

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 13.02.2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**

- Neapolis University
- Democritus University of Thrace

- **Town: Pafos**

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

In Greek:

ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΟ ΣΕ ΣΥΝΕΠΙΒΛΕΨΗ ΣΤΗ «ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗ
ΕΡΓΟΥ»(3-5 years, 180 ECTS)

In English:

PhD with CO-SUPERVISION IN "PROJECT
MANAGEMENT" (3-5 years,180 ECTS) Programme Name

- **Language(s) of instruction:**

- Greek/English
- Language(s)

- **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
The number of active students in the DUTH seems to be 50% of the students in total. This can be challenging for the administration as well as quality assurance - especially in terms of interpretation of KPIs. Both universities should consider actions to avoid similar developments in the study programme evaluated here.	Done. This has been resolved by law in Greece.	Choose level of compliance:
While the selection criteria are clear, it would be important to identify the ideal candidates who should follow a PhD program in project management, instead of continuing education programs. What is the added value of this degree for these people? What is the career opportunities this degree would offer them?	A Ph.D. in Project Management give the opportunity for in depth analytical skills, research opportunities, job career in consulting and, of course, academia. Short term continuing education programs provide applied vocational skills without any of the above career opportunities being accessible in this case.	Choose level of compliance:
There is only one mandatory course with no quals nor any other test for the PhD candidates. Each supervisor decides if the Candidate needs to take any more courses, which does not secure objective performance metrics during the first and second years of the programme	Done. In the specific Ph.D. we incorporated two compulsory courses. One in Research Methods and Quantitative Methods, <i>see Annex5_Curriculum of the course Ph.D. Research Methods</i> and one in Project Management Fundamentals, <i>see Annex 9_DMPM511_PROJECT MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS</i> in total: 15 ECTS, in relation to additional performance metrics, see attached <i>Annex1_Gantt Chart</i> , which is incorporated into the Learning Process of the NUP Doctorate Unit.	Choose level of compliance:
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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
<p>Publishing in lower-ranked journals included in Scopus poses several risks for students aiming to complete their PhD Program. While these journals may offer a quicker and seemingly easier route to publication, they often lack the rigorous peer-review process and high academic standards of more prestigious journals. This can result in the dissemination of research that is not thoroughly vetted, potentially diminishing the perceived quality and impact of the student's work. Additionally, publications in lower-ranked journals may not be as highly regarded by the academic community, which can affect the student's reputation and future career prospects. It is crucial for students to aim for high-quality, reputable journals to ensure their research is recognized and valued within the academic and professional communities. Professors of both universities should take several actions to mitigate the risk of students aiming to publish in lower-ranked journals included in Scopus. Firstly, they can provide guidance and mentorship to students on the importance of publishing in high-quality, reputable journals. This includes educating students about the rigorous peer-review process and the academic standards upheld by top-tier journals. Professors can also encourage students to aim for journals with higher impact factors and better reputations within the academic community. Additionally, professors can facilitate access to resources and support systems that help students improve the quality of their research. This might involve organizing workshops on academic writing, research methodologies, and the publication process. By fostering a culture of excellence and high standards, professors can motivate students to strive for the best possible outcomes in their research endeavors.</p>	<p>Done. We fully agree with the EEC recommendations as well as their observations.</p> <p>Two (2) SCOPUS listed publications plus an international conference with peer reviewed proceedings are the minimum requirements for being successful in this Ph.D. programme, see Annex 5_Guide for the PhD Thesis/chapter 14.</p> <p>However, the danger in publishing in lower ranked SCOPUS listed journal is always there. This is why we have incorporated training seminars for the Ph.D. candidates, which enhance their skills in publishing in top tier journals. On the other hand, there are other EEC Committees, which have noted that such requirements are over demanding. Nonetheless, training the students in publishing in reputable journals is already incorporated into the learning process of the Doctorate Programs in NUP.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Furthermore, professors should collaborate with students on research projects, co-authoring papers and providing valuable feedback</p>	<p>Done. This is already the case. Done. The Management, Governance, Business Intelligence, Strategy and Corporate Ethics</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>throughout the writing and submission process. This collaboration not only enhances the quality of the research but also increases the likelihood of acceptance in prestigious journals. By setting a strong example and actively participating in the publication process, professors can significantly influence students' choices and encourage them to aim for higher-ranked journals.</p>	<p>in Infrastructure Operators, Networks and Supply Chain Laboratory (MAGBISE) https://magbise.econ.duth.gr/en/home/ is an officially established Lab that already has been creating research and collaborative opportunities for research projects between the faculty and the students. So, there is already a sound background towards this direction. MAGBISE already is running numerous research projects involving students and Doctorate candidates including the ones of the joint Ph.D. in Project Management.</p>	
<p>Finally, it is important to set clear expectations for the students who can't meet the academic requirements and avoid staying in the program (and paying the fees) without real chances of success. During the first year of studies this should be made clear by the program. Such measure will support the students and will improve student retention and graduation rates.</p>	<p>Done. A Learning Analytics mechanism is already in place, as follows: Tutors and Coordinators get plentiful data about students' progress and engagement via notifications and related flags (emails, insights etc), and they are immediately aware of students staying behind schedule or participation, see Annex 10_ Student at Risk In assistance, a very well-organized Mentoring Unit is also an important part of the NUP. Mentors are responsible for 1-1 meetings with each one student of NUP and special sessions can occur if a student need further guidance and support. This process is implemented via MS-Teams, see Annex 11_ NUP_mentoring</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The evaluators have no concerns that both Neapolis University Pafos and Democritus University of Thrace will manage the challenges well, given their strong reputations and proven track records in higher education. Both institutions have demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement, which instills confidence in their ability to effectively oversee and administer the joint PhD Program in "Project Management". Their commitment to high academic standards, innovative teaching methods, and rigorous research practices further assures that they are well-equipped to handle any challenges that may arise during the program.</p>	<p>Many thanks for the good words.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

