Doc. 300.1.1

Date: July 07 2023

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Pafos
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Architecture, Engineering, land & Environmental Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Civil Engineering
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

  MSc in Structural Robustness for Extreme Loading Conditions (3 academic semesters, 90, Postgraduate)
- **Language(s) of instruction: English/Greek**
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

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].

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee members visited the University during the period of July 5 to 7 2023. The committee members were provided with a considerable number of resources and participated in in-depth discussions with various academic, administrative staff and students to carry out their evaluation for the post-graduate programme in Architecture & Civil Engineering at Neapolis University Pafos.

The members of the Department gave extensive and detailed presentations and were very willing to answer questions asked by the committee and offer additional data and complimentary information as requested.

The committee firmly believes that the assembled report and its findings are very representative of the current situation.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	*Position*	*University*
(Chair) Yong Lu	Professor	The University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
(Member) Dimitrios Lignos	Professor	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland
(Member) Emanouil Chatzis	Associate Professor	University of Oxford, UK
(Member) Marios Tsangaris	Student Member	University of Cyprus, Cyprus
(Member) Petros Athinakis	Professional Engineer	ETEK, Cyprus
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*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *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*
- *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:*
  - *selection criteria*
  - *intended learning outcomes*
  - *qualification awarded*
  - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - *pass rates*
  - *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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 programme does correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The MSc, which is currently completed over three semesters, offers 30 ECTS in each of the first two semesters and another 30ECTS are attributed to the actual dissertation. Information regarding the programme is evident and up to date and is publicly accessible via a website that is regularly maintained. The student-to-faculty ratio is 0.5:1, which creates a great environment for learning given the small number of students.

The post-graduate programme is designed to meet 8 programme learning outcomes including problem solving. The program is designed to enhance critical thinking, and moreover, the focus is on both new and existing structures and the use of highly pertinent digital infrastructure is promoted in parallel with the theoretical basis that is offered during the coursework. The focus of the programme is on structural robustness for extreme loading, which is highly pertinent given the location of the school. Therefore, the programme's learning objectives are highly relevant and up to date considering that extreme loading and its effects on infrastructure systems is a very timely topic.

Courses are offered in Greek with an emphasis in English compared to the bachelor's programme. However, if there are at least 3 foreign students enrolled then course(s) are also offered in English, thereby providing potential opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme. Noteworthy stating that the lecture notes are offered in Greek and English. Moreover, there are tutoring activities in English that have been put in place.

Student recruitment is mainly from a 4-year degree background (50% Greek students). The average graduation time is 1-1/2 years because the enrolled students typically work in parallel. This is one of the reasons why the courses are offered during the weekends. There are currently no statistics on dropouts since there are currently 5 enrolled students who have completed the undergraduate programme in the same school and the first graduates will appear sometime this year. It should be noted that the programme was impacted from the pandemic considering the small size of student body.

The career path of the students is mainly associated with leadership positions, establishment of private companies in related areas of civil engineering as well as academic careers.

There may be potentially an issue with Civil Engineers having a broader background (e.g., transportation) in terms of catching up given that the programme technically accepts those directly, but they may not have highly pertinent background in the field of structural robustness/extreme loading. However, this is anticipated to be a challenge in future student recruitments.

Strengths

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

A list of valuable points is summarized as follows:

- The post-graduate programme is fairly unique since it is one of the first few programmes in Cyprus and Eastern Mediterranean with emphasis on extreme loading and its implications on the built environment.
- The courses are taught by faculty members with highly pertinent experience, thereby ensuring a high quality of the teaching experience.

- There is continuous evaluation of the student's performance via various mid-term examination, semester projects.
- The MSc dissertation has a potential applied research component, which is always interesting so as critical thinking is further promoted as one of the programme's learning objectives.
- While some topics are quite specialized (e.g., blast, fire) there is existing faculty in the roster with experience to cover these courses in case of sabbatical leaves or other reasons.
- The program's focus on extreme loading seems appealing considering the actual location (earthquake prone).
- Similar to the undergraduate programme, there seem to be continuously changing evaluation practices as well as training activities for faculty with modern practices for preventing academic fraud, which is of particular concern in our days to ensure quality of an academic program.
- It is encouraging to see that there is a liaison office at the university level that establishes connections with local stakeholders and industry.

