Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 16/03/2023

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: Neapolis University Paphos (NUP)**

- **Town: Paphos**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): School of Economics and Business**
- **Department/ Sector: Accounting and Finance**

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

  In Greek:

  Πρόγραμμα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών (MSc) στην Λογιστική και

  Χρηματοοικονομική Διοίκηση

  In English:

  Master of Science in Accounting and Financial Management

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Λογιστική
  In English: Accounting

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the premises of the Neapolis University in Paphos (NUP) on the 14th of March 2023. Throughout the day, the EEC had the opportunity to meet with all relevant parties, starting with the Rector – Head of the Institution, the Vice – Rector of Research and Innovation, and the Head of the Department who is also the Coordinator of the program under Evaluation.

Excellent presentations were made throughout summarizing key elements of the application and expanding on some core areas. Documentation was at a high level of quality, thorough and very helpful in enabling us to understand the program structure, its management and the wider context.

The Committee also met with members of the faculty teaching staff of various disciplines who assisted in the presentation of the program of studies.

Furthermore, the Committee interviewed a group of postgraduate students and members of the administrative personnel related to admissions, registration, library facilities, IT and other administration support. Finally, the Committee visited some of the NUP's facilities. More specifically, we visited teaching areas, the University's library, student recreational rooms, staff offices and some open areas.

Every effort was made to help the Committee during the onsite visit and everyone seemed very flexible to accommodate their program to the needs of the assessment committee.

The Committee's impression of the submitted material is that it conforms to the assessment requirements stated by the agency and contains the desired documentation and information, and we acknowledge all the efforts that have gone into the production and presentation of the material.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Dimitrios Kousenidis (Chair)	Professor	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Sanjay Banerji	Professor	University of Nottingham, UK
Fergal O'Brien	Senior Lecturer	University of Limerick, Ireland
Georgios Nikolaou	Student	University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  (a) *sub-areas*
  (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

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

> ### Sub-areas
>
> **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
> **1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
> **1.3 Public information**
> **1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
    - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
    - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
    - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
    - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
    - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
    - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
    - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
    - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
    - *benefits from external expertise*
    - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
    - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
    - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
    - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*
  - o *qualification awarded*
  - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *pass rates*
  - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

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Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The Master of Science in Accounting and Financial Management is an 18-month full-time program (3 semesters). The program requires a minimum of 90 ECTS. The program is in operation since 2015 and was accredited by the Agency (CYQAA) in 2017. During the last two academic years the program has been inactive. The renewal of the accreditation by the Agency is required in order for the program to proceed with an accreditation by the ACCA.

In general, the program is well structured, its objectives are in accordance with the overall strategy of the School and the University and the intended learning outcomes stem from and are consistent to the content of the program. The purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes are clearly communicated and well-justified. The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students from the first week of the semester through the course syllabuses, the course outlines, the website of the program and the Moodle electronic platform. Overall, the program seeks to prepare students for leadership and managerial roles in accounting and auditing firms in the global competitive business environment.

The structure and content of the program include an appropriate number of core and elective courses. The program's core requirements consist of 6 core courses, of 7.5 credits each (45 credits in total) and 6 elective courses, of 7.5 credits each (45 credits). From the list of elective courses, students select 2 (15 ECTS). The taught courses are delivered in the first two semesters. During the third semester, students have to do a dissertation thesis which accounts for 30 ECTS. The program offers students the opportunity of practical training (placement) which is optional. All available courses and their content is communicated to students through the program's website and the Moodle platform.

The admission criteria are adequate. The program is delivered in English. The program is expected to resume operations in October 2023 with a prospective number of 10 to 15 students.

Quality assurance mechanisms are present and fairly well-aligned with international standards. There is a number of quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies for the development and the management of the program of study.

Moreover, the program of study reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe that is, preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The program of study is designed according to the ACCA content and enables smooth student progression. In summary, the strengths of the program are as follows:

- The NUP has a long experience (more than 10 years) in delivering educational programs in accounting and finance. Moreover, the program was accredited by the CYQAA in 2017.
- Most of the faculty has adequate practical experience which ensures a good balance between theory and practice.
- Most of the full-time teaching staff are Ph.D holders and well experienced teachers.
- The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and well-communicated to the students. The course syllabuses and course outlines clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.
- The structure of the program follows the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- For the students who do not opt to go for the ACCA exams, the content of the program could be rebalanced to include more elective courses at the expense of the core courses. We propose free elective courses that cover topics such as sustainability, digitalization, financial markets and institutions or fintech. This would ensure that the recent educational and societal trends are reflected in the program of study.
- An internship, as an elective, would be a welcome addition to the program as it would allow the students to connect theory and practice beyond case studies while boosting future employability opportunities.
- The international dimension of the program is rather underdeveloped and could be improved by inviting more visiting professors from abroad who could help in the development of the quality of the program and in the strengthening of the research profile of the program and staff through collaborations.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

> ### Sub-areas
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

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Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

There appears to be a well-structured, effective and well-implemented educational process. The accreditation of the program by the CYQAA in 2017 guarantees quality in the educational process. There are well-documented academic procedures involving the Dean of the School, the Head of the Department, the faculty staff and the students.

