Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 03.06.2022

Higher Education Institution's Response (E-learning programme of study)

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

- **Town:** Pafos

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Architecture, Engineering, Land and Environmental Studies

- **Department/Sector:** Architecture, Land and Environmental Sciences

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

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Χώρος και Εταιρική

  Ταυτότητα (1.5 Έτη, 90 ECTS, 3 εξάμηνα,

  μεταπτυχιακό, εξ αποστάσεως)

  In English:

   MSc in Space and Branded Identity (1.5 years, 90

  ECTS, 3 semesters, postgraduate, Distance)

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

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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, without changing the format of the report:*

  - *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.*

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

1.1.	Placement impediments related to the E-Learning traits of the programme have to be addressed and the respective information should be available to prospective students before the start day of the MSc.
1.2	Stakeholders from the private and public sector should be consulted in all future revisions of the Programme.
1.3	A breakdown of the credits into hours of student work, and the correspondence of these hours to particular tasks (lectures, home study, essays etc.) would make student workload transparent, preparing students for the course. The various course description documents would be good places to include this detail.
1.4	The Department has to define the maximum number of the students who will be admitted for attending the Programme. It is noted that in the context of this evaluation it was considered that the expected number of the students in the Programme will be 15, with a foreseen increase up to 20. In case the number of the student increases further, then a re-evaluation of the Programme is considered necessary.
1.5	Given the fact that this Programme will initially accommodate a small number of students, the scenario of adding more elective courses seems to be nonviable. This recommendation, however, should be reconsidered in future revisions of the Programme, and in the case that there is an increase in student and teaching staff numbers.

HEI's response:

1.1 Done. NUP has initiated various actions in order to give to distance students the placement opportunity as it is given for the students of conventional programs in order to improve their knowledge and skills as well as to gain work experience. The actions are the following:

- NUP has already established a network with companies and enterprises that operate in Cyprus, Greece and other places of the world. These companies can offer internships internationally as well as virtual internships depending on their field of study. Every year, NUP expands this network of companies and organizations aiming to provide our students with all the assets for their career.
- The prospective students have also the choice to apply for ERASMUS + mobility for placements in order to get trained by obtaining new skills and qualifications. There is a remaining budget of €8.900 that can be used for ERASMUS + student placement and €33.600 has already been approved for the new contracted period, so, a total of 42.500€ is available for NUP student placement.
- NUP has applied to be part of International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) Community Scholarship https://www.isepstudyabroad.org/planning/finances/study-abroad-scholarships/isep-community-scholarship for internabroad programs in order to maximize the potentials for placement for our e-learning students.
- All the above information is given to students (DL and conventional) during the Induction Week. Also, during their studies, the NUP Liaison Office encourages students to participate in placement and internship programs and provide them all the information needed to apply for the offered positions. Students are also constantly been informed through emails with available placement and internships positions both in Cyprus and Internationally.

1.2 Done. NUP has already established the process with an external advisory board which is comprised by both academics and other relevant stakeholders from the private and public sector in order to reflect on existing programmes and provide their suggestions. Thus, this process will be done for this programme as well.

1.3 Done. In each course syllabus has been introduced an additional table that explains the workload breakdown. Additionally, in the study guides a revised section has been developed that explains in detail the workload breakdown. Please refer to Annex 1 in order to see the new additions to the study guides and syllabi. Additionally, please see revised study guides attached for the courses DSBI504, DSBI502, DSBI503, DSBI504 (**Annex 10**).

1.4 Done. The maximum number of students who will be admitted for attending the Programme is **30**. In case the foreseen number of students increases above 30, a new audience will open with new academic staff under the general supervision of the programme director and the course coordinator.