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 following aspects may be considered for further improvement and quality assurance of the post-graduate programme:

- If the effects of climate change on infrastructure systems is a primary focus, this should be contextualized more evidently in the curriculum. Currently, there does not seem to be any pertinent courses on this as Climate change is much more than earthquakes, blast and fire. This should be reflected into potentially new faculty/lecturers that should join the programme.
- There should be more formal procedures developed to assist students who may not have the full spectrum of technical prerequisites to advance in the program. A preparatory semester may be necessary in this case.
- The program appears to put emphasis on retrofitting of existing structures and use this module to facilitate a comprehensive appreciation of effects across different types of extreme loads, which is an important component; however, this is not conveyed well in the current program description. This perhaps relates to the further re-balancing the coherence of the programme.
- There should be more established evaluation criteria for admission for the future case where the number of applicants will exceed the target number of places. Such procedures should be clear to potential applicants.

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)?*

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 programme has a robust process in place to ensure access of advice and support on students learning at all stages from both the teaching and supporting staff. Teaching and assessment methods are available and communicated to the students in a clear and timely manner, via course information on the online platform Moodle, as well as induction sessions at the start of semester.

The programme at the moment has a small cohort of students – 5 current and another 5 or so to start in September, and this number of students is comfortably manageable with the existing capacities of the teaching staff and admin support. There is good culture that encourages active teaching-learning feedback process, and support on individual student's need in the learning process, through flexible consultation arrangement at the course level, and regular exercise/coursework submission, grading and feedback.

There is a standard process to identify special needs of individual students, and such needs are informed and addressed at teaching, coursework submission and exam stages. There is a tailored process in place to address different learning profiles and needs of individual students. Course materials, assignment and exam papers are available in both Greek and English where necessary, and extra help is available for students who may require additional assistance in their learning of specific subjects.

There is a standard process to gather student's feedback to identify areas for improvement in the teaching and assessment from the students' perspective. There is good mixture of coursework submission, mid-term and final exams in the assessment across most individual courses.

Inter-connection between practical and theoretical studies is facilitated by site visits and physical experiments at the laboratories. All students carry out a dissertation project, and this facilitates comprehensive training and involvement of students in research-oriented process and activities. It is noted though the scope of research exploration is constrained by the limited availability of experimental facilities to the dissertation students as well as the supervisors.

Strengths

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

The use of new technologies and assistive tools, such as the Smart Board, facilitate the delivery of the lectures. The IT support and the further services enabled via the Moodle, Computer Labs, the access to engineering & computing software, as well as the library resources is on par with international standards.

There is good practice of active teaching-learning interaction such as through flexible arrangement of consultation. Access of help is readily available and this in part has benefited from a relatively small staff-student community at the department, and an apparent connected community culture.

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.

There is good practice in encouraging active teaching-learning feedback process through flexible arrangement of consultation. Nonetheless, it would be good to allocate specific time slots at individual

course level to ensure availability of teaching staff and encourage good practice in time management in the learning process.

Also the mechanisms of formative feedback throughout the semester should be explicitly stated at individual course level to ensure students' awareness and consistency of practice across the board.

It is clear that teaching staff are well positioned to deal with ongoing difficulties due to issues such as sickness that may have affected a coursework submission. It would be good to have a standardised process to address such special circumstances, which may also have affected a student's ability to demonstrate their learning achievement.

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.*

- *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 primary findings are very similar with those for the undergraduate programme. Particularly, the department has invested on 11 permanent and 4 temporary faculty members to maintain the programme continuity and coherence. The academic staff is comprised of a full professor, an associate professor and the rest are all lecturers (i.e., assistant professors). Each faculty member appears to teach, on average, 3 courses per semester. The workload appears to be appropriate. On the other hand, because of the lack of assistants, this compromises a bit the faculty's ability to conduct uninterrupted research activities that could further improve the university's public image. However, teaching activities and allocation does connect with pertinent research that the respective faculty members appear to have.

The teaching performance per faculty member is assessed via a course evaluation form that is distributed to students; hence, student evaluation is explicitly considered as part of the process. The results are analysed via a platform and based on those the faculty receives feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching.