The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate and are communicated to the students at the beginning of the course. The assessment system is course work, mid-term examination and final examination.

There is good evidence of structured and well-organized taught material (lecture presentations, good blending of theoretical material and case studies, independent study, etc). All teaching material is uploaded to the educational platform used by the University and students have easy access to it. Textbooks are revised regularly and students get the newest editions. All textbooks are available in the library of the University.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

- The program compares very positively with relevant programs offered in Cyprus and abroad. The intended learning objectives of the program conform to the aims and objectives of the program and they are effectively communicated to the students (e.g. through the course handout). Also, the structure of the program as well as the learning mechanisms are appropriate for the effective delivery of the learning objectives.
- The Head of the Department responsible for the program and the administration team associated to it are experienced and committed to its delivery. The program is fully managed by the academics in charge and is evaluated and monitored by quality assurance committee of the NUP. There is also a team of dedicated administrators who are involved in the student support processes (library, admissions, placement etc).
- Internal quality assurance committees and processes are quite effective. The quality assurance of the program of study is ensured through active participation of the members of the academic personnel, the members of the administrative personnel and the students. The procedure of quality assurance of the program of study is well documented and communicated in the application material and in the presentations which took place during our visit at the NUP.
- The programme is of relatively small size and guarantees a friendly and collegiate environment between students and teaching/ administrative staff. The students interviewed by the Committee indicated that they are quite satisfied with the quality of the program and that they have access to feedback and advice from faculty on a regular basis.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- The international aspect of the program could be enhanced. The NUP participates in student exchange programs with other European Erasmus collaborating institutions, however this possibility has not been fully capitalized.
- Internship opportunities should be enhanced. This would provide students the opportunity to find employment after graduation and would add to the industry/market link of the program. Also, possible internships for current foreign students would add value to the program and would improve the already good reputation of the Department in the market.
- We were not informed whether students get a diploma supplement along with their degree. This is a common practice among European Universities and could further improve the international aspects of the program.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		_Non-compliant/_ _Partially Compliant/Compliant_
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
> **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
> **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

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- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The department has nine full-time members of faculties, and two of them hold visiting positions. Some members have PhDs in the subject areas, and others have practitioners' backgrounds. The research profile is not very significant for most except for one or two members. The University instructs the faculty members to publish at least one paper per year but did not mention any benchmark set of journals against which research output would be evaluated. The publications of the staff members varied in content, standards, and topics. A few papers published a while ago (e,g., the Journal of Future markets) claimed some impact on the profession, but most papers published in recent times were of mediocre quality. Some research papers and monographs in the fields of Financial Reporting, Auditing, and Taxation auditing have been published in practitioner journals and outlets.

The criteria for hiring members of staff and the process of promotion were not made explicit in the documents submitted. Neither was it clear from our conversations with various faculty members. The school and the department have a very strong presence of practitioners and instructors with relevant professional qualifications and experience in the field. In short, the department has the potential to teach courses with practical applications as professional bodies like ACCA and ICAEW also approve their inner contents. In that sense, the new MSc course, Accounting and Financial Management, holds relevance as most members are equipped with practical knowledge about modern auditing procedures, recent corporate governance developments, and relevant contemporary issues in taxation and regulations.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

- Most students expressed happiness and spoke highly of the teachers and pedagogical methods. However, they could not cite any specific examples of good practices. So, either the teachers were sincere and delivered the pedagogical approaches (like combining lectures, group presentations, and interactions) very well, or the matter requires further detailed investigation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- As mentioned in the report that the members have written a wide variety of papers which cater to the practitioners' needs. The members are well advised to write this sort of articles in more detail and publish them in more applied journals.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

  4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
  4.2 Student progression
  4.3 Student recognition
  4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
    - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

- The regulations governing the University, School, Department and program operations are detailed and cover a broad range of areas. With regards to the program, there are provisions for student progression, recognition and certification.
- NUP operates an admissions system where they focus on admitting quality applicants for the programme. The key criteria is academic excellence. There is also a focus on recruiting students for a market led curriculum that covers syllabuses of ACCA and ICAEW. The emphasis on the practical aspects of the course explains the need to use instructors with relevant professional qualifications and relevant experience in the fields of Financial Reporting, Auditing, Tax, and Financial Management.
- The admission process is based on well-defined criteria that are in line with standard practices for such a program.
- It was clear from the site visit that the admission process evaluated the suitability of applicants based on academic record, references and where necessary interviews.
- Staff in the NUP admission process highlighted the "equal opportunity" policies that they follow.
- The students' evaluation typically includes final exams (60%) and other methods of assessment (totalling 40%). In order to secure a passing grade in a course, students need to secure an overall mark of 50% and a minimum mark of 40% in each of the separate components of assessment.