1.5 Done. There is a wide array of new and already running courses that could be introduced in future revisions of the programme. In particular the electives could be either from creative disciplines or from business-related disciplines so as to enhance students' choices and give to students the possibility to select elective courses of their personal interest.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

2.1	As per the above recommendation (see section 1), the programme and course documentation should indicate more clearly the expected workload per course and for the programme overall and explain the procedure and conditions for extending the duration of the studies. Such student-facing documentation should be discussed with student representatives to ensure clarity and comprehension from the side of the student body. This is particularly important for E-learning programmes where the students may have the impression that the workload is less intensive, compared to conventional programmes
2.2	Single grading is acceptable for most courses, but there needs to be a procedure of double- checking and potentially moderating course grades (e.g. confirming failed or exceptional work).
2.3	We should not underestimate the importance of the obligatory Dissertation both in terms of corresponding to 30 ECTS (i.e. one third of the total 90) and also in terms of evidence of independent student work (e.g. future employment or pursuit of PhD studies). Such a significant piece of work should be double-graded independently by 2 staff members. In addition, there should be a transparent mechanism for addressing potential disagreement in the two grades (e.g. if more than 9% difference or if one of the grades leads to a fail), through 3rd marking and/or moderation.

HEI's response:

2.1 Done. In each course syllabus has been introduced an additional table that explains the workload breakdown. Additionally, in the study guides a revised section has been developed that explains in detail the workload breakdown. Please refer to **Annex 1** in order to see the new additions to the study guides and syllabi. Additionally, please see revised study guides for the courses DSBI504, DSBI502, DSBI503, DSBI504 (**Annex10**). Regarding the procedure and conditions for extending the duration of the studies, this possibility is already clearly communicated to the students in Section 4.6 "Duration for Completion of Studies" of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes* (see **Annex 12**), which is available to all students through the Moodle platform. Also, the students are provided with the necessary information during the Induction Week (see Section 6.1 "Induction Week" of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes*, see **Annex 12**).

2.2 Done. There is already a NUP Appeal Policy that ensures a high quality students' experience. Please see the attached policy and procedure in **Annex 4**. All students can find all the pertinent forms online on the Moodle platform. Also, the students are provided with the necessary information during Induction Week (see Section 6.1 "Induction Week" of the *University Student Handbook for Postgraduate Programmes*, see **Annex 12**).

2.3 Done. The dissertation is already supervised by a three-member committee. Additionally, there is a detailed study guide for the dissertation completion that is provided as a primary general guidance aid in the context of preparing a dissertation, in addition to the relevant support by the primary supervisor. Please see this study guide in **Annex 11**.

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3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

3.1	The institution provides a more formal programme of training for conventional (not just for distance learning) to support staff in developing and delivering innovative teaching. The institution provides a means for staff to log what training they have completed so as to support annual performance review and promotions processes.
3.2	The institution introduces more formal structures for developing a community of practice for teaching innovation. The institution develops a programme of training for new lecturers, to support their adoption of innovative teaching practices.
3.3	The Department conducts a review of research activity and puts clear provisions in place to better support and incentivise staff to collaborate more on producing good quality research outputs that are aligned to the objectives of the programme.

HEI's response:

3.1. Done. NUP has already an established policy for academic staff development. Please see the policy in **Annex 6**. In this context, the previous years NUP has provided training seminars and mentorship programmes for all the academic personnel (both permanent and adjunct teaching staff) with various subjects (i.e dissertation tutors, Moodle and teams, library etc.). The detailed list with all the activities and dates can be found in **Annex 8**. Additionally, NUP has an already established policy for staff promotion which states that the academic staff should submit to the selection body all times he or she has participated in University activities (i.e trainings, mentorships and other activities) and this will be taken into account for their promotion. Please see the policy in **Annex 5**.

3.2. Done. NUP has already an established policy for academic staff development which ensures the development of a community of practice for teaching and innovation. Please see the policy in **Annex 6**. In this context, the previous years NUP has provided training seminars and mentorship programmes for all the academic personnel (both permanent and adjunct teaching staff) with various subjects (i.e dissertation tutors, Moodle and teams, library etc.). The detailed list with all the activities and dates can be found in **Annex 8**.

3.3. Done. NUP has already an established research policy and procedure that ensures the delivery and support of research at the University. Please see the policy in **Annex 7, Specific Guidelines I.5&I.6**

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

4.1	The list of documents provided by foreign students who apply for the programme should include The Recognition of their higher education Title of Studies by The Cyprus Council of Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

HEI's response:

4.1 Done. The provisions and regulations that are applied for the overseas' students are clearly described on the Republic and thus full applied by NUP.