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During the interviews the evaluators sensed some details in the pace of the programme which are not well known by all the professors involved. The evaluators recommend establishing even more intense communication with all relevant stakeholders. Also, establishing separate resources and additional dedicated support staff during the preparation phase of the programme may be helpful.	Done. This is a program that has not started yet. Mentoring for Ph.D. supervisors as well as Orientation Program is incorporated into the process, see attached Annex 8_SUPERVISORS TRAINING PROGRAMME	Choose level of compliance:
It is important to ensure the program has enough capacity to offer high quality supervision to the students. Support to younger academics in supervision and peer-to-peer mentoring by more experienced colleagues (professors) is needed, as well as monitoring of the supervision quality (apart from the quantitative indicators, such as the number of meetings)	Done. See attached Annex 2_ NUP PhD in Project Management Quality Assurance Code . We also follow related CYQAA Guidelines.	Choose level of compliance:
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3. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

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During the interview with the teaching staff, we were informed that students will be submitting progress reports will be submitted by the students every two months, which is not considered suitable and realistic to demonstrate progress in doctoral level studies. It is recommended to have fewer monitoring moments (twice a year?) but more in-depth reporting and obligations (milestones, deliverables).	Done. It is compulsory for students to submit Annual Progress Reports, see attached Annex1_Gantt Chart	Choose level of compliance:
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4. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

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During the interviews with the teaching staff, we were informed that students could be based in Greece or in Cyprus (or in a different country). In this context, it would be necessary to ensure that these students have access to equal quality of resources, infrastructure and administrative support independently of their location.	Students have equal access to resources in both DUTH and NUP. Physical presence for Ph.D. is compulsory for research purposes. This is not an on-line program.	Choose level of compliance:
It is important to ensure stable working relationship (contract) with the supervisor up at least until the end of the maximum duration of the supervision. In addition, there should be a clear process for changing supervisor during the program, ensuring that there is another expert in the field, who will offer the suitable support to the students.	We follow CYQAA regulations in case of external supervisors with designated contract entailing all details in supervision process being stated. The staff being present in the accreditation has been full time staff of both Universities.	Choose level of compliance:
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5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Publishing in lower-ranked journals included in Scopus poses several risks for students aiming to complete their PhD Program. While these journals may offer a quicker and seemingly easier route to publication, they often lack the rigorous peer-review process and high academic standards of more prestigious journals. This can result in the dissemination of research that is not thoroughly vetted, potentially diminishing the perceived quality and impact of the student's work. Additionally, publications in lower-ranked journals may not be as highly regarded by the academic community, which can affect the student's reputation and future career prospects. It is crucial for students to aim for high-quality, reputable journals to ensure their research is recognized and valued within the academic and professional communities.	Addressed. See above.	Choose level of compliance:
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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None. The university already has a similar legal structure and joint program accredited and the existing framework applies to this program as well.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
One of the key areas for improvement is addressing the issue of inactive students. Implementing strategies to increase student engagement and participation in the programme can help mitigate this challenge.	Addressed. See above.	Choose level of compliance:
Ensuring that all relevant policies are accessible to both students and staff is crucial for maintaining transparency and consistency in the quality assurance processes. The universities should review and update its policy access mechanisms to ensure that everyone has the necessary information.	Done. Information and Orientation as well as numerous training sessions addressed to academic staff involved in every separate program as well as to students are always realized before and during the program implementation. This is an element already incorporated into the learning process addressing policies as well as skills. Those policies and skills development is transparently known to students and staff through public announcements, Moodle and LMS platform uploading, as well as well-known during the Orientation seminars.	Choose level of compliance:
The performance evaluation process for teaching and administrative staff is well-structured, involving self-assessment reports and supervisor evaluations. However, the universities could consider incorporating additional metrics and feedback formats to provide an even more comprehensive evaluation of staff performance.	The issue has been addressed above.	Choose level of compliance:
The quality management committee plays a vital role in observing modules and evaluations. To further strengthen this process, the committee should establish clear and concrete guidelines for redesigning courses that need improvement and ensure that these guidelines are consistently followed	CYQAA regulations are followed in the case we need to change courses, redesign or improve. This can be the outcome of the feedback mechanism that already exists in the University.	Choose level of compliance:
The development of innovative training methodologies and the use of new technologies in the learning process are commendable. Both universities should continue to invest in these areas and explore new ways to enhance the learning experience for students	Thanks for the good words.	Choose level of compliance:

C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

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