to the more junior academics. Although junior faculty are at an early stage of their careers, they seem willing to improve the quality of their teaching and research. Faculty seemed to be well integrated and in good working terms.

The modern premises and facilities of the University enhance both the teaching and learning environment on campus. Although, the University has invested in databases, the committee felt that more investment was needed in economic databases since the availability of such databases would help both students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and academic staff. Access to these databases could help the academic staff with their research.

Moreover, it seems that the outcome of teaching is being monitored and taken seriously by the institution and that any issues or problems are professionally and effectively taken care of through the existing Quality Assurance Framework in place.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

The committee would like to have more information on how research performance is assessed for the academic staff. More generally, while there is evidence of research activity, such as research output, more needs to be done in terms of improving the quality and quantity of the publication output. Neapolis University could encourage the “good research” and the publication to top listed journals. That means that Neapolis University could formally incorporate a certain level of research quality indicators (based on e.g. the ABS journal quality lists, that is publications in ABS 3, ABS 4 and ABS 4* journals) and peer-reviewed work so that online publications and conference submissions (which sometimes may not be peer reviewed) are discussed with respective communities. It was pointed out through our discussion that incentives are given to the teaching staff referring to their publications. We see good attempts, but we believe that the academic staff of Neapolis University could make few steps on the research level.

Even though the existence of research seminars was pointed out to the committee during the interviews there was no detailed evidence in the internal evaluation report of these seminars and whether faculty presented their work to colleagues in order to obtain feedback, a practice that may improve the quality of the research and research related teaching in the institution. The COVID-19 global situation could foster the

introduction of virtual research seminars inviting renowned speakers from abroad to present their work at little or no cost.

OUR COMMENTS:

NUP is a very young University that is maturing and growing. Synergy among research and teaching has been one of the major pillars of enhancement and improvement. Besides the initiatives already undertaken, already prescribed in Part 1 of this document we also document developments in the following:

1. See Appendix 1: Research Output and Statistics – including staff recruitment and development
2. See Appendix 2: Synergy between teaching staff research and teaching
3. See Appendix 3: Last 5 Years research output of teaching staff

Additionally:

1. NUP has already been enhanced with new staff with strong research background and international teaching experience. See Appendices 1,2,3.
2. Max. number of courses per semester is 4.
3. Considering that NUP is not offering any summer semester or summer courses the total teaching load of faculty members is limited to 26 weeks per year.
4. All teaching staff with administrative tasks have a limited number of courses (0-3 depending on the administrative tasks undertaken).
5. The visiting staff for BA is restricted to 2-3 visitors per academic year.
6. All academic staff are Ph.D. holders with related research activity with the exemption of 1-2 professionals, e.g. Accounting, nevertheless holding related MSc.
7. Three full time academic staff have been hired from September onwards, namely Professor Maria Psillaki, Associate Professor Sofia Daskou and Lecturer Dimitra Dimitriou.

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8. Two renowned academics have joined the Department as Visiting Professor, namely Professor Christopher Moon from Middlesex University and Professor Paul Jones from Swansea University, to further enhance the academic impact of the School and the Department as well as to further enhance the research environment of the University , the School and the Department.

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<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/paul-jones/>

The above and combined Part 1 and Part 2 responses indicate that NUP has taken all necessary initiatives to create the necessary research environment and reach a sufficient level of synergy of teaching and research.

Sub-area

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2 Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3 Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Findings for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

1. Student admission in general is well arranged.
2. General admission criteria: Candidates must possess a Secondary School Certificate. The general admission criteria are based on the type and quality of previous studies, the grade obtained in previous studies and the suitability of the candidate for the program of study that has been applied for.
3. English language requirements: Satisfactory knowledge of English is essential in principal level B2.
4. The program Coordinator is actively involved in the review of applications.
5. Admissions appeal process: Where an applicant is dissatisfied with a decision of the University, relating to admission to the program, the applicant may appeal to the relevant Admissions Office within 10 working days from the notification of the decision.
6. Each application reviewed on its own merit

Students performances are well described against standards. Furthermore, the possibility fo students to do a double degree in Middlesex university indicates an adequate international level of universities comparable to Middelsex University or University of Hull. The committee wonders whether these role models represent a high ambition level.

Strengths for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

The program admission, progress and certification is in line with international standards.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

The connection to UK universities certification is commendable, however for longer term a more independent accreditation is recommended.

OUR COMMENTS:

NUP is moving towards this direction of independent accreditation. Following the successful completion of the Sureplus Quality evaluation process of all its internal quality assurance policies and procedures, NUP has received the *SUREPLUS label level A certification* for the next 4 years. <https://www.nup.ac.cy/news/recognition-and-certification-by-the-international-quality-evaluation-body-sureplus-quality/>

Sub - area

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor) Public)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria | Compliant |
| 4.2 Student progression | Compliant |
| 4.3 Student recognition | Compliant |
| 4.4 Student certification | Compliant |

5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

Findings for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

The committee got the impression that the facilities are in order. Also in the covid 19 pandemic the school is well able to teach and an compliment must be made to the IT staff enabling student & staff to switch fast to online and hybrid. The human support is also well arranged in this program. All other physical and support facilities are good.

Strengths for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Simulation tools are available and well supported by IT. Students were satisfied about the support they get.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

On the resource and facility side the committee sees no immediate improvement necessary.

Sub-area

Business Administration (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources Compliant

5.2 Physical resources Compliant

5.3 Human support resources Compliant

5.4 Student support Compliant

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

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

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8. Additional for joint programmes
(ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

The Department of Economics & Business offers many academic graduate and postgraduate programs. All programs are compliant to most of the standards. However, the permanent staff is not enough to run all these programs and that also influences the research base underlying the programs. Much of what the committee has seen is in what we would call a developmental stage. Considering the age off the programs this is not surprising, however, for the coming years the strategy needs to focus a stronger research base of the staff of the university and consequently higher ambitions considering the ambition level, to be able to fully comply to the mission/vision of the school and comply to high international standards especially for the master education level.

More in particular we see the program bachelor business administration as the relative strongest program. Also the conclusion on the MBA is that this is compliant, however, both suffer from a relative heavy teaching load, and in the growth trajectory we advice to attract new staff with strong research background.

OUR COMMENTS:

- 1. NUP has already been enhanced with new staff with strong research background and international teaching experience. See Appendices 1,2,3.**
- 2. Max. number of courses per semester is 4.**
- 3. Considering that NUP is not offering any summer semester or summer courses the total teaching load of faculty members is limited to 26 weeks per year.**
- 4. All teaching staff with administrative tasks have a limited number of courses (0-3 depending on the administrative tasks undertaken).**
- 5. The visiting staff for BA is restricted to 2-3 visitors per academic year.**
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<https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/paul-jones/>

Also, please see responses above.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Sklias Pantelis	Rector	
Prof. Psillaki Maria	Dean	
Assoc. Prof Volos Christos-Christodoulou	Head of Department	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 00/00/0000