

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 10/09/21

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty:** School of Economics, Administration and Computer Science
- **Department:** Department of Computer Science
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

- **Department'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.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department 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. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

It is our belief and principle that there is always room for improving the provided quality. Therefore, we want to thank the EEC members for the constructive suggestions and recommendations provided. As a result, we enclose our response to fully satisfy the EEC suggestions and recommendations, which we found very useful and productive.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

Findings

In summary, we find that the Department has a clear sense of direction, supported by strong processes to recruit staff and students. There are some caveats about whether funding is in place to meet future research ambitions and to enable potential growth in the overseas student cohort but the situation would be typical for many similar institutions. We have some caveats about the external validation and about equality/diversity processes.

When time allows, **it will be important to update sections of the report which was first drafted in 2019**. This did not affect our evaluation given the impact of the COVID pandemic and the open way in which all staff supported our site visit.

The student perspective found that NUP professors seem to understand the existence of a gap between academics and real-life work experience and have taken steps to reduce this gap by giving the opportunity to students to experience the hiring processes and an actual work environment, something that is valuable for an undergraduate, as well as teaching skills that are currently being used by corporations.

Students and alumni enjoy their studies and have good relations with their professors even discussing private issues with them, although the panel had feedback only from students at year 3 of their studies.

Strengths

The pre-visit materials were clear and comprehensive. They documented the relevant internal processes, procedures and structures.

We also commend all staff on their enthusiasm and commitment as evidenced during the virtual visit.

The students we spoke to were generous in their praise for the Department and described a strong sense of belonging to the Department.

Staff and students were able to identify some of the learning outcomes and most of the guiding principles that motivate the Department and these are all strongly aligned with societal values - evidenced by engagement with the local community and national priorities.

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Greater clarity is needed in terms of the trade-offs to be made between financial returns to the investors who have supported the initial development of the School and the continuing needs of staff and students under any future expansion of the School. There were no explicit commitments to future funding for PhD students, for instance, which can ensure the future excellence of the technical content across many different courses.

Neapolis University Pafos requests from the Departments to prepare and submit a yearly "budget". The Budget covers the period 1 Oct – 30 Sept and is chosen to cover a full academic term. More details about the Budget are given in Question 21. It is worth noting that the University management has implemented and re-enforces through the years a "non-countable policy" to enhance the Research Activities of the University. Specifically allocate an unlimited amount of resources regarding the Research & Publications category (upon approval of the Dean and/or Rector of the University), where all other budget categories have specific financial limitations. As a result, the proposed cost regarding Research & Publications requested by each Department is not counted as a cost for Budget and/or decision purposes. The decision for the resources requested for Research depends clearly on each department Dean/Rector and each Department's faculty members.

Moreover, the University supports and promotes Research by allocating a significant part of its Budget to research activities and research programs undertaken by its academic staff. As one can see on question 19, NUP funds several Internal Research and Innovation Programs.

- Seed-Funding - € 100.000
- Initial Funding - € 100.000
- Internal Research Programs - € 200.000

Neapolis University Pafos offers a variety of scholarships, discounts, and financial aid, to full-time students, in the form of academic merit scholarships, financial-aid assistance, athletic scholarships and special scholarships offered to community in general. All types of scholarships/financial aid, discounts are available and explained as below:

Scholarships:

Based on the overall grades of their High School Certificate:

Students, in their first year at the University, are eligible for a scholarship on the basis of the grades of their High School Leaving Certificate as below. Scholarships are given as a percentage reduction on tuition and are valid for the first academic year. Scholarship may continue on further years of study provided that the student generates an overall marking 85 and above.

Overall Grade greater than	Scholarship reduction
17	25%
18	30%
19	35%

Athletic Scholarship:

Athletic Scholarship is also available for all medal awarded athletes according to the country of performance. The scholarship is granted for entire duration of study and is valid only for undergraduate degrees.

Country	Scholarship reduction
Cyprus	Up to 40%
Greece	Up to 60%
European / Worldwide/ Small countries	Up to 75%

Contracted Army Staff –SYOP:

Contracted Army staff scholarship is eligible on the basis of the grades of their High School Leaving Certificate. Scholarships are given as a percentage reduction on tuition and are valid for one academic year as below. Scholarship may continue on further years of study provided that the student generates an overall marking 85 and above.

Overall Grade greater than	Scholarship reduction
16	30%
17	40%
18	50%

Greek Residents:

In the light of economic situation in Greece Neapolis University offers Scholarships to all students who are Greek residents. The scholarships are granted for entire duration of study and are valid only for undergraduate degrees.

Community Scholarship:

Neapolis University offers a various types of scholarships on all over Cyprus on the grounds of ‘Social Contribution and Responsibility’ into Cyprus Community as below:

On all Cyprus High schools

Number of scholarships	Scholarship reduction
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2	50%
2	30%

On selected athletic unions

Number of scholarships	Scholarship reduction
2	50%

Leptos Group Scholarship

A significant number of scholarships are offered during each academic year by the board of Directors and Leptos Group.

The below Table summarises the amount of Scholarships Offered and expected to be offered:

Academic Year	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Scholarships	370.000	400.000	450.000	490.000	530.000

Financial Aid Committee:

Neapolis University runs a Financial Aid Committee operated by the Campus Directors, Administration Director and the CFO of the University. The committee meets once a month and assesses each individual case and accordingly grants the Financial Aid.

Eligible for Financial Aid are native students only and the Specific Financial Aid is given in respect of academic performance as below:

- Students who experienced financial hardship.
- Health Issues matters to the student or into close family members that have an impact on student.
- Students who come from large families
- Any other issue that may have a direct impact on University student.

Students interested in this type of financial aid must complete and submit the Application for Financial aid form with all supporting documentation.

The below Table summarises the amount of Financial Aid the University has offered and expected to offer:

Academic Year	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Amount of Financial aid	40.000	45.000	55.000	60.000	70.000

Discounts:

Neapolis University offers a variety of Discounts that students are eligible as the below:

Early Booking

Discounts for undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees is available on students for early booking. The term and conditions varies according to the calendar booking. For Undergraduate students the discount may reach up to 20% and for postgraduate students up to 10%.

Early payment

A discount of 5% is offered on cases of prepayment and full settlement of tuition fees. The discount is calculated on the net tuition fees after all eligible deductions (scholarships, discounts)

Additional category of Discounts that are offered

A discount of 15% is offered on specific programs on the below professionals bodies

- Members of Technical Chamber of Cyprus
- Employees of Land registry Office
- Independent Valuers
- Members and Employees of the below government bodies
 - Fire brigade,
 - Police,
 - Army

Second degree on Neapolis University

Neapolis graduates wishing to apply for a second Degree into the University are eligible for a 10% discount for the entire duration of the study.

