

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 21/03/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University

- **Town:** Pafos

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

In Greek:

Διεθνείς Σχέσεις και Ασφάλεια (3-5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη,
180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό

In English:

International Relations and Security (3-5 academic
years, 180 ECTS, Ph.D.)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **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.*

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 EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>1.1. The EEC considered that the Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security would benefit from more focus on research training and the provision of training that is embedded throughout the programme.</p>	<p>Done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NUP has developed a whole process of formative and summative support process prescribed in the Gantt Chart. See Annex 1: Gantt Chart. as well as Chapter 4 entitled Research Skills and Career Planning for Ph.D. candidates in NUP PhD Research Quality Assurance Code (Annex 2). See Annex 2: NUP PhD in International Relations and Security Research Quality Assurance Code ✓ Ph.D. related KPIs have been incorporated into the NUP Quality Assurance modelling. See Annex 6: NUP Quality Assurance Modelling ✓ NUP has developed a coherent Code of compulsory training and support activities for students (See Annex 1) and staff. See Chapter 4 in Annex 2 entitled Research Skills and Career Planning as well as Annex 3: Training and Continuous Professional Program for Ph.D. Supervisors. ✓ NUP has already requested external assistance and expertise on the said issue, especially the colleagues from the University of Haifa (see also point 1.2.). 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>1.2. The EEC considered that some of the wider support and training for Ph.D students was more of an ad hoc nature and that there was a need for clearer guidelines in terms of how students and staff would be developed.</p>	<p>Done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ See our response in 1.1. ✓ NUP has developed a coherent Code of compulsory training and support activities for students (See Annex 1) and staff. See Chapter 4 in Annex 2 entitled Research Skills and Career Planning as well as Annex 3: Training and Continuous Professional Program for Ph.D. Supervisors. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>✓ NUP has already requested external assistance and expertise on the said issue. More precisely, as noted in the EEC report one of the main institutional collaborators in offering the Ph.D. in International Relations and Security is the University of Haifa. The Head of the IR Division in the University of Haifa Prof Carmela Lutmar was physically present during the EEC. After sharing the EEC report with them, they will happily offer their expertise in delivering quality support and training courses for both the students and the Ph.D. supervisors. See Annex 4: Communication with Prof. Lutmar, Head of IR Division, Haifa University.</p>	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
2.1. The Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security will offer one 7.5 ECTS research methods course. The material provided by the Department and the presentation of the Department does not outline in any detail the research methods course, thus the EEC cannot assess the methods, pedagogy, content, bibliography, assignments, or assessments.	Done. See Annex 5: Curriculum of the course Ph.D. Research Methods.	Choose an item.
2.2. The EEC found that the Department needs to develop a full Ph.D programme with compulsory and optional courses on theory and method, with study plans, content, methods of delivery, assignments, bibliography etc.	Done. See Annex 1 and Annex 2 See also how this is reflected in terms of ECTS in the revised structure:	Choose an item.

	<table><tr><th>ACTIVITY</th><th>ECTS</th></tr><tr><td>Research Course</td><td>7.5 ECTS</td></tr><tr><td>Research</td><td>112.5 ECTS</td></tr><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">3 By-annual seminars on Research Methodological ApproachesAdditional Research and training including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compulsory submission of progress reports every two months.Compulsory submission of the annual reportResearch Development seminarTraining for the supervisor and PhD Candidate on pedagogyAnnual Development and Presentation of DissertationPublications 1/per year Scopus & 3 or 4 conferences</td><td>9 ECTS (3 ECTS/20 Hours) 63.5 ECTS 40 ECTS</td></tr><tr><td>Writing & Defence</td><td>60 ECTS</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL</td><td>180 ECTS</td></tr></table>	ACTIVITY	ECTS	Research Course	7.5 ECTS	Research	112.5 ECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3 By-annual seminars on Research Methodological ApproachesAdditional Research and training including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compulsory submission of progress reports every two months.Compulsory submission of the annual reportResearch Development seminarTraining for the supervisor and PhD Candidate on pedagogyAnnual Development and Presentation of DissertationPublications 1/per year Scopus & 3 or 4 conferences	9 ECTS (3 ECTS/20 Hours) 63.5 ECTS 40 ECTS	Writing & Defence	60 ECTS	TOTAL	180 ECTS	
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<p>2.3. The EEC suggests that the Department develop a process for exchanging best practices in Ph.D supervision between external and NUP staff, which is not clearly outlined. There is a need for less experienced supervisors to undertake pedagogical training on supervising Ph.D. candidates.</p>	<p>Done. See Annex 3.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>												
<p>2.4. The Department must ensure an active research environment. Existing research</p>	<p>Done. See Annex 1 and Annex 2</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>												

