Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution: NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY**
- **Town: PAFOS**
- **School/Faculty: SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS ANS COMPUTER SCIENCES**
- **Department: DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS**
- **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: New**

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Let us first express our satisfaction for the positive comments of the EEC as well as the productive suggestions and recommendations.

Since it is our belief and principle that, there is always room of improving the quality of the Department and the said programmes, we hereby enclose our response to FULLY satisfy the EEC suggestions and recommendations, which we found very useful and productive.

A. Introduction

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

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

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

Furthermore, the committee interviewed members of the teaching staff, a group of undergraduate students from the various years of the BSc programme, as well as postgraduate students, administrative staff in charge of admissions, registration, library facilities, IT and other administrative support staff. Then, we had a virtual visit of Neapolis University facilities.

More specifically, we were shown the impressive exterior premises, various teaching areas, the Library, meeting rooms, staff offices, student accommodation, and some open areas.

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

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

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

> **Sub-areas**
>
> 1.1 **Mission and strategic planning**
> 1.2 **Connecting with society**
> 1.3 **Development processes**

Mission and strategic planning

For 1.1.6 the voices of alumni and of the public sector stakeholders appear to be less than central to the strategic processes of the Department. Given the popularity of the MPA programme for example, this looks like a missed opportunity.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department

2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

There is reasonable coherence and compatibility within and across the programmes of study offered by the Department. Programme objectives have been articulated and are appropriate. The Programmes are also being developed in line with a strategy of expansion and wider recruitment.

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

Nothing arising but we do make some suggestions about aspects of the MPA programme in our separate Report.

Connecting with society

The linkages with private sector organisations appear to be strong, extensive and well developed. We heard of some linkages with public sector agencies, but these appeared to be far fewer in number, and in some cases more informal. In relation to 1.2.4 above, we learned that there is not formal and systematic way of managing and developing alumni relations and we see this as a missed opportunity to further support students and develop the institution.

OUR COMMENTS:
An Alumni Office is functioning within the University to enhance linkages with graduates. Although GDPR restrictions apply in relation to contacting alumni, nevertheless the said dimension is constantly enhanced.

Development processes

We are generally positive about the work of the institution. However, given its ambitions to expand and to mature, it faces challenges in supporting staff to further develop their research profiles; and challenges in succeeding in recruiting high performing research active staff. We acknowledge the existing efforts being made and the seeming awareness of these issues among the university and departmental leadership.

We understand the institution to be recruiting Cypriot and Greek students, but is developing its recruitment strategies for Africa and the Middle East. Moving to greater levels of teaching provision in English will of course involve significant effort and support for staff.

OUR COMMENTS:

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

1. Organisation of international research oriented conferences, supported by highly ranked, SCOPUS included related publication opportunities:

   - http://ebeec.ihu.gr/: The 13th International Conference of "the Economies of Balkan and Eastern European Countries – EBEEC 2021" will be held from 14 – 16.05.2021 in Pafos under the co-organisation of Neapolis University in Cyprus with the International University of Greece.
   - NUP will host the 2022 International Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship https://www.academic-conferences.org/conferences/ecie/. The conference is generally attended by participants from more than 40 countries and attracts an interesting combination of academic scholars, practitioners and individuals who are engaged in various aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship teaching and research. The 16th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship will be hosted by Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE), Portugal and the Conference Chair will be Florinda Matos.

2. Active involvement in international research oriented networks together with high ranked institutions

   - Neapolis University in Cyprus, a Founding Member of the Institute for Small Business and Enterpreneurship (ISBE). Neapolis University in Cyprus, is now, together with other distinguished and internationally renowned University Institutions, such as the University of Birmingham, Brunel University London, Coventry University, Liverpool University, Strathclyde University, University of Warwick and others, founding member of the International Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (https://isbe.org.uk/).

3. Organisation of internal research seminars. From October to December all staff have presented their research in progress work to share experiences and enhance the research environment within the Department.

4. Online series of seminars (e.g. webinars) have been organised by the School of Economics, Administration and Computer Science of Neapolis University, which analyse the various trends in business finance, such as decentralised financing based on financial technology (FinTech). It also presents the qualifications and skills that employees must possess, and analyses how to promote products successfully. As a result, the new environment that is being created provides new challenges for entrepreneurship and creates opportunities for global and sustainable growth. https://www.nup.ac.cy/news/webinar-new-trends-and-skills-for-business/

5. Research seminars addressed to NUP teaching staff have been incorporated into the University's function. https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/277e5b1b-7c87-4d7b-a1ad-ff3a99a45e62

6. In the meantime, the University has continued to financially support ALL research publication requests for ranked scientific journals and participation in related international conferences.