Simultaneously study of first-degree relatives

A discount of 15% is offered on first degree relatives that study on the same academic term on the University.

The below Table summarises the amount of Discounts the University has offered and expected to offer:

Academic Year	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Amount of Discounts	780.000	900.000	1.400.000	1.600.000	1.750.000

Neapolis Overall Contribution and Expected Supports:

Academic Year	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Discounts	780.000	900.000	1.400.000	1.600.000	1.750.000
Scholarships	370.000	400.000	450.000	490.000	530.000
Financial aid	40.000	45.000	55.000	60.000	70.000
Totals	1.190.000	1.345.000	1.905.000	2.150.000	2.350.000

Finally, it is worth noting that during the last 5 years, the University has funded from internal funds more than 15 doctorates theses. The University management maintains the same commitment for each new Doctoral program operating at the University.

2. We observe that there is some complexity in the CYQAA validation of a degree that is already externally validated by the University of Middlesex. We have not let this drag down any of the grades, but it needs to be a focus for continuing discussion between senior staff across the University and the CYQAA.

The University of Middlesex has validated the program of BSc of Applied Computer Science. Clear and transparent guidance has been set out. Therefore, we attach the agreement between the two institutions (see Appendix 17_Partnership agreement, Appendix 18_Memorandum of Cooperation, Appendix 19_Addendum March 2020). As clearly indicated in the Partnership Agreement, the program always operates in compliance with DIPAE.

This Partnership Agreement records an agreement between Middlesex University (hereinafter referred to as the University) and Neapolis University Pafos (hereinafter referred to as the Partner Institution) to provide University-validated collaborative programmes to be delivered either jointly with, franchised to, as Collaborative Research provision or, for Validated collaborative programmes to be wholly delivered by and at the Partner Institution.

1. The Partner Institution, always in compliance with DI.P.A.E. regulations, agrees to comply with the standard and institution-specific conditions as outlined at the time Institutional Approval is granted to the Partner Institution and as published by Middlesex University from time to time in the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook or equivalent document (LQEH). The current standard conditions are listed below and may be updated by the University and published in the LQEH ¹.

Later sections of our report will document the need to adopt more formal policies to ensure progress towards a more diverse and inclusive environment for staff and students.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

Findings

The documents provided to us with a clear understanding of the processes and procedures that maintain the quality of service across the Department. As might be expected, these focus on teaching activity and on staff appraisals. These were appropriate and were validated during the virtual site visits.

From the student perspective it was found that study material is freely available with no need to buy textbooks for additional costs.

Student representatives meet with the department staff once a month. Currently there are 2 students representing all the Department. Since the number of enrolled students is not very high this is not a big issue, but it could become one since they are expecting an influx of students in the following years mainly from 3rd countries. When this happens 2 students cannot realistically represent all these student's concerns so more representatives will be needed.

The increase of enrolled students may also affect the availability of the computers in the computer lab. Currently there seems to be an almost one to one ratio of students which is good, but in the future some students may struggle to find a workspace especially if deadlines from different years line up. Fortunately, the staff is aware and ready to increase the number of computers if they see an increase of enrollments in the summer

Strengths

The quality control and audit processes were clear and coherent and appropriate for the existing size of operations across the Department. Administrative staff understood their responsibilities as did the academics. Students reported good experiences in having their concerns listened to.

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	<i>Partially Compliant</i>
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	<i>Compliant</i>

Areas of improvement and recommendations

3. As the scale of operations hopefully increases, there may be a need to follow more formal processes to ensure for instance that staff provide feedback on time and to ensure that the level of feedback is appropriate for students from a range of international backgrounds.

Neapolis University is committed to providing timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic progress and achievement, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress and plan their academic and skills development effectively. Therefore, feedback and acting on feedback are part of the active learning process throughout a student's course of study. Methods of feedback vary according to assessment type, discipline, level of study, and individual student needs. It is crucial for students that the feedback they receive is meaningful and valuable. Therefore, any comments made should be clear, directly related to areas of assessed performance, and sufficiently detailed to be helpful for the student in their personal and academic planning. Where brief comments such as "good" or "satisfactory" are used, they should be used consistently across the programme and, if possible, the Department or School. It may be appropriate to align this type of comment to grading descriptors. Students should be advised on how to interpret feedback comments and ask questions if their feedback is not clear to them. Each student must feel that appropriate consideration has been shown to their piece of work and their personal development as a learner.

Students are evident that feedback must be personal to them. Generic feedback is only acceptable as additional feedback and substantive feedback must be given to each and every student in a unit. This policy applies to all courses and sets out the principles under which feedback should be planned and delivered and relates to both formative and summative work.

4. Additional detail could be provided about the interventions that might be taken when colleagues do not meet necessary quality thresholds. It might also be good to have known more about the processes for induction in supporting new staff and also the role of appropriate mentors beyond immediate line managers.

Here at NUP, we apply the Academic Mentoring Policy (APPENDIX 1 - NUP ACADEMIC MENTORING POLICY) that concerns each permanent staff's enhancement and enrichment, such as the programme coordinators, course coordinators, and associated teaching staff. This procedure ensures that the development process of academics and administrative staff is based on the philosophy of NUP for academic excellence and modern teaching. Mentoring represents a confidential, non-reporting relationship that is a valued element in NUP academic staff development methods. Responsibilities for performance management are distinguished from those of mentoring relationships. Many existing mentoring arrangements reflect good practice, and mentoring has the potential to serve a variety of functions in the context of NUP's strategic objectives. As part of the collegiate activity of Academic Staff, mentoring is recognized as a core aspect of the culture of NUP, where staff is encouraged to improve their performance and the performance of others. NUP supports staff to mentor their colleagues and, through this policy, establishes principles, expectations, and structures for mentoring relationships to occur for staff at all levels. Neapolis University is committed to a working environment, where professional learning is seen as a continuous process that enables all members to develop their skills and effectiveness in support of the goals and priorities of the University. This procedure recognizes the value of staff development to achieving academic excellence, the efficient and effective operation of the University, and the work, career, and personal goals of each individual member of the staff.

5. Although support services for the students are in place, the panel would recommend the establishment of an EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) Committee with students and staff representatives for support of underrepresented academic communities.