<p>evidence that the seminar is key to foster innovative and original research, to ensure an active research environment, as well as opportunities for Ph.D students to practice in presenting research. Thus, regularly running seminar series is an indication of an active research environment. The EEC suggests that such series needs to be developed.</p>		
<p>2.5. The requirement to publish two peer-reviewed journal articles on topics from their thesis in Q1, Q2, or Q3 journals may not benefit the Ph.D candidate as the Ph.D thesis is not a Ph.D by publication but a research monograph. The risk is that the Ph.D candidate will be pressured to publish their research in less important journals with lower impact-factors to ensure they meet this</p>	<p>Done. The requirement to publish has been embedded as an integrated component of a coherent training to research program, rather than an “isolated” part of the program. Additionally, the requirement to publish has been one that CYQAA has usually requested.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>particular requirement. The programme learning outcomes emphasis on forecasting international affairs limits the options Ph.D candidates have in selecting the research design of the Ph.D research and thesis.</p>		
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
3.1. Careful consideration is required as to how supervisory teams will be allocated. It should be compulsory that at least one of the three members of the supervisory team has prior experience with Ph.D supervision to completion. If this is provided by an external collaborator/ supervisor, it should be compulsory that at least one member of the supervisory team is a permanent member of staff at NUP. It is recommended that one member of the supervisory team is an Early Career Scholar, to facilitate career and personal development.	Done. Fully agreed by NUP. Confirmed.	Choose an item.
3.2. Consideration needs to be given to recruitment strategies which address the current gender imbalance of staff.	NUP is an equal opportunities employer.	Choose an item.
3.3. All supervisors should receive regular and compulsory training on the pedagogical aspects of PGR supervision. Further consideration is also required of the ethical aspects of conducting Ph.D research, which extends from how students engage with potentially high-risk subject matters to the ability of supervisors to provide guidance and support in this process.	Done. See responses in 1.2. on training, support and continuous professional development of Ph.D. supervisors.	Choose an item.

<p>3.4. Further consideration is required as to the methodological expertise of staff, and how it will be matched to the requirements of supporting the needs of a Ph.D project.</p>	<p>Done. See response in 1.2. and 3.3.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>3.5. To enrich the research environment at NUP, staff should be encouraged and supported to apply for external grants, following the example of the Erasmus + application noted above. The Department should also establish a regular research seminar series, which will integrate PGR students in addition to the current ad hoc activities it organises.</p>	<p>Done. See response in 1.1</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
4.1. The EEC considered that the annual progression report could be more rigorous given that the overall award is based on a single final thesis and there is no interim award. The EEC would recommend that in the annual progress report the reviewing panel are presented with a substantive chapter or other output, e.g. publication, that emanates from the Ph.D project. This will also flag concerns about student progression at an early stage.	Done. Annual progression report has become more rigorous. See Chapter 3 entitled “Monitoring and Progress” in Annex 2: NUP PhD in International Relations and Security Research Quality Assurance Code	Choose an item.
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
5.1. There is a requirement for the documentation relating to Ph.D supervision, training and development to provide more granular detail and also to provide a sense of the scaffolding of the support being provided over the duration of the degree programme.	Done. See response in 1.1.	Choose an item.
5.2. There is a need to ensure that the documentation for the Ph.D reflects the contemporary learning environment. For example, Ph.D student are requested to submit their thesis on a compact disk. This is an old data storage format and most students will not have computers that have a compact disk drive.	Done. Submission requirements are set in Chapter 5: Submission and Examination of Annex 2: NUP PhD in International Relations and Security Research Quality Assurance Code	Choose an item.
5.3. There is a need to make it clear what the exact research environment is for research students. For example, do research students have access to dedicated study space? Do research students have access to financial support?	Confirmed. They do have access to designated study space. They do have access to financial support. Participation in scientific conferences as well as potential publication costs that may occur (especially for on open access publications) are fully covered by NUP.	Choose an item.
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
6.1. The requirement to publish two peer-reviewed journal articles on topics from the Ph.D thesis in Q1, Q2, or Q3 journals may not benefit the Ph.D candidate as the Ph.D thesis is not a Ph.D by publication but a research monograph. The EEC sees a risk in that the Ph.D candidate will be pressured to publish their research in less important journal with lower impact-factor to ensure they meet this particular requirement.	Done. See response in 2.5.	Choose an item.
6.2. The stages of the doctoral degree programme need to be outlined more clearly and not only distinguish between 7,5 ECTS research methods course, the research phase, and the writing of thesis.	Done. See our response in 1.1 and 1.2.	Choose an item.
6.3 The Department may also want to reconsider the presentation and interpretation of “original research” in a Ph.D thesis.	Done. Production of new knowledge and contribution to the academic discourse. This can also be shared and achieved through participation in established international conferences as well as publications throughout the research part of the thesis. This is enhanced through a credible training and support system already envisaged and described in 1.1 and 1.2.	Choose an item.
6.4. The Programme may also need to consider research ethics in more detail, including in relation to research methods.	Done. See our response in 2.1. and 2.2.	Choose an item.
6.5. The EEC suggests that the Ph.D programme outlines the composition, the procedure, and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee as well as	Done. See our response in 5.2.	Choose an item.