- The programme is aimed at students who are in employment and are highly motivated to progress towards ACCA qualifications. The programme is delivered at weekends and student feedback suggests that they were happy with the structure of the programme.
- Students that meet ACCA requirements will have that recognised on their award from the programme.
- The student feedback was generally positive and all contributors highlighted the career progression and employment benefits of having undertaken study at NUP.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

- The admissions policy is commendable in its focus on academic excellence for entry onto the programme. The low staff-student ratio is a strength. There is a rich level of data available on the admission process, from lead generation to enrolment.
- The programme delivery is appropriate for the learners, who will invariably be working full-time in related industries. Student representatives attending the EEC visit were happy with the weekend schedule for classes and commented on it being compatible with their busy working lives.
- The close links with industry is an excellent feature of the programme and could be leveraged further in funding and scholarship arrangements.
- NUP showed evidence of strong data-driven tracking of student progression and student performance.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- The (previous version of the) programme has relatively low intakes. The new programme (assuming full ACCA accreditation) should be more attractive and NUP will need to implement robust recruitment activities to ensure financial viability. The programme should be attractive to the international market too.
- Industry partners with NUP should contribute significantly to the programme in return for access to students on the programme. This should include scholarships, other funding, and contributions to seminars and other academic activities.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

> **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**
> **5.2 Physical resources**
> **5.3 Human support resources**
> **5.4 Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

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- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

- NUP is a well-resourced University and its ambitious expansion plans were outlined during the visit, e.g., new amphitheatre, new campus, etc.
- The staff-student ratio is low and a strong feature of NUP, i.e., the ratio was presented as 14:1.
- Strong industry links were highlighted throughout the EEC visit.
- The facilities at the University were of the required standard with flexible teaching spaces, high-tech teaching aids, and appropriate student spaces.
- The library facilities and resources were in line with expectations for the University and the programme under evaluation.
- It was evident at the EEC visit that there were adequate resources around student support.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
- The learning environment at NUP was in line with expectations for a programme such as the one under review and the new facilities under development will improve this further.
- The mode of delivery for the programme at weekends is appropriate for the target learners.
- There was evidence at the EEC visit of wellbeing and pastoral support for students.
- The close links with industry will be an important feature of the programme both in terms of programme attractiveness and academic/professional rigour.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- While the programme is heavily influenced by the needs of ACCA for accreditation and exemption purposes NUP should recognise and maintain its role as the academic lead on the programme and this can be reflected in academic outputs, teaching philosophy and programme content.
- NUP should consider how it engages with the sustainability agenda, both from a faculty and student perspective.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

    6.1 Selection criteria and requirements
    6.2 Proposal and dissertation
    6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards
- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards
- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

> - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
> - *support for writing research papers*
> - *participation in conferences*
> - *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*
>
> *You may also consider the following questions:*
>
> - *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
> - *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
> - *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

In this report, the EEC has provided feedback on the program under evaluation at NUP. The report includes the main findings, highlights the program's strong points, and makes suggestions for improvement and development.

Overall, the EEC was impressed by the level of preparation that went into the design of the program, the careful consideration in creating a well-structured and well-organized program and the academic commitment of the professors, teachers, coordinators and staff. Based on the formal presentations and interviews conducted with teaching and administrative staff throughout the EEC visit, there is evidence of enthusiasm, passion and commitment to ensure the programme is a success. It was also clear to the EEC that NUP has a student-centred approach and this was evidenced delivery of the programme at weekends to suit the needs of learners working full-time.

The EEC has identified some potential risks and challenges that should be taken into account:

- Albeit that the focus of the learning is for the accounting profession, that should not deflect from the research agenda of faculty. There are particular opportunities for publications in applied and policy research given the focus of the programme and its access to industry.
- Low enrolment numbers is a risk to the programme's viability. Marketing and student recruitment efforts at local and University level should highlight the pathways through the programme and associated award differentiation in a clear understandable manner so as to simplify the purchasing decision of potential students.
- The sustainability agenda should be reflected in the curriculum with students having the opportunity to consider this aspect of accounting and financial management and its growing importance.

The EEC hopes that this feedback will guide future growth and contribute to the success of the program. If the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education requires any clarification on the report, the EEC is available to assist. Finally, the EEC would like to express its gratitude to the CYQAA coordinator for his efficient and effective management of the evaluation process.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Dimitrios Kousenidis	
Sanjay Banerji	
Fergal O'Brien	
Georgios Nikolaou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 16/03/2023