We understand the importance of creating an inclusive environment where the rights and dignity of all our staff and students are upheld and where every individual is valued and is able to reach their full potential. We are fully

committed to both meeting and exceeding our obligations under the current legislation. By doing more than what is required by law, we equip all our staff and students with the knowledge and ability to sustain and enjoy a fully inclusive working environment. We recognise the importance of making meaningful and sustainable change and dismantling systemic barriers so that everyone can thrive during their time at Neapolis.

By decision of the Senate on 23/06/2021, our University adopted 2 new Committees: In the EDI [umbrella] policy (Appendix 2_Neapolis D&I policy), we make provision for an EDI Committee; and in the Gender Equality policy (Appendix 3_Gender Equality Policy), we make provision for a Gender Equality Committee. Both committees include both staff (academic and admin staff) and student representatives. In particular, the EDI policy provides the following: “Day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, including its regular review, has been delegated to the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is led by the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. Its membership consists of the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead; the 5 members of academic staff who are the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Leads for each School of the University; three members of administrative staff; and four students. Equal gender representation and representation of staff and students with different protected characteristics within the Committee is imperative and this must be taken into account during the selection procedure for the members of the Committee. The University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead will be selected every three years following the publication of an internal University vacancy seeking for expressions of interest to be appointed to this role. The School Leads for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be appointed at School level, following the publication of an internal vacancy (at School level) seeking for expressions of interest to be appointed to this role. The three members of administrative staff will be selected every three years following the publication of an internal University vacancy seeking for expressions of interest to be appointed to this role. The four student members who will sit on the Committee will be selected on an annual basis following the publication of an internal vacancy (at University level) seeking for expressions of interest to be appointed to this role.”

The Gender Equality policy provides the following: “Day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy has been delegated to the University Gender Equality Committee. The Gender Equality Committee is appointed by the Senate and operates as an advisory body to the Senate and the University Committee for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for the promotion of gender equality at all levels of operation and in all the processes of academic life. The membership of the Committee should, ideally, include representation of female, male, intersex, transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse employees and students. However, because it is recognised that – under the current circumstances – it is unlikely to be possible to achieve this wholly or partly, the Committee, which will have eight members, will – at the present moment – simply aim to have equal representation of men and women. The Committee will consist of four faculty members (two female and two male), two members of administrative staff (one male and one female) and two students (one female and one male). The Committee’s staff members will be selected every three years following the publication of an internal University vacancy seeking for expressions of interest. The two student members who will sit on the Committee will be selected on an annual basis following the publication of an internal vacancy (at University level) seeking for expressions of interest among the student body.

6. Within the quality assurance strategy, it would be beneficial for the department to have a monitoring process and data collection on a yearly basis.

The EDI policy provides the following:

Monitoring Process

To ensure that its workforce and student body is representative and complies with its equality legal obligations, Neapolis University Pafos currently monitors on an annual basis the age, disability, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and religious affiliation of all staff, job applicants, promotions, committee membership, and students. Monitoring enables us to see what is happening in practice to measure progress in relation to equality so that the workforce and student body profile reflects and is representative of the diversity of society at all levels of the University. It also enables us to identify any obstacles within organisational structures or procedures and modify these accordingly to promote equality of opportunity.

Monitoring data is collected annually by the University's Head of Internal Quality Assurance and is presented to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The collection of data for this purpose is carried out in line with Data Protection legislation.

7. More formal approaches may be needed to evaluate research and professional services as the scale increases. This is important as Universities grow because pay differentials may be needed to attract and then to retain experts in areas of greatest demand - which in turn requires more detailed forms of performance evaluation. At present, these are not necessary - for similar reasons, we cannot comment on the quality control processes associated with PhD supervision.

Neapolis University Pafos is committed on the implementation of an internal system of quality assurance and evaluation. This system is based on the guidelines and the European standards for quality assurance in higher education. The Committee for Quality Assurance and Internal Evaluation consists of academics, people with experience in administration and management, as well as a person from the administrative personnel who plays a decisive role in the field of informatics and technology. The members of the teaching staff are active in teaching, in research and in other activities related with the academic world of Neapolis University. The Committee for Quality Assurance handles the various strategies and procedures that are related with the mechanisms of quality assurance. The system for quality assurance of Neapolis University aims at evaluating on a regular basis the following: programs of study, courses, students' admission procedures, preconditions for enrolling at the University, methods for attracting new students, planning of programs, learning outcomes, methods of teaching, and organizing the academic and the administrative staff. The continuous University's self-evaluation is one aspect of ensuring the quality of the education. The University seeks to facilitate excellence and innovation in teaching and learning, research and research training through different methods. Research is crucial for NUP. For that purpose, all methods of academics' evaluation include the Research as a core sub-component. More specific, every academic year, the academics are being evaluated through different methods, as described in the Procedure of the Evaluation of academic staff (Appendix 12_ NUP Academic staff Evaluations- Procedure). The annual review of faculty performance recognizes the teaching effectiveness, research, professional development, and service to the public, and the University, as well as all other types of scholarly activity. The evaluation of academic staff is based on the following:

- Students' Evaluations (25%)
- Self -Assessment Report (5%)
- Supervisor's Report (10%)
- Course Observation (30%)
- Institutional Effectiveness Evaluation (30%)

3. Administration

Findings

There is a relatively small but well organised administrative function within the Department. Duties are clearly described.

Strengths

The administrative team are well motivated and supported by defined processes.

The students and staff feel that they are adequately supported.

Informal communications mechanisms provide flexible means for administrative staff to ensure that academic colleagues meet deadlines and respond to requests for information.

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
3. Administration	Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Although plans are in place to gradually grow student numbers and to increase research intensity, relatively little was said about any consequent growth in administration.

Based on the University's handbook, the working load of the administrative staff is estimated based on the following formula:

$$W_L = S \times T_s + F \times T_f + A_L$$

where,

W_L → Workload of the administrative staff and is equal to 2400mins per week (5 days, 8 hours per day)

A_L → Administration load and its equal to 480mins per week (1 day per week)

S → number of Students

F → number of Faculty members

T_s → time needed per student

T_f → time needed per Faculty member

Based on observations, the workload needed by the administrative staff for each student per week is 5mins and for each Faculty member 10mins.

By considering the formula above and based on the current number of students in our Department, there will be a need for hiring new administrative staff when the number of students grows above 250 or when the number of Faculty members increases to 7.



2. There were no explicit quality assessment procedures mentioned that focussed on administrative functions, including opportunities for team development and for personal progression.