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5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

5.1.	Library access to books and resources (particularly hard copies) needs to be supported further for distance learning students located outside Cyprus through interlibrary loans and partnership agreements. Participation of the university in international partnerships such as the international EMERGE network mentioned by the senior management (currently at application stage) could enhance access to both soft and hard copies of resources.
5.2.	The NUP benchmarking tool could be enhanced to support learning design in distance mode delivery, by clearly differentiating between three significant categories: 1. Minimum requirements for all courses, 2. Good practice for e-learning (applicable to both conventional and DL/e-learning programmes) and 3. Additional requirements for fully online courses (this would apply to this programme).
5.3.	The use of serious games and simulations represent great examples of employing learning technologies to support students in an online environment. We recommend that the university employs both serious games and computer-based simulations (it would be useful not to confound serious games and simulations in programme literature as they have different affordances) to cover more disciplinary areas in the programme. The programme team should look at other learning technologies that can support the distance learner.
5.4.	Induction activities for new students should be mandatory, as induction can have a positive impact on long term support.
5.5.	We recommend that a system is set up to support DL students located abroad in their search for placements or internships, so that they are not disadvantaged in relation to students of the conventional program. This can have a positive impact on employability and on the international reputation of the programme.
5.6.	We recommend a further alignment between the programmes (the conventional and the e-learning) in terms of design and delivery. This will benefit both cohorts. Approaches that could achieve this would be adopting a flexible approach in terms of student workloads with clear signposting about workloads at the start of the course and allowing the students to move from the conventional to the e-learning programme and vice versa.

HEI's response:

5.1 Done. The **NUP Library** is a fully functional hybrid library as it provides both: hardcopies & electronic materials. Library collection consists of over 20.000+ hardcopies,1.500.000+ electronic books and 22.000.000+ articles, **all accessed and available to both conventional and distance students with their credential given with the registration.**

Also, the Library of Neapolis has subscriptions with these major editors and databases, (can see inside of each database/editor the total number of results), such as:

- Springer (includes over 7.7 million articles and 200,000+ e-books)

- ProQuest (The largest single repository of graduate dissertations and theses. Includes 5 million works – grows by 100thousands each year. International scope – deposits from universities in 90 countries)

- ProQuest Ebook Central (is the largest selection of 1M+ ebooks,
750+ publishers, 1,500 imprints, Flexible models with guaranteed access)

- Taylor and Francis (includes over 4.6 million articles)

- Thomson Reuter / Retinitis Eikon (Trusted source of financial data, news and analysis, it lets you share and connect with trusted contacts in 40,000+ firms across 190+ countries. It is one of the world's largest providers of financial markets data and infrastructure)

- Ebsco (has a portfolio of nearly 3 million articles)

- Jstor (provides access to more than 2 million academic articles and e-books)

- Cambridge University Press (With over 1.5 million articles and 40,000+ e-books)

- Oxford University Press (has a portfolio of nearly 2 million articles)

- Emerald (has a portfolio of nearly 1 million articles, more than 2,500 e-books and over 2000 teaching cases)

- LexisNexis Academic or Nexis uni (is a huge provider of legal, regulatory, business information and analytics and Political science news)

- FAME (contains very useful, comprehensive data. Its real power comes from how it can help you create searches to find companies with specific profiles, and do detailed analyses on individual or groups of companies)

- ORBIS (is the world's most powerful comparable data resource on private companies and has information on around 300 million companies across the globe)

- Westlaw (is an online legal research service for lawyers and legal professionals in the United States and the United Kingdom)

- Sakoulas-online (is a provider of Bibliography - Jurisprudence – Legislation , which includes 1 million+ pages)

The **integrated** library catalogue (includes the entire collection, printed and electronic material) provides **''Remote access'' (through VPN)**, which means that any student can have access to the library collection **from any work station outside the campus** (using username and password). Also, Neapolis Library supports and provides a service called **''Interlibrary loan''**, which means that a book or e-journals not available in our collection, we can find and borrow them from other libraries. This service for books is provided without any charge, except for inter-branch loaning. In collaboration with various Libraries in Cyprus, Greece and abroad: Students can borrow books from nearby libraries.

NUP also offers educational professional seminars (conventional or online) to students, which are recorded and saved on Moodle. Furthermore, NUP has signed an agreement with the Hellenic Organization for the Collective Management of Published Works (OSDEL). Under this agreement Academic staff has the right to upload until **20 % of all pages of books on Moodle platform**; more specific, book chapters necessary for the distance-learning courses.

