Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 04/05/22

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Neapolis University Pafos

- **Town:** Pafos

- **Programme of study
  Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα

  στη Δημόσια Διοίκηση με τρεις κατευθύνσεις – Εξ

  αποστάσεως

  In English:

  Master in Public Administration with three

  Specialisations - Distance

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Γενική Διοίκηση, Διοίκηση Υπηρεσιών
  Υγείας, Εκπαιδευτική Διοίκηση
  In English: General Administration, Public Healthcare
  services Administration, Educational Administration

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) 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, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

Dear EEC,
We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the positive reaction and comments we have received, among others that the program is overall either fully compliant or partially compliant to the stated criteria and standards. We hereby state our response to all the comments regarding areas of improvement and recommendations.

1. **Study programme and study programme's design and development**
   (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

   1. **The EEC recommends to seek more harmonisation of the programme objectives across the three specializations, and to more explicitly link programme objectives to course objectives.**

      Our comments:

      1. Done. Please see attached *Annex 1_ DMPA Mapping PLOs – CLOs*.

   2. **It is advised to more explicitly communicate to students how they can report instances of unethical (academic and non-academic) behaviour, as well as the appeals procedures that apply.**

      Our comments:

      Done. Please see attached *Annex 2_Policies and Procedures*.

   3. **The EEC recommends to strengthen the information management in relation to student progress and student outcomes, and to communicate these metrics to students**

      Our comments:

      Done.

      We are using a Business Intelligence (BI) software which has the ability to connect to CRM (SIS) and Moodle and provide detailed reports on student progress and teaching staff performance. Please see *Annex 3_Business Intelligence Software.*

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
(ESG 1.3)

1. The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is a good practice. Therefore, the university is urged to apply for external accreditations, such as EFQUEL, to evaluate the quality of its distance learning model.

Our comments:

Done. We have contacted EFQUEL and Unique. Please see attached email that was sent by our Quality Assurance Unit Manager. We have also submitted an application to become a member of the European Distance E-learning Network (EDEN) Organisation (http://www.eden-online.org/) and are awaiting an invoice to process membership payment. Please see attached email (*Annex 4_External Accreditation Organisations – Communication*).

2. The EEC wants to point out that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment through the writing assignments during the course could be reinforced instead.

Our comments:

Done. Alternative forms of assessment have already been applied e.g. open book exams. The EEC for the DL MSc in Banking, Investment and Finance has already received samples of such exams (see attached *Annex 5_Exam Papers*) and has commented the following in its report:

"*The EEC reviewed two examples of MBA exam papers (in pdf format) that demonstrated a pedagogically valid approach to design an open book exam paper with good guidance about selection of information sources to support student narrative.*"

3. From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process.

Our comments:

Done. Gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. Please see *Annex 6_Simulation.*

4. In addition, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.

Our comments:

Based on our Business Intelligence software (*see section 1.3*) we have the ability to generate agents (notifications) on every aspect of our data and more specifically for students. The agents have the ability to notify via email (see *Annex 7_ BI Student Performance Overview*). Students can then view the data and even drill through for further analysis.

5. **While the EEC emphasizes the benefits of any form of interaction and collaboration, the online synchronous teleconferences and the teamwork among students were perceived as problematic if in the next years the program is expanded internationally and attended by many students across different time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their distance learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous online interaction and collaboration.**

Our comments:

We appreciate the recommendation, nevertheless, the programme under evaluation is taught in the Greek language only therefore no different time zones are expected. Nonetheless, synchronous teleconferences are recorded so the asynchronous element is already embedded.

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

1. **In case of future hiring of new faculty or teaching staff, it is recommended to strengthen the pool of teachers who can cover the topics offered in the healthcare and educational administration, in order to reduce the dependence on a single member of staff.**

   Our comments:

   We thank the EEC for the recommendation. In the Educational Administration specialization we already have a new hiring (Dr. Christos Goulas, https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/christos-goulas/). Please see attached *Annex 8_Christos Goulas contract*. Any potential new hiring will be targeted towards the HealthCare Services Administration specialization.

2. **It is recommended to develop a formal policy and approach to teacher development, in particular for more junior teaching staff.**

   Our comments:

   Done. Please see attached *Annex 9_Academic Staff Development Policy*.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

More sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning are encouraged to be used to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and/or the number of online students.

Our comments:

Done. See our response in section 1.3.

5. **Learning resources and student support**
   (ESG 1.6)

   1. **While the online courses include a good variety of learning materials (e-books, articles, videos, etc.) which are good for distance learning, the EEC suggests that the recorded teleconferences and video lectures to be usable and accessible for students by making them short (edited), include the teacher in all the videos to provide non-verbal communication, and add subtitles for accessibility.**

      Our comments:

      We appreciate the suggestion which will be taken into consideration in future developments of the programme.

   2. **In addition, the EEC suggest that some considerations should be taken into account to the provision of entire volumes as basic materials in order to adapt them to part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion.**

      Our comments:

      We thank you for the suggestion, which will be taken into consideration in future developments of the programme.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
   (ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Pantelis Sklias	Rector	

Date: 04/05/22