Kindly Refer to “Appendix 10_NUP CONTINUOUS STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY”

Here at NUP, we apply the Continuous Staff Development Policy that concerns the enhancement and enrichment of each member of the academic and administrative staff of NUP. This procedure ensures that the development process of academics and administrative staff is based on the philosophy of NUP for academic excellence. Staff development refers to the development of the individual's potential and career in terms of knowledge, skills, personal abilities, competencies, and understanding, in line with the aims and objectives of the University. This procedure embraces a wide range of learning experiences, both within and outside the workplace, and is a continuing process that can help individuals achieve agreed strategic, operational, team, and individual goals. Neapolis University is committed to a working environment, where professional learning is seen as a continuous process that enables all staff members to develop their skills and effectiveness in support of the goals and priorities of the University. In addition, it recognizes the value of staff development to achieving academic excellence, the efficient and effective operation of the University, and the work, career, and personal goals of each individual member of staff. Staff development includes everything that is done to maintain and extend the knowledge and skills of staff to contribute fully towards the achievement of the goals of the University. Fundamental to this Policy is the premise that staff development should be considered from both the viewpoint of the individual's needs and the University. Staff development thus supports the personal and professional learning of staff and the organizational development needs of the University. It is a vital investment from which staff, students, the University itself, and the wider community will benefit. Of particular importance for staff are the ongoing development of new skills while maintaining currency in the disciplines on which the University's programs are based.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

Findings

The department offers good quality BSc. and MSc programs with clear quality assurance and assessment policy and with a dedicated Quality Assurance Committee.

Strengths

The committee felt that the department is making a good effort to offer the highest possible level of education to the students. The committee needs to praise the institution for the support mechanisms, academic mentors and keeping the student audience to max 30 people.

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	<i>Compliant</i>
4.2 Organisation of teaching	<i>Compliant</i>

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The department has had an increasing but small international student intake for the last 3 years (i.e. excluding Greek students). We would encourage the department and the University to take a strategic approach to attract international students.

There is great market potential to enter international markets and recruit students for both conventional and distance learning programmes. The quality of the Departments' programmes along with the competitive prices are important factors to attract students from various countries with certain focus in Africa and South & Southeast Asia. We have run test campaigns in these regions and the market response is very positive although there are issues to consider and bypass in regards to the entry requirements in Cyprus. In addition, we had recently attended major trade fairs and had the opportunity to meet more than 100 agents from Africa and Asia where we receive strong signals for the potential to recruit students from these regions.

We are currently focusing to penetrate some countries in Africa such as Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, and some countries in Asia such as Pakistan, India and Vietnam. We have already established partnerships in various countries with agents and consultants to promote our programmes and recruit students. Moreover, we are running marketing campaigns targeting the aforementioned countries, generating significant volume of leads daily. The objectives from these activities is to build brand awareness, generate fast and in volume leads, expand

and upgrade the network of agents and improve their performance, and build relations with corporations, associations and educational institutions in the various countries.

To cope with the possible high volume of leads (inquiries) and applications, we have setup a new call center at NUP and a couple of call centers in Africa and Asia through local partners. We have put in place CRM and other systems to be able to automate processes and manage data efficiently. Our student advisors contact every day hundreds of people who have shown interest in studying at NUP and assist them to select programmes and submit applications.

With the current strategy and plan of action, we expect that our student registrations from international markets will grow significantly for both conventional and distance learning programmes. Although the NUP has the capacity in terms of facilities to support this growth, maintaining the quality of education and service, it continuously invests in new facilities and infrastructure. For example, the upcoming Neapolis Smart Eco-City is a mixed-use mega-project of 777,000sqm with the capacity to accommodate dozens of thousand students. It's also important to note that many prospective students from Africa and Asia will choose our distance learning programs, so there is a saving in facilities and extra investment.

2. The committee has some concerns in terms of all genders' representatives' voice to be heard during the monitoring and design of the curriculum. We would advise for an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Committee (EDI) to be actively involved with the Departmental Teaching monitoring as a support mechanism for teaching staff and students. Although each student has an academic mentor, there has been scientific evidence that students benefit from the inclusion of student mentors in the support services of the department, where the mentor is at a higher stage of studies.

Regarding the monitoring and design of curricula, the EDI policy provides the following: **“Embedding Diversity in the Curriculum”**.

Creating an inclusive, relevant, and accessible curriculum will contribute to attracting and retaining our target groups, equipping students to respond to increasingly diverse environments, and will assist us in achieving our strategic objectives.

Accordingly, when new courses and programs are designed – and when existing courses and programs are reviewed – issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion must be taken into account throughout the process. Hence, it must be ensured that the language, content, and imagery used in all programs and courses reflect the diversity of culture, identities, and experiences in Cyprus and internationally. Moreover, curriculum planning should include an assessment of the level of accessibility for students with protected characteristics (e.g., disabled students) and should make provision for reasonable adjustments where necessary.

For this purpose, the School Lead for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion should be involved in all program and course design and review processes at School level.”

5. Teaching Staff

Findings

A large proportion of the teaching load is performed by male tenure - track academics. The learning process is teaching focused and there are clear processes for visiting staff and feedback to teaching staff on their teaching performance with specific criteria.

Strengths

The committee felt that the department is making a good effort to offer feedback to the teaching staff and involved visiting Professors and external evaluators. Special Teaching staff has also been assigned to the department with appropriate qualifications.

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	Partially Compliant
Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
Synergies of teaching and research	Partially Compliant

We would like to thank the committee for the comments. Regarding the comment on the synergies between research and teaching and the suitability of the faculty staff, a table is attached that summarizes the research result of each faculty member and the courses they teach. Kindly refer to **Appendix_20_Synergies**.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There are only 4 core Computer Science staff members in the department and the panel recommends a targeted staff recruitment strategy to significantly increase the number of the core CS staff members (with special focus on the job description to be female friendly).

Following the suggestion of the evaluation committee, we have proceeded with two new **female** academic staff hires as shown below:

- Dr. Elena Kakouli. Find attached the CV as “Appendix 13_Elena Kakouli”
- Dr. Salomi Evripidou. Find attached the CV as Appendix 16_Salomi Evripidou.docx

The new staff is also listed on our website <https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty-department-of-computer-science/>

- Although there was no gender identifiable data for the Teaching Staff information, it was evident that the Department is a male dominated space. The committee is recommending the inclusion of an EDI policy and a female welcoming job description for future teaching staff recruitment processes. The committee is also

recommending to the department to consider a self assessment exercise that takes place under the Athena SWAN Application process, which will assist the department to self-reflect on an action plan to deal with gender equality issues, diversity and inclusion.

The Department, as shown by answer 12, has hired 2 new female faculty members. Moreover, regarding job vacancies, the EDI policy provides the following:

We will proactively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in both internal and external media sources. All information contained in prospectuses, websites, and other material used in the recruitment of students will promote equality of opportunity. Language and images used in all University communications must be inclusive and must not discriminate against specific persons or groups of persons.

