Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 25/05/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

- **Town: Paphos**

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

  In Greek:

  Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα στην Ψυχολογία

  In English:

  PhD in Psychology

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

1. The Committee would like to comment on the proposals for the development of a programme to support the development of supervisors. The Committee would support the implementation of such programme.

2. The documentation, the presentations and discussions during the site visit made it clear that the department aims at enrolling students who they want to pursue an independent research career as well as those who they wish to advance their current professional practice. The Committee feels that the revised programme is suitable predominantly for those who wish to pursue an independent research career. In order to maximize the chances of success in attracting high-calibre students with clear academic ambitions, additional actions are recommended. These actions pertain to an upscaling of the overall research focus with regard to intensity and quality of research activity on the one hand and the development of a clear marketing strategy on the other hand. Suggested initiatives may include:

   - More strongly embedding the research activities of PhD students in the research programmes of the faculty (e.g. by not advertising general PhD positions but positions with specified research topics that are matching the research expertise and programs of current faculty (both junior and senior staff).

   - Encourage new PhD students to make use of existing datasets (e.g., those collected in SKEPSI) to maximise their use; PhD positions to help with existing datasets may also be offered.

   - When a PhD topic matches the interests of a junior faculty member, then it is recommended that appropriate mentorship is being offered to the junior faculty member by a senior faculty member. This process can enable both staff development and it can also enhance student experience.

   - To enhance the overall research culture in the department, it is suggested that junior faculty are being mentored in grant proposal writing by more experienced researchers (i.e. those serving in grant evaluation committees). Funding from successful grants can be partly used to support PhD related activity.

   - For marketing purposes, more detailed information should be made public on the website. This information should include a description of the program structure, course content and assessment procedures. The Committee also recommends that specific research topics that are matching the interests of faculty should be made available in the website.

3. Some further recommendations can also be made for the curriculum of the PhD program:

   - Consider providing some additional training in core skills of doctoral researchers including development of a data analysis plan or data management plan in line with the research questions and hypotheses, skills relating to writing a grant proposal or an empirical paper or academic language.

   - Consider alternative formats of dissertation (e.g. a collection of completed manuscripts of publishable standard preceded by an introductory chapter setting the stage for the research project and followed by an integrative

discussion). This may enable submission of higher number of papers by the PhD candidate pre- and post-completion of studies.

- To enable development of skills manuscript publication, consider requesting at least one paper of publishable standard to be prepared prior to completion of studies, in addition to research seminars or conference presentations that are already part of the provision.

4. The Committee would also like to recommend consideration of a professional doctorate route to match the needs of those who are already in an established professional trajectory. For those established professionals a PhD might be a less attractive option.

NUP Response: Concerning the section "Study programme and study programme's design and development", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our Program and Department. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather made suggestions for possibly further improving our program. From the suggestions on point 2, we have decided to adopt the following:

i. We will advertise PhD positions both as general as well as by topic in order to maximize the matching of the research expertise and programs of current faculty (both junior and senior staff).

ii. We will encourage new PhD students to make use of existing datasets (e.g., those collected in SKEPSI) to maximise their use.

iii. When a PhD topic matches the interests of a junior faculty member, then mentorship will be offered to the junior faculty member by a senior faculty member. This process enables both staff development and enhances student experience.

iv. Junior faculty will attend trainings for grant writing offered widely (within and outside the institution) as well as be mentored by more experienced researchers (i.e. those serving in grant evaluation committees) This also satisfies the comment raised on point 3.

v. For marketing purposes, more detailed information will be made public on the website.

From the suggestions on point 3, we have decided to adopt the following:

i. When deemed appropriate (i.e. proposal is a series of studies), alternative formats of dissertation (e.g. a collection of completed manuscripts of publishable standard preceded by an introductory chapter setting the stage for the research project and followed by an integrative discussion). This may enable submission of higher number of papers by the PhD candidate pre- and post-completion of studies.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

Supervisors may benefit from mentoring in supervision by experienced members of staff within the department, the University or other external providers. This will enable junior faculty development as well enhance the overall student experience.

NUP Response: Concerning the section "Student – centered learning, teaching and assessment ", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our program and department. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather suggested for possibly further improving our program. As stated in the previous section, we have decided to adopt the suggestion and provide this synergy between junior and senior faculty.

3. **Teaching staff**
   (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

1. Teaching and administrative workload is overall high with limited time for research. The Committee would like to recommend consideration of rebalancing workload for all faculty members with adequate time for research in order to enhance the research skills of more junior staff.
2. Given that teaching load can become very high for some teaching staff, especially for methodological courses, we recommend that the department can create rotations either within the current labs or perhaps abroad (possibly in part of a distance learning format) using existing collaborations with other Universities abroad.
3. The Committee would like to recommend electing experienced senior researchers as faculty members who will be able not only improve the overall research culture but also to mentor junior faculty members.

NUP Response: Concerning the section "Teaching Staff", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our program. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather made suggestions for possibly further improving our program. From the suggestions, we have decided to adopt the following:

- Concerning point 1, the university's new research policy allows the opportunities and incentives for our faculty to significantly increase their research outputs as well as decrease their teaching load. We are glad that the EEC commented positively on our implemented institution's research policy.
- Concerning point 2, given that we have recently hired staff (e.g., Antonia Zachariou) that can also cover the methodological courses, we believe this addresses this issue.
- Concerning point 3, we have at least two faculty (Marios Argyrides and Andri Christodoulou) that will soon be able to apply for a higher ranking, therefore, this will also address the issue raised. Additionally, in our dissertation committees, we keep a balance between junior and senior faculty so that mentorship can occur at the same time.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

The Committee would like to encourage staff to keep monitoring student satisfaction with the new proposed programme.

NUP Response: Concerning the section "Student admission, progression, recognition and certification", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our program. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather suggested for possibly further improving our program. We will keep monitoring student satisfaction as we have always done.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

The SWOT analysis that was produced by the University has identified limited laboratory equipment, facilities and offices for academic staff.

NUP Response

Concerning the section "Learning resources and student support", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our program. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather suggested about our equipment.
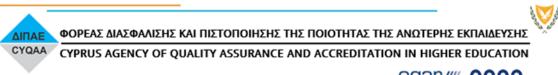
 As stated to the EEC on the premises, we do continuously improve our laboratory equipment and we have approved 100% of every equipment our faculty have requested the last few years (i.e. upgrade of Eyetracker, Virtual Reality software).

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

The Committee would like to encourage staff to ensure that prospective candidates have the necessary knowledge foundation, skills and aspirations for an independent future research career which matches also the aspirations of the revised programme.

NUP Response: Concerning the section "Additional for doctoral programmes", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our program. We are also satisfied with the fact that the EEC did not request any changes but rather commented positively on our matching of their suggestion to our aspirations of the proposed program of study.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

All Points were addressed previously.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	*Position*	*Signature*	
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector		
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position		
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position		
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position		
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position		
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position		

Date: 25.05.2023