Strengths

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

- There seem to be a clear career development plan for faculty promotions in place as well as connection with local stakeholders and industry that could generally help in field implementations and on-site teaching activities.
- There seem to be seminars and other activities to support faculty for active learning.

- While the theme of the post-graduate programme is quite specialized, the existing faculty appears to have the required expertise to provide highly relevant courses and effective teaching.
- In the case of sabbaticals, because of the complementarity of existing faculty, several courses can still be offered.

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 following aspects may be considered as recommendations to improve future aspects of faculty recruitment and implications on teaching:

- Potentially consider hiring a temporary faculty member first in the general area of climate / extreme loading conditions for proper quantitative assessment of the loading site.
- Similar to the undergraduate programme, It would help to establish relationships (formal agreements) with public universities and pertinent laboratory facilities along with training activities to assist young faculty to further develop their research path. This could effectively assist their teaching.
- Further develop facilities (e.g., classrooms and laboratories) on campus to support architecture and civil engineering students.
- As discussed, each faculty teaches, on average, 3 courses per week (9h lecture time per week). This should be re-balanced in a longer term to ensure current faculty can increase their research output. This could be achieved by hiring 2-3 additional faculty members in key thematic areas.

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	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 University follows the ECTS system the number of units are in agreement with the system. 90 ECTS are required for successful completion and can be obtained in one and a half year. The last semester is entirely for an MSc Dissertation.

The courses are set and hence are all mandatory. The 1 or 1.5 year program is an MSc, this is in agreement with the requirements of ETEK and TEE. The programme is dedicated to civil engineering and this makes the expected requirements to accreditation from professional bodies obvious to the students.

Recruitment: Recruitment from Civil Engineering graduates, but also from other relevant specializations. In cases where students don't have all the necessary prerequisites they will be given the option of taking those courses from the Undergraduate program. However, since the Department has not met such a case yet they have not decided on whether the prerequisites will be done in a preparatory year/semester or in parallel with the MSc courses but increasing the overall duration. Although, some of the courses are specialized they can be delivered by more than one lecturers which covers students in cases of having to repeat the course (even in the case of lecturers going on Sabbaticals). Admissions are based on an application with a statement, cv, previous education and so on. A committee will select out of the eligible candidates. The students admitted must have a BSc/BEng in Civil Engineering or Similar.

The students would be informed about whether they would be asked to take more courses than the default number before the academic year starts.

Progression: Resit exams in September. Resits cannot change a mark by more than Good (64%). Students pass a course if they go above 50%. The rules of passing or failing a course are explained in a transparent manner to the students.

Since the number of applicants is smaller than the number of places available, then the matter of access or diversity has not come into play but based in the approach of the faculty if they were to find themselves in such a scenario they would follow the suggested procedures by the Ministry of Education.

Strengths

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

The courses offered are clear for the students

The rules of passing or failing a course are clear and offering the option of resitting failed papers in September is good.

The MSc is in compliance with the ECTS system

The MSc follows practices and guidelines suggested by accreditation bodies in Greece and Cyprus

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 MSc is a relatively recent programme so inevitably there is a small amount of data in terms of pass/fail. Over time and through gathering more data some further improvements will be made.

As the number of students admitted in the MSc grows, the faculty should define a policy that will be made publicly available regarding what happens in the following cases:

- A student admitted who lacks some of the core concepts needed to follow all the courses in the MSc. For example, a student with a background in civil Engineering who however has not taken courses in Reinforced Concrete or other courses related to Structural Engineering. The Department can decide if such students will take a preparation semester before starting the MSc or if they would need to take such courses in parallel to the other courses. Whatever the decided policy will be it should be included as part of the studies guide.

- The practices over which selection of students will be made if the number of eligible candidates exceeds the available positions should be included in the studies guide.

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.).*

- *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.

Reasonably, the MSc and BSc programs share facilities and there are several common points in both degrees.

The tools that are used are appropriate for student-based learning. The Department makes good use of resources in that matter in collaboration with the Library. The students have access to notes that also correspond to the lecture slides in both Greek and English. The lectures would be in Greek unless there are more than 3 international students attending. In such cases, the international students are supported with extra hours of tutoring and the lecturers spend more time to answer their questions. This system appears to work reasonably well right now despite its challenges because the lecturers follow the approach of lecturing using the same slides as the notes. There is hence a direct correspondence between the lecture slides in Greek and the notes in English. Certainly, this is an area where the faculty can consider further improvement such as the upload of recorded lectures in English.