All our communications for employee and student recruitment will state our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

We will actively engage with staff, students, and the community to improve our equality functions and activities.

10. There is a lack of “true” visiting professors. The panel has met special teaching staff instead of visiting professors.

Neapolis University Pafos has a diverse and active international Visiting Scholars Programme, hosting visiting researchers from around the world. The programme is open to academics and PhD candidates from other institutions wishing to undertake research and to take part in the academic life of the University. For more details, kindly refer to <https://www.nup.ac.cy/research/visiting-scholars-programme/>.

Visiting Scholars hosts a seminar within the University and present research findings to staff and students before the visit ends. In addition, any outputs produced during their time as Visiting Scholars at Neapolis should acknowledge this.

Currently, the Department of Computer Science hosts 3 visiting professors:

1. Prof. Elias G. Carayannis, George Washington University School of Business (GWSB) in Washington, D.C.
2. Prof. Blionas Spyros, Department of Informatics and Telecommunications, University of Peloponnese
3. Prof. George Dafoulas, School of Science & Technology, Middlesex University

The visiting professors are listed on our website <https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty-department-of-computer-science/>.

6. Research

Findings

Only 4 CS research active staff.

Only a small set of CS subareas are covered.

External funding is very small and the current makeup of projects is not research intensive.

International overall presence of the department is very small.

There exists an unwarranted emphasis on some journals as a quality indicator for faculty members research outputs. This goes against what is typical in CS where specific conferences are considered to be the most prestigious publication venues for many subareas of CS.

Strengths

Proper policies are set-up for research engagement.

Some externally funded projects already – albeit they do not appear to be research-intensive.

Department appears to be aware of key deficiencies.

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
Research mechanisms and regulations	Compliant
External and internal funding	Partially Compliant
Motives for research	Partially Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

11. Need critical mass for research impact.

Thank you for your comment. The Department, despite its size, focuses on producing high-quality research. With only four faculty members, the Department managed to count more than 150 papers, most of them on high prestigious journals and conferences. Together, these publications count more than 5000 citations. Always keep in mind that the average age of the faculty members is below 40 years old. To increase and strengthen our research output, the Department has proceeded to the following:

1. Recruited two new faculty members

2. Modified the "Visiting Scholars Program" aiming to motivate Ph.D. candidates from other Universities around the globe to visit our Department for research collaborations. For more details, kindly refer to <https://www.nup.ac.cy/research/visiting-scholars-programme/>

3. The Department has sent invitations to several prestigious academics around the globe to host them as visiting professors for a limited amount of time. Today, the Department proudly hosts 3 visiting professors, and the number is expected to increase soon.

- Prof. Blionas Spyros, Department of Informatics and Telecommunications, University of Peloponnese
- Prof. George Dafoulas, School of Science & Technology, Middlesex University
- Prof. Elias G. Carayannis, George Washington University School of Business (GWSB) in Washington, D.C.

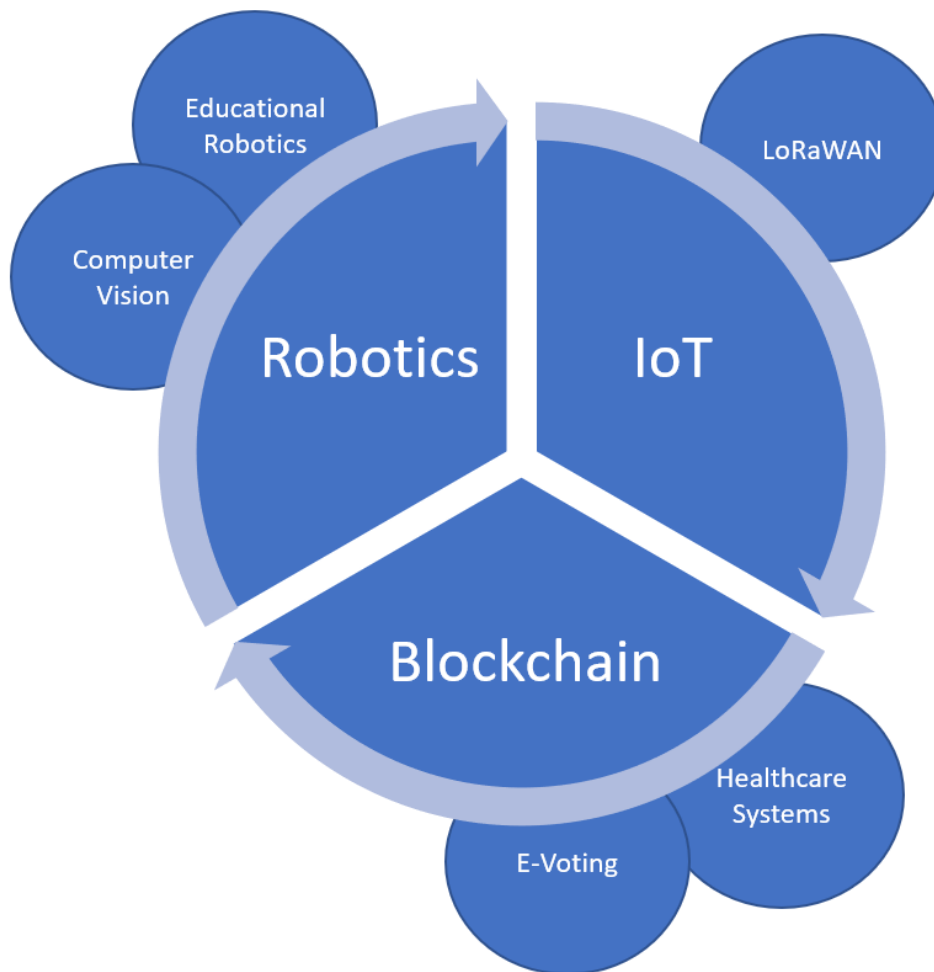
4. Faculty members of the Department have submitted two new research proposals that envisage young researchers' employment.

At the same time, the Department has launched the following action:

1. Preparation for submitting a doctoral program. A doctoral program in research topics related to the Department's interests will attract Ph.D. candidates from around the globe.

12. Need focus on / identify specific sub-areas of CS to target. As it will take time for the department to grow to an adequate size (e.g., 20 CS academic staff) it is encourage for the department to identify first specific areas of CS where high research expertise will be sought.