7. **Research component is an integrated part of the teaching staff assessment and evaluation. See Appendix 6.**

8. **Three full time academic staff have been hired from September onwards, namely Professor Maria Psillaki, Associate Professor Sofia Daskou and Lecturer Dimitra Dimitriou.**
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/sofia-daskou/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/maria-psillaki/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/demetra-demetriou/

9. **Two renowned academics have joined the Department as Visiting Professor, namely Professor Christopher Moon from Middlesex University and Professor Paul Jones from Swansea University, to further enhance the academic impact of the School and the Department as well as to further enhance the research environment of the University, the School and the Department.**
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/christopher-moon/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/paul-jones/

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

    - **AIMER for Business**
    - **AIMER for the Public Sector**

    and simulation games , already incorporated into the learning process, in collaboration with CESIM https://www.cesim.com/. The University has already employed Ph.D. candidate Elena Polydorou for mentoring and supporting students in such simulation tools https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/elena-polydorou/ .

Already organised:

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

	Zinonos Zinon	11:00
	Masouras Andreas	11:30
	Siakalli Michailina	12:00

Research seminars from external scholars already realised:

Person	Topic	Date
3. Panagiotis Tziogkidis, Assistant Professor, University of Macedonia	Identifying the optimal innovation policy direction: insights from a recently published research in European Journal of Operational Research.	4 November 11:00am
4. Professor Giovanni Barone-Adesi, University of Lugano	Estimating the pricing Kernel	17 September 2020 at 12.00 pm

Webinars already realised:

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

Findings

We looked in most depth at the MPA programme but have a good understanding of how this fits with wider provision. As peers, it was interesting to hear about the Department, the School, the University and the future plans.

Strengths

 • Active private sector partnerships

• Strong levels of investment underpinning the growth strategy

• Good international linkages in particular regions

• Good approach to quality assurance

• Very good administrative staff

Ambitious plans for the Smart Eco City campus project

• A good sense of corporate identity Areas of improvement and recommendations

• There is scope to make the international institutional partnerships with other UK universities more active to the benefit of staff and students

• There is a need to systematize the approach to alumni relations

• We heard that the location of the University is felt by some to act as a barrier to recruitment of staff

• Given the ambitions of the Department, the need to invest in the development of research is very important

• There is a need to ensure that the department matches staff with relevant expertise to deliver the specialist elements of programmes. We elaborate further on this in Section 5.

Sub-area

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

2 Quality Assurance

Findings

The committee was satisfied with the systems, regulations and facilities. It seems that the university has structures in place to manage quality. The ambitions put forward and the role models of UK universities taken into consideration, the committee thinks that the overall level is
satisfactory.

Strengths

The IT facilities seem to be managed very well

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The systems are in place, however, we feel that the quality level with regard to the extend to which the programs are research based from own staff still can use improvement.

OUR COMMENTS:
Please see our responses for the Development Processes in Part 1.

Sub-area

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

3 Administration

Findings
The administration and governance of the department works in general well. The connection to the leadership of the university is strong also witnessed in the role of the rector and strong presence in the process of the audit.

Strengths
The administrative staff of IT and library seem to be excellent handling the growing online processes Areas of improvement and recommendations No specific elements to improve based on these observations.

Assessment area

3. Administration   Compliant

4   Learning and Teaching

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Planning the programmes of study**
> **4.2 Organisation of teaching**

Findings

The overall quality assurance, planning and assessment of the program are in line with expectations of the committee. Students we met expressed also high level of satisfaction.

Strengths

The use of the eqf system is very explicit

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The combination of theory and practice is a matter which can still be enhanced, based on a better connection to high level research of the staff, which could be organized more in line with specializations in programs which then could lead as guiding practices to a better connection between research and teaching.

OUR COMMENTS:

Please Attachments 1,2,4,5 on research output as well as the synergy on research and teaching per programme.

Sub-area

4.1 Planning the programmes of study   Compliant

4.2 Organisation of teaching   Compliant

5 Teaching Staff

Findings

The current teaching staff is quite well qualified and most of the faculty members have adequate experience in the business world. This enables them to offer teaching, which is balanced between theory and practice which is very important for the students. Based on the documents that were submitted 11 full time faculty members are assigned at the Department of Economics & Business. Looking at the web site of the Department, 17 faculty members are assigned at the Department. From these 17 faculty members, we understood that 12 are full timers and 5 are visiting professors/part timers.