for the examining committee. The Ph.D programme requires that the Ph.D student will submit the Ph.D thesis on a CD. This needs to be updated to reflect contemporary technology.		
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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<p>The Committee was impressed with the overall ambitions of Neapolis University Pafos to develop a Ph.D degree programme in International Relations and Security that offers significant opportunities for potential students to upskill, as well as making a significant contribution to the local and regional economy and society. However, the Committee considered that there were a number of weaknesses in the proposal that were not fully clarified in the discussions during the site visit.</p> <p>The EEC were concerned with the capability and the capacity of Department of History, Politics and International Studies to move towards the awarding of the Ph.D in the context of the current resources available and the support to be provided to students and staff. In general terms, the EEC considered that the information provided in advance of the visit and also the discussions on the day demonstrated the ambitions of the Department with regard to the Ph.D programme, but were less clear on the details relating to how students and staff would be supported. This specifically relates to the research training provided for</p>	<p>Many thanks for the outcome and productive remarks of the EEC report, which is quite encouraging for the efforts and quality assurance upgrade of NUP.</p> <p>p. 2 of the EEC report: “In general terms the EEC gained confidence from the existing capacity of NUP to deliver Ph.D degrees given the feedback and discussions with students who had successfully managed to complete research degrees at the University. The University has an understanding of the requirements relating to Ph.D supervision and the Department of History, Politics and International Studies has obviously given a good deal of thought with regard to how it can build its research environment through collaborations with external partners, such as Haifa University and the University of Buckingham. The University and the Department attach importance to academic standards in the context of being aware of academic integrity and the provision of an appropriate administrative structure.”</p> <p>p. 24 “The Committee considers that the issues that are identified in this report are significant, but they are nonetheless within the capacity and capability of the Department to address with proper reflection and consideration.”</p> <p>The responses above demonstrate our commitment to proceed accordingly and realise a successful Ph.D. program in IR and International Security. Our external collaborative modalities with experienced scholars and institutions also ensure and enhance a fruitful and productive, research oriented environment.</p> <p>Finally, we want to sincerely thank the CYQAA representative Mrs Emily Alexandridou for her patience and the great job she did throughout the day.</p>	Choose an item.

students, the nature of the detail required for progression reports, and the level of confidence in relation to the provision of support for staff to ensure that they had the necessary support and skills to enable them to be successful Ph.D supervisors. The EEC considered that the presentations in relation to the Ph.D were light in detail in terms of the technicalities of supervision and were at times blurred by more ambitious language that was not always supported by substance. The Committee were particularly concerned about the way in which the degree programme had insufficient attention to research methodology and an absence of clear content and structure in the programme to train the Ph.D candidates. This is not up to the required standards. Nonetheless, the Committee did gain confidence from the interactions with staff and students on the day, including the testimonies from recently completed Ph.D students. The Committee considers that the issues that are identified in this report are significant, but they are nonetheless within the capacity and capability of the Department to address with proper reflection and consideration. The Committee was grateful for the support provided by the University and the Department on the day and the materials that were

distributed in advance. We are grateful to the contributions from staff and students, which was a pleasure to meet, and are particularly grateful for the excellent support from the CYQAA, in particular Emily Alexandridou.		
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C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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