As the Department of CS we aim in driving positive change through research to develop a real difference in the world impacting at the same time societies and economies around the globe. To this end, the last few years our academic staff has been focusing and producing high quality research on the specific sub-areas of CS outlined below:



AI/Robotics/ Educational Robotics:

S. Gkelios, A. Sofokleous, S. Plakias, Y. Boutalis, and S. A. Chatzichristofis, "DEEP CONVOLUTIONAL FEATURES FOR IMAGE RETRIEVAL", «Expert Systems with Applications», Elsevier, vol. 177 (114940), 1 September 2021.

S. Evripidou, A. Amanatiadis, K. Christodoulou, and S. A. Chatzichristofis, "INTRODUCING ALGORITHMIC THINKING AND SEQUENCING USING TANGIBLE ROBOTS", «IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies», IEEE, 14(1), 93-105, 09 February 2021.

A. Amanatiadis, V. G. Kaburlasos, Ch. Dardani, S. A. Chatzichristofis, and A. Mitropoulos, "SOCIAL ROBOTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: CREATING DYNAMIC INTERACTIONS FOR OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE", «IEEE Consumer Electronics Magazine», IEEE, vol. 9(3), 02 April 2020, pp. 39-45

A. Ch. Kapoutsis, S. A. Chatzichristofis, and E. B. Kosmatopoulos, "A DISTRIBUTED, PLUG-N-PLAY ALGORITHM FOR MULTI-ROBOT APPLICATIONS WITH A PRIORI NON-COMPUTABLE OBJECTIVE FUNCTIONS", «International Journal of Robotics Research», SAGE, 38(7), June 2019, pp 813-832.

C. Iakovidou, M. Lux, N. Anagnostopoulos, K. Christodoulou, Y. Boutalis and S. A. Chatzichristofis, "COMPOSITE DESCRIPTION BASED ON SALIENT CONTOURS AND COLOR INFORMATION FOR CBIR TASKS", «IEEE Transactions on Image Processing», IEEE, 28(6), June 2019, pp 3115-3129.

Blockchain:

Christodoulou, K., Christodoulou, P., Zinonos, Z., Carayannis, E. G., & Chatzichristofis, S. A. (2020, May). Health information exchange with blockchain amid COVID-19-like pandemics. In 2020 16th International Conference on Distributed Computing in Sensor Systems (DCOSS) (pp. 412-417). IEEE.

Christodoulou, P., & Christodoulou, K. (2020, April). A Decentralized Voting Mechanism: Engaging ERC-20 token holders in decision-making. In 2020 Seventh International Conference on Software Defined Systems (SDS) (pp. 160-164). IEEE.

Christodoulou, P., & Christodoulou, K. (2020, November). Developing more reliable news sources by utilizing the Blockchain technology to combat Fake News. In 2020 Second International Conference on Blockchain Computing and Applications (BCCA) (pp. 135-139). IEEE.

IoT (Internet of Things):

Zinonos, Z., Christodoulou, P., Andreou, A., & Chatzichristofis, S. (2019, May). Parkchain: An iot parking service based on blockchain. In 2019 15th International Conference on Distributed Computing in Sensor Systems (DCOSS) (pp. 687-693). IEEE.

Anastasiou, A., Christodoulou, P., Christodoulou, K., Vassiliou, V., & Zinonos, Z. (2020, May). Iot device firmware update over lora: The blockchain solution. In 2020 16th International Conference on Distributed Computing in Sensor Systems (DCOSS) (pp. 404-411). IEEE.

It's definitely worth mentioning that our academic staff members are encourage to collaborate and work on joint research projects by combining their knowledge and expertise on the certain CS sub-areas mentioned above to produce high quality research on newly-introduced fields. In this context, we have published research papers that combine Blockchain and IoT and Blockchain and Robotics.

13. Need much more externally funded projects.

The addition of the two new CS academic staff members will help all the academic members substantially focus on research activities such as submitting of research-oriented proposals. Furthermore, we plan to:

1. Increase international partnerships with participation to info and cooperation days. More specifically to attend:
 - Info days organized by European Union.
 - Info days organized by Research and Innovation Foundation
 - Cooperation events like Hannover Messe
2. Participation in COST actions related to the academic staff expertise. Examples of COST actions that academic staff **has already applied to participate are**:
 - CA20120 - Intelligence-Enabling Radio Communications for Seamless Inclusive Interactions

Moreover, only the last month, the faculty members of the Department have participated in 2 more research proposals to the IDEK - EXCELLENCE HUBS call. Below, one can find the abstract of the two research proposals that have been already submitted:

- Project Title: Cypriot NGEU Scoreboard (S. Chatzichristofis – Budget 119.000)

Project Summary: The main objective of the project is the creation of a pilot digital scoreboard basis, which could lead to productivity measurement of NGEU resources. The digital scoreboard database will include the weighting mechanism of more than 40 indicators. More specifically, the unemployment rate, unit labor cost, research and innovation per employee, high technological added value in production, the use of renewable energy sources and the reduction of gaseous pollutants, would be some of the indicators. It is noted that the digital scoreboard database will be classified into four strategic pillars according to the NGEU structure. The first is Green Transmission, the second is Digital Transmission, the third is employment, skills, social cohesion, and the last one is private investments and economic transformation. Depending on each pillar of the NGEU, different weights will be given to the indicators, while it is emphasized that each pillar will have a different assessment. Therefore, the assessment of the NGEU will be done per pillar, but also as a whole.

- Project Title: Crowdfunding as an effective tool for finance for Cypriot SMEs (P. Christodoulou – Budget 119.000)

Project Summary: The CCSME project has as a general objective to address the long-standing challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Cyprus in terms of access to finance through the design of a customized innovative technological deliverable. More specifically, the project aims to investigate certain forms of alternative finance, namely crowdfunding, that could contribute towards the financial sustainability and growth of SMEs. SMEs are the backbone of Europe's economy, representing 99.8% of all businesses in the EU, 56.4% of total value added across all sectors of the economy, and 66.6% of total employment. The SME figures are even more striking for Cyprus as it is responsible for 76.3% of total value added and 83.8% of employment.

Despite their importance to the economy and society, Cypriot SMEs have been having severe trouble accessing bank loans for over a decade and, yet, they have not sought out alternative finance tools as have their counterparts in other countries. We seek out to investigate the reasons behind this observation and, more generally, the lack of a developed alternative finance market in Cyprus, with a goal to construct a remedy by leveraging on the team's technological know-how, which constitutes the novelty of this project. The main outcomes of the CCSME project will be the following:

- a thorough analysis of the perceptions of both SMEs and investors through interviews and questionnaires, in order to understand the local environment and perceived obstacles surrounding crowdfunding (such as lack of awareness and lack of trust) and,
- the design of a Blockchain-based crowdfunding platform and the implementation of a smart contract to overcome some of the concerns that will be identified through the analysis of data from interviews and questionnaires.