Strengths

Students are highly satisfied from the quality of learning and teaching. Academics are always available to the students and help them in solving questions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Department of Economics & Business offers many academic graduate and postgraduate programs. The permanent staff is not enough to run all these programs. That means, that there are postgraduate programs, such as Master in Public Administration, that run mainly by visiting professors (academics). The Committee encourages the University to create a strong team of permanent academics in short or mid term. Due to the above, the committee finds that the teaching load is relatively heavy and the faculty members do not have enough time to develop their research in top listed journals. Finally, the committee would encourage the internationalization and the collaboration with other universities. Moreover, we encourage a stronger collaboration and students' exchange with the University of Middlesex and Hull University in order for the students to enhance their horizons.

OUR COMMENTS:

Clearly, this is not the case.

1. **In relation to the MPA, as per the application and the presentation, the programme has 3 visiting members of staff, namely Professor Spanou – Public Administration - (University of Athens), Professor Lazaridou – Educational Management - (University of Thessaly) and Professor Geitona – Health Economics - (Peloponnese University), all renowned Professors, to offer their highly recognised academic expertise in the three specialisations of the programme, a requirement very often demanded by the EECs. NUP has invested in bringing together those scholars and upgrading the teaching and academic processes. The three Profs teach 6 out of the 18 courses of the programme. The other courses are taught by 8 NUP full time staff. Thus, the EEC argument does not stand and the 70-30 principle is full satisfied since the said programme is covered by 11 staff overall out of whom 3 are visiting professors (27%).**

The 8 permanent staff covering the MPA program are as follows:
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/anastasia-reppas/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/charalampos-chrysomallidis/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/christos-papademetriou/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/dimitra-latsou/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/sotirios-karatzimas/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/giorgos-meramveliotakis/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/pantelis-sklias/
https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/michailina-siakalli/

2. **Overall the ratio of the permanent staff per programme under accreditation is the following:**

In terms of the permanent staff covering the programmes under accreditation, clearly the EEC's point is not the case:
MPA: 8 Permanent Staff out of the 11 (72,72%)
MBA: 100% permanent staff
BA: 13 permanent staff out of 16: 81,25%

3. In relation to the research component of the Department, please see our response in part 1 of the document as well as related attachments.

4. Certain programmes of the Department, including the MPA, although they are offered in conventional format, for the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 have no students registered, thus, there is no work load for the academic staff involved. MPA is currently run in DL format.

NUP is a very young University that is maturing and growing. Synergy among research and teaching has been one of the major pillars of enhancement and improvement. Besides the initiatives already undertaken, already prescribed in Part 1 of this document we also document developments in the following:
1. See Appendix 1: Research Output and Statistics – including staff recruitment and development
2. See Appendix 2: Synergy between teaching staff research and teaching for the three programmes under accreditation
3. See Appendix 3: Last 5 Years research output of teaching staff

Additionally:
1. NUP has already been enhanced with new staff with strong research background and international teaching experience. See Appendices 1,2,3.
2. Max. number of courses per semester is 4.
3. Considering that NUP is not offering any summer semester or summer courses the total teaching load of faculty members is limited to 26 weeks per year.
4. All teaching staff with administrative tasks have limited number of courses (0-3 depending on the administrative tasks undertaken).
5. The visiting staff for BA is restricted to 2-3 visitors per academic year.
6. All academic staff is Ph.D. holders with related research activity with the exemption of 1-2 professionals, e.g. Accounting, nevertheless holding related MSc.
7. Three full time academic staff have been hired from September onwards, namely Professor Maria Psillaki, Associate Professor Sofia Daskou and Lecturer Dimitra Dimitriou.
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/sofia-daskou/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/maria-psillaki/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/demetra-demetriou/
8. Two renowned academics have joined the Department as Visiting Professor, namely Professor Christopher Moon from Middlesex University and Professor Paul Jones from Swansea University, to further enhance the academic impact of the School and the Department as well as to further enhance the research environment of the University , the School and the Department.
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/christopher-moon/
   https://www.nup.ac.cy/faculty/paul-jones/

The above and combined Part 1 and Part 5 responses indicate that NUP has taken all necessary initiatives to create the necessary research environment and reach a sufficient level of synergy of teaching and research.

Assessment area

5. Teaching Staff Compliant

6   Research

The EEC believes that although there is quality of the teaching, research is the weaker part in the Department. Although they have added research seminars in their programs and there are faculty members with publications in top listed journals, the Department should make few steps on the research level. The Department could encourage the "good research" and the publication to top listed journals (i.e. publications in ABS 3, ABS 4 and ABS 4* journals).

OUR COMMENTS:
Please see our response in Part 1

Findings
Although the Department seems to organize research seminars, the EEC encounters low active research environment. We encourage faculty members to develop internal collaborations. There are incentives towards those that deal with research, such as less teaching hours, or financing. In order to improve the research level of the Department, the Committee would encourage the incentives to be given to those that publish in top listed journals.