- Library staff is allowed to scan and send up **to 20% of a book** (students can request book chapters and have them instantly delivered to their emails)
- Remote students with no access to printed material and collaborating libraries are mostly eligible for this procedure.
- More than 820 editors are included in the agreement.

5.2 Done. NUP already uses the Prose benchmarking tool the description of which can be found in **Annex 9.**

5.3 Done. NUP already uses a series of simulation games and computer-based simulations. In the particular programme, Cesim marketing simulation is already in usage by the course **MBA584: Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Please see the Annex 2** for the implementation of Cesim simulation game in this course. As regards the new courses (DSBI501, DSBI502, DSBI403, DSBI504) of this programme, a list of simulation scenarios, computer-based simulations and simulation games that are used in the courses are summarised in the **Annex 3**.

5.4 Done. NUP has a particular policy for Induction activities (NUP 07.100) for all new students which is operated by the Students' affair office that indeed positively impacts students since it provides them with information such as study handbook, study procedures, university's clubs, procedure for appeals and complains etc. However, these cannot formally be presented as mandatory, but the University places great

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emphasis on student participation. Specifically, induction activities are included in the yearly Academic Calendar and all students are notified to participate in the activities of the induction week. Also, after the completion of induction activities NUP provides all students with all the informative documents and presentations done during the induction week in order to benefit all students.

5.5 Done. NUP has initiated various actions in order to give to distance students the placement opportunity as it is given for the students of conventional programs in order to improve their knowledge and skills as well as to gain work experience. The actions are the following:

- NUP has already established a network with companies and enterprises that operate in Cyprus, Greece and other places of the world. These companies can offer internships internationally and at the same time these internships can be also offered virtually depending their field of study. Every year, NUP expands this network of companies and organisations aiming to provide our students with all the assets for their career.
- The prospective students have also the choice to apply for ERASMUS + mobility for placements in order to get trained by obtaining new skills and qualifications. There is a remaining budget of €8.900 until 31/10/2023 that can be used for ERASMUS + students mobility and €33.600 has already been approved, starting from 1/9/2022.
- NUP has applied to be part of ISEP Community for intern abroad programs in order to maximize the potentials for placement for our e-learning students.
- The above information is given to students students (DL and conventional) during the Induction Week. Also, during their studies, the NUP Liaison Office encourages students to participate in placement and internship programs and provide them all the information needed to apply for the offered positions. Students are also constantly been informed through emails with available placement and internships positions both in Cyprus and Internationally.

5.6 Done. The very detailed planning of the e-learning programme has enabled the programme director to have a holistic image of the courses that are taught in both formats of the programme. In particular, the alignment of the two formats of the programme is achieved by having a similar framework for evaluation, same content of knowledge with no overlaps between courses and lastly similar but still flexible enough workload breakdown per course. This alignment does indeed gives the possibility to a student at the beginning of his or her studies to move from one format of the postgraduate programme to the other.

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

The External Evaluation Committee wishes to thank the University and the Department for the documentation provided in advance of our visit. We also wish to thank all the staff and students we spoke to during our visit for the open engagement throughout all our meetings. Additionally as regards the final remarks provided by the external evaluation committee the University as regards the various points mention would like to state the following:

1. Policy for Quality Assurance
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 1.4

2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review of the Programme
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 1.3, 1.2, 1.5, 1.1.and 5.5

3. Student Support and flexible modes of learning
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 5.4.

4. Access to physical resources by Dl students
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 5.1.

5. Student recognition of higher education qualifications
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 4.1.

6. Students-centered learning, teaching and assessment
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 1.3. and 2.3

7. Support for staff development
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 3.1

8. Community of practice for teaching innovation
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 3.2 and 3.1.

9. Support for research outputs
   NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 3.3.

10. Learning design and learning technologies
    NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 5.2., and 5.3.

11. Alignment between the conventional and the Dl/e-learning programme
    NUP RESPONSE: Please refer to answer 5.6.

We would like to thank all members of the External Evaluation Committee for their time, effort and attention, the almost full rating compliance as well as for their constructive comments, which have contributed and achieved in considerably improving the Programme.

We believe that all the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee have been considered and led to corresponding modifications.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Date: 03.06.2022