Finally, it is worth noting that we proudly participate in the consortium of 2 proposals to be submitted under:

- "HORIZON-CL4-2021-TWIN-TRANSITION-01-02" (CERTH serves as Coordinator)
- "HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-05" (MDX serves as Coordinator)

For both proposals we can provide additional information if needed.

14. Need to allow staff more research time – 83 days a year are not enough if the Dept wants to be a point of reference for research excellence, as a claimed.

As mentioned earlier, the addition of the two new academic staff members will help all the academic members substantially focus on research activities. We completely agree with this comment and please allow us to clarify some points regards to the time available for research activities.

According to “Appendix 1_Workload”, each academic staff member without administrative duties is entitled to 2 days of teaching that equals in total to 416 hours per year.

The table below summarizes the teaching load of the CS permanent staff for the upcoming academic year 2021-22. As one observes, the maximum teaching load of the academic staff members, **in both semesters** for this academic year, is 19 hours. These 19 hours correspond on average to 6 courses per year. Moreover, these 19 hours correspond to 247 teaching hours per year (19 hours X 13 weeks).

Members of the Department	Category	Total Hours
Savvas Chatzichristofis	DEP	17
Zinon Zinonos	DEP	18
Panagiotis Christodoulou	DEP	18
Konstantinos Zagoris	DEP	10
Salomi Evripidou (New Member)	DEP	19
Elena Kakouli (New Member)	DEP	18
	Total	100

If we subtract the 247 hours from 416 hours the remaining time available from teaching, that is 169 hours, moves into the research activities. This remaining time equals to an extra of 21-22 days of research during both semesters. As in the new academic year there are 5 academic staff members without administrative duties only from those members there will be more than 110days available for research activities. If we take into consideration also all academic staff members as well as the time available for research during the non-teaching period the available time for research is much more than 83 days.

15. Need to provide internally funded projects for new faculty especially.

The updated research policy (Approved by the Senate at 23/06/2021, attached as “Appendix 15_Research Policy”) indicates the following:

Neapolis University Pafos supports and promotes research by allocating a significant part of its budget to research activities and research programs undertaken by its academic staff.

A: Research Activities

Funding for research activities comes directly from the University's budget and applies to all teaching and research staff members. This funding supports expands and strengthens the parameters of an individual or joint research activities. In particular, this funding enables and motivates the academic staff to participate in international scientific conferences, facilitates disseminating research results, and promotes research collaborations between universities and research institutes. In addition, the funding for the publication of scientific articles in open access journals, wherever and whenever required, comes directly from the university budget. Each year, every Department of the University, based on its estimated needs, allocates funding to finance the research activities of its faculty members. The budget preparation takes place during the Department's Council and is submitted to the University's financial services. To formulate the amount required for funding each Department's research activities, each faculty member firstly submits a relevant document in which he/she describes a provisional list of actions that he/she will implement. Then, the Department evaluates all actions and formulates its overall research budget. The funding for research activities concerns prestigious journals and conferences. Each Department, in collaboration with the Head of the Research Department, determines the evaluation of the conferences or the journals.

B: Internal Research Programs

Neapolis University Pafos, in order to additionally support research, funds Internal Research and Innovation Programs.

I: "Seed"-Funding

This funding aims to support early-stage Lecturers and Assistant Professors (with less than two years of experience) in developing their independent research. The requests for seed-funding are submitted to the Research Committee through the Head of the Department, the Dean of the School, and the Head of the Research Department. Seed-funding aims to foster high-level research activities, help the faculty member participate in new research projects, promote collaborations across the academic and industry sectors, and drive novel and exciting research and innovation ideas. Eligible costs are primarily related to travel expenses for networking opportunities and project collaboration. Fees related to the purchase, installation, and utilization of the necessary infrastructure and laboratory equipment that are not currently available at the University, are also allowed. It is emphasized that each faculty member can receive seed funding only once.

II: Initial Funding

The Initial Funding refers only to the recruit academic staff members of the University regardless of their rank. The initial funding of the new academic staff intends to provide the necessary infrastructure to enhance the continuation of high-level research and to contribute to the competitiveness of attracting funding from external research sources. Any new member may apply for initial funding from the date that he/she took up his duties until month six. The requests for initial funding are submitted to the Research Committee through the Head of the Department, the Dean of the School and the Head of Research Department. The total amount requested per new academic staff must not exceed € 20,000, and each project that receives initial funding must have a maximum duration of 24 months from the commencement date. Eligible costs are primarily related to the purchase, installation, and utilization of the necessary infrastructure and laboratory equipment that are not currently available at the University. In addition, operating expenses related to the employment of staff, or the hiring of third-party services are allowed.

III: Internal Research Programs

Internal research programs consist of the primary funding source to support the research work of academic staff members. Internal Research programs are announced every two years, and five projects in total get funded. Each internal program should have a maximum duration of 24 months and a maximum funding amount of € 20,000 per year (€ 40,000 in total). Each proposal is sent to two external evaluators, who are selected based on their relevance to the proposal's subject. The final score of the proposal is based on the average score of the two evaluators. If the score of the two evaluators has a difference equal to or greater than 5 points, then the proposal is forwarded to a third evaluator. The final score of the proposal is derived from the average of the two closest scores. The distribution of the internal programs is done per Department, given that there are proposals that have secured a high score (at least 8/10). All members of the academic staff are eligible to participate, except the members of the Research Committee. It is also emphasized that the faculty members who received an internal research program in the previous call are not entitled to submit a new proposal during the next call.

16. Need associate with stronger partners with respect to research collaborations, both from industry and other Universities and the public sector.

Collaboration with industry is critical for academia to create scientific knowledge and obtain industrial data. In turn, collaboration with universities is crucial for organizations in joint, scientific-based research projects in order to develop solutions for production-sourced problems.

In this context, the Department of Computer Science engages partners from the public or private sectors in research through a series of activities such as:

- i. Invited Sessions/Talks: we invite our partners to make presentations to our students and academic staff regards to emerging topics in Computer Science
- ii. Joint Research Projects: we firstly, discuss real-world problems or specific use-cases with our partners and then if the problem under study consists a small-scale project, we work on it internally, but if the problem under study needs more exploration and consists a large-scale project, we submit joint research proposals for external funding.
- iii. Members of the Advisory board: representatives of the companies participate as members of the Advisory board to provide NUP knowledge, understanding, and strategic thinking of the industry.