Generally the format of lectures, exercises, intermediate tests and final exams is good and the students had very positive comments about the teaching style. All appears to be in good shape in terms of the teaching material used.

The MSc uses the same facilities as the BSc but over the weekends and hence overlaps are avoided.

Currently the number of students in the program is small and cohorts are of the order of 5 students. This is currently comfortably accommodated with the size of classrooms. The classrooms are well equipped, the writing boards are modern and allow for projection and digital writing. The rooms are well lit and air conditioned. The desks are spacious and allow for comfortable space between students.

The library is well organized and with a good ratio of reading spaces. The use of e-books is also positive, but the students have also access to physical copies of books. Some of the spaces in the library are used as computer rooms. Perhaps a consideration would be to add more such spaces, even outside the premises of the library. E.g. include computer rooms which are used for teaching courses that use computers. And include a computer lab. Having such spaces outside the library allows for lecturing and interacting of the students without disturbing those studying in the library.

As will be mentioned later, the current space and rooms are good for the size of the cohort.

However, as the Department has the aspirations of growth in size new classrooms should be added that can host more students. The University overall should consider also the addition of amphitheatres that can be used for very well attended courses (from different Departments), seminars and conferences. The facilities are reasonable for the current size of the Department but there should be a plan for increasing the rooms, and adding some rooms of larger size. Such a growth would further require a larger space for the library as well. Of more immediate need is the addition of a computer room for teaching and a room to be used as a computer lab outside the premises of the library.

In terms of laboratories, again those are reasonable for the size of the cohort. It would certainly be useful to consider the growth of the laboratories space which is a direction that the department has within its plans. Of more immediate attention is the addition of further testing equipment for both demonstration and for supporting the research needs of some of the faculty. The members of the Department have a list of items to be pursued in the future and they should be supported in that effort.

The feedback from the teaching staff and students is that they are generally happy with the current facilities for demonstrating. There is a recorded need for rooms with computers for both teaching and use as labs. There is a recorded need for more testing equipment in laboratories for teaching and research and giving

access to other testing facilities to researchers. The Department could consider formalizing visits to construction sites by making a direct agreement with the related companies for such visits so that this is not organized by the demonstrators.

There were several positive things about support services. A special department called Skepsi makes assessment of potential disability of students and provides the lecturers with suggestions. The staff feels happy with resources in terms of their own job and the tools to support the students. All offices of support are in open communications between them and with the tutor.

There is good help of the students in terms of mobility for Erasmus and related applications.

Overall there is a good network for supporting students. Perhaps there should be some added guidance to international students about visa. The current services were found to be pretty good, but this is is an area where certain international students would need extra help.

Strengths

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

- A very good support network for students. Good motivated people in suitable places.

- A well organized library

- Well equipped classrooms, which are OK for the current size of the cohort (although perhaps not for the future plans of growth).

- The staff and students are happy with their working environment.

- There is a vision for growth of the Department and the recognition that this will mean more teaching rooms and larger laboratories.

- The current facilities are well taken care of and maintained.

- There is little overlap between BENG and MENG classrooms

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.

There are certain areas that the University can consider for improvement, they were mentioned in detail above and so are summarized here:

- While what is currently done for international students appears to work reaonably well, there is some room for improvement in terms of the lectures. Those students should be offered lectures in English even when there is only one attending a class. Perhaps the use of recorded lectures in English could help in this direction.

- A computer lab and a teaching room with computers should be added.

- The University has a growth plan and hence should support the Department with more teaching rooms, and the addition of larger rooms.

- The Department should be supported in terms of obtaining new equipment for teaching and research in the current labs.

- The Department and University can consider how to further support international students in terms of easing the transition from the MSc to the job market (since the current visa requirements make this challenging). Obviously there are limitations in what the University and the Department can actually do regarding visa matters.

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

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	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

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.