OUR COMMENTS:
Please see our response in Part 1

Strengths
Based on the CVSs of the academics, it seems that very few academics are active into research (based on the productivity and quality of articles).

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Neapolis University and the Department of Economics & Business could encourage the "good research" and the publication to top listed journals. That means that the Department could formally incorporate a certain level of research quality indicators (based on e.g. the ABS journal quality lists, that is publications in ABS 3, ABS 4 and ABS 4* journals) and peer-reviewed work so that online publications and conference submissions (which sometimes may not be peer reviewed) are discussed with respective communities. It was pointed out through our discussion that incentives are given to the teaching staff referring to their publications. We see good attempts, but we believe that the academic staff of Neapolis University could make few steps on the research level. We could suggest financial incentives to publish in top journals. Finally, although there are few research seminars that take place, we encourage the organization of more research seminars in order to improve the quality of research. The COVID-19 global situation could foster the introduction of virtual research seminars inviting renowned speakers from abroad to present their work at little or no cost.

OUR COMMENTS:

Please see our responses in Parts 1 and 5 in relation to the comments above.

Additionally, the following ranked SCOPUS registered publications have already been financially supported and very recently initiated by NUP academic staff, which is a clear indication of the tendency. We only mention the December 2020-January 2021 initiations:

1. **4 papers financially supported for the English language editing already approved for publication in the Special issue of the European Politics and Society, "Eurozone and Economic Crisis in Greece at 2020: Current Challenges and Prospects", https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rpep21/current**

- **The political economy of the Greek Economic Crisis at 2020 (Sklias), Editing cost approved, 541, 81 euros**
- **Fiscal Policy, Growth and Entrepreneurship in the EMU (Apostolopoulos), Editing cost approved 498, 75 euros**
- **Government lending and economic crisis: A comparative analysis of four EU countries (Apostolopoulos), editing cost approved 444, 66 euros**
- **EU Structural Funds and Employment Policy Performance in Greece: Impact and Reform during the Fiscal Austerity years (Masouras) editing cost approved 589, 58 euros**

2. **Special issue of MDPI Administrative Sciences on Public Administration and Policies to Foster Sustainable Economic Development during the COVID – 19 crisis**
   https://www.mdpi.com/journal/admsci/special_issues/PAPFSED

Assessment area

6. Research   **Partially Compliant**

7 Resources

7.2 The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.

Our score in 7.2 reflects our comments in earlier sections of this Report in relation to the research profile and environment of the Department. Further investment of resources are required to lift the Department to the level of its ambitions. In saying this, we recognize that the Department is in a developmental phase, and is trying different approaches to address this. More might be done via the existing academic institutional partnerships to support the Department.

Findings

This is not a financial assessment report and so we did not look at financial figures. We were briefed on student and staff numbers, the strategy of the Department, School and University,

Strengths

• Strong and active linkages with the private sector, including well developed presence in other regions

• Modern and robust learning technologies

• Committed teaching staff

• Well resourced library provision, within an international network

• A young university with ambitions to expand and mature

Areas of improvement and recommendations

• The intended rise in student recruitment needs to be matched by investment in teaching and support staff

• As discussed in other sections, the need to develop the research profile of staff is a key strategic requirement

• There are some relationships (e.g. alumni and with public agencies) that appear to be relatively informal and which would benefit from a more systematic approach.

Assessment area

7. Resources Compliant

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Overall satisfied but a department in its developmental path. Therefore, we see especially improvements possible in the research base of the department. For this to happen one of the issues to be resolved is the number of permanent staff, with short to medium term we think it is necessary to have enough permanent staff to manage and deliver the programs. The use of visiting professors is for additional developmental power, not for standard delivery of programs. The level of research could at the same time rise to a higher level, shown in publications in ABS 4 and ABS4*, by giving staff more time for research (4 courses per semester means no time for research in those two semesters, so only summer period available for research. Research, certainly empirical research is a matter of long-time processes and cannot be forced in a summer period only). Hiring new staff with a good to excellent research track record may speed up the research development.

OUR COMMENTS:

In terms of the permanent staff covering the programmes under accreditation, clearly the EEC's point is not the case:

MPA: 8 Permanent Staff out of the 11 (72,72%)

MBA: 100% permanent staff

BA: 13 permanent staff out of 16: 81,25%

In terms of the comments related to the research as well as for hiring new personnel we have already provided our response, so please refer to points 1,5,6.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. Sklias Pantelis	Rector	
Prof. Psillaki Maria	Dean	
Assoc. Prof Volos Christos Christodoulou	Head of Department	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	

Date: 00/00/0000