Currently the Department of CS has active research collaborations with the following companies from the private sector:

1. RootHunt Cyber (Cybersecurity)
2. beepXtra (Web and Blockchain)
3. Statore Solutions (App development)
4. Nexxie (Affiliate Marketing)
5. eAdvertise (Web Development)
6. Robotics Lab

At the same time, through the research proposals and consortia that are formed, the department comes in contact with several research bodies around the world. For example, in the 2 Horizon Europe programmes that are currently being submitted, the Department is collaborating with the following Universities / Research Centers / Companies:

- Centre for Research & Technology - Hellas (Certh)
- Deloitte



- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- Universitat Politècnica de València
- Oracle
- University of Cagliari – UniCa
- CESIE
- Middlesex University

Moreover, the Department of CS has participated in in joint research projects with members of the following public sector organizations:

1. Cyta
2. Municipality of Pafos
3. Cyprus Computer Society
4. Cyprus University of Technology
5. University of Cyprus

In addition, the Department, by adopting a new mechanism for visiting professors, aspires to develop links with well-established Universities.

Finally, the Department is in contact with the University of Piraeus and the University of Western Macedonia to create a new postgraduate and a Doctoral program.

Finally, it is worth noting that our Department collaborates through the Erasmus+ program with 52 universities Europe-wide.

7. Resources

Findings

The Dept has by and large the appropriate mechanisms in place for 7.7, 7.6, 7.5.

More clear information is needed on the budget and what percentage of it is used to enhance teaching and research.

Owing to its relatively small size, the Department's resources are adequate. This, however, may not be the case if/when the Department grows and more investments must be made.

Strengths

See above.

Assessment area	<i>Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant</i>
7. Resources	Partially Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

As the committee aptly pointed out, "Owing to its relatively small size, the Department's resources are adequate." We would like to thank the committee for the comment. Nevertheless, the Department has foreseen actions in order to continue the smooth operation in case of grow

17. More transparency on what the budget is and how it is spent and re-invested towards the improvement of the programme and the Department.

Neapolis University is requested (financial framework) to prepare and submit a yearly "budget" where each Department within the University is requested to submit by the 1st week of September. The Budget covers the period 1 Oct – 30 Sept and is chosen to cover a full academic term. The below categories are requested by each Department (academic) to complete and submit to the CFO to prepare the forthcoming comprehensive academic Budget. University management has implemented and re-enforces through the years a "non-countable policy" to enhance the Research Activities of the University. Specifically allocate an unlimited amount of resources regarding the Research & Publications category (upon approval of the Dean and/or Rector of the University), where all other categories have specific financial limitations. As a result, the proposed cost regarding Research & Publications requested by each Department is not counted as a cost for Budget and/or decision purposes. The decision for the resources requested for Research depends clearly on each department Dean/Rector and each Department's faculty members.

- Faculty members' cost: The operational cost of each program in terms of human resources
- New Staff / New Programs cost: Needs for new hires or initial cost of new programs

- Campus Cost: Each Department describes the building infrastructure needed to operate its programs. This amount is related to the number of programs, the number of students, and the total of its needs.
- Travel Expenses: Travel expenses are costs associated with traveling to conduct networking purposes
- Research and Publications: Each faculty member of the Department estimates the cost of participation in scientific conferences as well as the cost of publication in open access journals
- Conferences and Events: The Departments are prompted to organize international scientific conferences or participate as sponsors in international scientific forums/events. In the case of our Department, for the last three years, the Department participates as organizer and sponsor of the "International Workshop on Intelligent Systems for the Internet of Things" workshop, while in 2020, it organized and funded the "IEEE International Conference on Distributed Computing in Sensor Systems (DCOSS 2021)".
- Subscriptions: This section of the Budget covers subscriptions to software, societies, and/or journals not included in the library budget. For example, this budget section covers faculty members' contributions to the IEEE society in our Department.
- Equipment: Finally, this part of the Budget covers the needs of the Department for equipment (Software and Hardware)

As stated and above, the requested "budget" is submitted by the Dean of each Department to the CFO with explanatory comments. The CFO is requested to prepare the overall comprehensive University budget. Upon completion of the University Budget, meetings are set with each department heads, the CFO, director of administration & Finance, and the Rector. At the specific meetings, the Dean presents the proposed budget allocation to the management team as described above. All parties mutually form a final decision for the Department Budget called "Departmental Budget for the academic year". Upon completing the mentioned process with all departments, the final Budget is sent for the final approval and adoption by the Board of Directors. The board of Directors signs the overall University Budget, and CFO distributes to each Department's head the final approved Budget. Each Department is authorized to extend its overall Budget by 5% for unseen expenses and extend its estimated Research activities if new opportunities arise upon approval of the Dean and/or Rector of the University.

18. A clear plan is needed to be in place for the case of increased student population. Will this be capped? When and how?

According to the University's strategic plan, for the next 5 years, we expect that our student registrations from international markets will grow significantly. Although the NUP has the capacity in terms of facilities to support this growth maintaining the quality of education and service, the number of undergraduate students that the Department will serve will increase only when the University's new facilities are completed. The upcoming Neapolis Smart Eco-City is a mixed-use mega-project of 777,000 sqm with the capacity to accommodate dozens of thousand students. Neapolis Smart Eco City is one of the most significant planned mixed-use developments of its kind in the Mediterranean and probably in Europe, given its size, scope, unique character, and eco-smart principles. It involves developing a truly 21st-century city that will combine a wide range of residential product options with a synthesis of key lifestyle-enhancing elements, including the Neapolis University Campus.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that many prospective students from Africa and Asia will choose our distance learning MSc programs, so there is a saving in facilities and extra investment.

19. Also, what will happen if there is a drop in the incoming student population?

All Programs are evaluated on a yearly basis, budgets are formatted and approved, and compared to actual results. Strategies, are designed and implemented according to the needs and resources of the University. Based on the university's strategic plan, in case the number of incoming students' population is decreasing, then an internal procedure is initiated. The process is triggered by a committee that continuously monitors the sustainability of each program. If the committee verifies the decreasing trend regarding the incoming student numbers, new actions are required to guarantee that the department will increase the number of incoming students and thus be sustainable. These actions include:

1. Analysis of the current markets and classification of the issues that lead to the decreased student population. This action is supported by the Quality Assurance Committee.
2. Identify new markets and create a new marketing plan specifically targeted for the referral program.

If an existing program remains unsustainable after the above actions, the next step is to deactivate the program and offer a new program of studies.



B. Conclusions and final remarks

Click to enter text.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Pantelis Sklias	Rector	

Date: 10/09/21