With regards to the postgraduate programme, its design and development, similar to the undergraduate programme, it appears that the programme has well established procedures to ensure high standards regarding the quality assurance including electronic platforms and tools that monitor student / faculty / course evaluations, the use of predictive capabilities for analysing the data and prognosticating which course(s) may be problematic and in which cases further training may be important. The average time of graduation is 1-1/2 years, which is deemed reasonable given that all enrolled students are working in parallel. The programme itself, with 90 ECTS ensures the enhancement of critical thinking and project-based learning.

One aspect of improvement may be hiring of new faculty who may be specializing on climate change (demand side) so as this can become a more natural aspect of the programme, which primarily focuses on extreme loading but with emphasis on blast, fire and earthquake actions. Moreover, there should be more formal procedures developed to help students who are transferred or have a broader engineering background to ensure a seamless transition to the particular focus of the MSc programme, which is considered unique in Cyprus and nearby regions. Finally, there should be more established evaluation criteria for admission for the future case where the number of applicants will exceed the number of available positions. Such procedures should be clear to potential applicants.

The expansion of facilities, classrooms and laboratories will enhance both the opportunities for effective learning, teaching as well as research, which appears to be a concern of existing faculty members. These are comprised of primarily lecturers who firmly believe that have a clearly established career development plan and opportunities to grow within the university. Though, access to research funds is perhaps limited and should be strengthened via the establishment of a small research fund that could aid access to facilities as well as testing equipment, which seems to be necessary for maintaining the high quality of teaching activities and the creation of future research activities that could eventually inform more effective teaching.

There is a healthy environment, good attitude and systematic process at the department and programme level that facilitate student-centred learning. There is good culture and practice of teaching staff – student interaction that help ensure the needs of individual students in their learning are met in a timely manner. Teaching materials are easily accessible and information about assessment is clearly communicated to students. Interconnection between theoretical studies and practical skills is facilitated through exposure to sit visits and laboratory experiments at course levels. Research oriented training is available through dissertation projects. Areas for improvement in terms of student learning experiences could include: arrange allocated time slots for consultation for each course; consider innovative approaches to overcoming the shortfall in availability of experimental facilitates for research oriented projects – for example possible collaboration with other institutions in nearby regions.

The teaching material is appropriate. Both lecturers and students had many positive comments. It does appear that the engagement of lecturers secures student-centred learning. Perhaps the only consideration that the University and Department can make in this area is regarding international students. Such students should be offered the opportunity to have lectures in English. Perhaps recorded lectures can help in this direction. The committee notes that the international students where quite positive about the current arrangement.

In terms of teaching facilities: the small size of the cohort allows for a very efficient use of the current teaching rooms. The number of students in the MSc in this evaluation was, reasonably, very small. It is expected that those numbers will only grow in the following period. Some suggestions were made in terms of adding teaching rooms with computers and computer labs outside the library. The labs are adequate and allow for teaching but there was an identified need for their expansion and the addition of new equipment. As the University and Department plan to expand, the University should help the Department in planning for additional teaching spaces and the addition of larger teaching spaces. The University should also accommodate such an expansion by increasing the size of the Library. However, it should be noted that currently both the teaching staff and the students had many positive comments about the teaching facilities, albeit few comments that were generally covered by the previous suggestions.

The support network of the University is very good. The support officers engage with the students well and support them. They feel that they have the correct tools in their disposals to do so, the feedback from the students is in agreement with those remarks. It is a positive point that the administrative staff appears broadly satisfied with their working environment. Perhaps something that can be considered further is the addition of means to support students in their visa application. Obviously, there is a limit on what the University can do along this direction.

In terms of student progression and selection these follow a well regulated path. The MSc is still very new and hence very reasonably there were few statistics on percentages of pass and fail courses. But overall the Department follows the EU guidelines for recognizing degrees. As the numbers of applicants grow, the faculty should make a formal policy on selection criteria that is included in the website. The Department should consider aspects of diversity in such criteria in accordance with their general policies on the matter. The Department should also formalize their policy for students who need additional courses from the Bachelors before they can attend the offered courses of the MSc. Very reasonably this has not been a priority as the program is very new and the faculty has not come across such a case yet.

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E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*
Yong Lu	
Dimitrios Lignos	
Emmanouil Chatzis	
Marios Tsangaris	
Petros Athinakis	
Click to enter Name	

Date: July 07 2023