Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 4 March 2023

External Evaluation Report

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

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

- **Town: Pafos**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): School of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of History, Politics and International Studies**

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

  In Greek:

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

  In English:

   International Relations and Security (3-5 academic years, 180 ECTS, PhD)

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

- **Programme's status:** New

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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A. Introduction

The evaluation visit took place on Thursday 2 March 2023. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) were grateful for the information that was provided in advance of the meeting. During the visit the EEC had the opportunity to discuss the details of the proposed Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security with a range of academic and administrative staff as well as with students and alumni. The latter included those who had completed a Ph.D at the University on other programmes of study, such as Educational Leadership.

The evaluation visit commenced with an introduction of the key members of staff from Neapolis University Pafos (NUP) and the members of the EEC. The Rector of Neapolis University Pafos provided the EEC with an overview of the achievements and ambitions of the University and the progress that had been made over the last decade. During the visit the EEC had the opportunity to review the wider learning environment, including student social spaces and learning resources such as the library.

In general terms the EEC gained confidence from the existing capacity of NUP to deliver Ph.D degrees given the feedback and discussions with students who had successfully managed to complete research degrees at the University. The University has an understanding of the requirements relating to Ph.D supervision and the Department of History, Politics and International Studies has obviously given a good deal of thought with regard to how it can build its research environment through collaborations with external partners, such as Haifa University and the University of Buckingham. The University and the Department attach importance to academic standards in the context of being aware of academic integrity and the provision of an appropriate administrative structure.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Alasdair Blair	Chair	De Montfort University
Professor Annika Björkdahl	Committee member	Lund University
Professor Georgios Karyotis	Committee member	University of Glasgow
Ms Anna Tzamantaki	Committee member	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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*

- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *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.*

Findings

The Ph.D programme that was presented for review is based primarily on the independent research of the Ph.D student, with only 7.5 credits of the 180 credits being designated for an academic course that focuses on in-class teaching. As such, the design of the programme does not easily sit within the overall description of the requirements of this reporting form.

The EEC recognises that a Ph.D programme has in the broader international Higher Education landscape changed quite considerably over recent decades. This includes a shift towards Ph.D by publication and the emphasis on research training. The latter includes extensive training on research methodology. The EEC considered that the proposed Ph.D Programme in International Relations and Security in the Department of History, Politics and International Studies was light in terms of the formal requirements for research methodology training and that the policies and procedures for ongoing review in terms of student annual reviews were not sufficiently rigorous.

Given that the proposed Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security is yet to be accredited, the EEC made their judgments based on the information on the Department's website for the Ph.D in Modern and Contemporary History as well as the information relating to Ph.D study on the Neapolis University Pafos website. The EEC considered the information presented to be appropriate in terms of giving an indication of the content of the programme and key aspects relating to student supervision and the student experience. Broader aspects relating to such issues as pass rates were less relevant in the context of a Ph.D programme of study.

In the broader presentations and discussions during the site visit, and from the material that was available in advance as well as that being consulted from the University's website, it is evident that there are procedures relating to the wider quality assurance framework. The EEC were reassured

from the discussions with existing and former Ph.D students about the level of support provided by the University. Many of the Ph.D students that we spoke to were already in employment and therefore aspects relating to future employability were less of an immediate concern to them. Given the nature of the independent study of a Ph.D programme, the EEC considered that the information relating to annual monitoring and review of student progression could have been more detailed in terms of the requirements from Ph.D students.

Strengths
- External collaborations as evidenced by Memorandums of Understanding with Haifa University and the University of Buckingham to support Ph.D supervisions and to develop staff expertise in supervisions.
- A commitment and desire by the Department of History, Politics and International Studies to develop their postgraduate suite of programmes into more research degree provisions that relate to student demand and which is part of a focus on developing a stronger research environment.
- Strong student endorsements from existing and former Ph.D students at NUP relating to the benefits of the Ph.D programmes at the University.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- The EEC considered that the Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security would benefit from more focus on research training and the provision of training that is embedded throughout the programme.
- The EEC considered that some of the wider support and training for Ph.D students was more of an ad hoc nature and that there was a need for clearer guidelines in terms of how students and staff would be developed.

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	Partially 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.*

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- *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.*

Findings

The structure and the content of the Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security was not clearly presented to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) and the material received in advance was insufficient to properly evaluate the programme. Thus, it is not clear that the process of teaching and learning will support students' individual and social development. The programme learning outcomes are detailed and ambitious. The requirement for being awarded a Ph.D are clearly outlined. The progress of the Ph.D candidate is monitored through annual progress reports. The progress report that Ph.D candidates are to submit is at a minimum 500 words. Writing samples from the thesis such as draft chapters, conference papers, draft articles are not required for the monitoring process. The Ph.D student is required to have published two peer-reviewed journal articles on topics from their thesis in Q1, Q2, or Q3 journals. There is a rubric for evaluating the Ph.D thesis and defense of the thesis. The programme requires completion of a 7.5 ECTS research methods course. The Ph.D supervision will be conducted in collaboration with external staff. The potential candidates for the programme seem to be practitioners, thus practice and theory may be integrated in a natural way.

Strengths
- External collaboration in supervisions broadens the expertise and experience of potential supervisors. The research-active external staff also provides an important element to the research environment of the Department of History, Politics and International Studies.
- The Erasmus Key Action 2 application has identified some of the current weaknesses that the Department of History, Politics, and International Studies will have to address to be able to offer a credible and solid Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security. For example, it will be key to identify gaps and needs in the security studies curricula, to incorporate new approaches to security studies.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security will offer one 7.5 ECTS research methods course. The material provided by the Department and the presentation of the Department does not outline in any detail the research methods course, thus the EEC cannot assess the methods, pedagogy, content, bibliography, assignments, or assessments.
- The EEC found that the Department needs to develop a full Ph.D programme with compulsory and optional courses on theory and method, with study plans, content, methods of delivery, assignments, bibliography etc.
- The EEC suggests that the Department develop a process for exchanging best practices in Ph.D supervision between external and NUP staff, which is not clearly outlined. There is a need for less experienced supervisors to undertake pedagogical training on supervising Ph.D. candidates.
- The Department must ensure an active research environment. Existing research evidence that the seminar is key to foster innovative and original research, to ensure an active research environment, as well as opportunities for Ph.D students to practice in presenting research. Thus, regularly running seminar series is an indication of an active research environment. The EEC suggests that such series needs to be developed.
- The requirement to publish two peer-reviewed journal articles on topics from their thesis in Q1, Q2, or Q3 journals may not benefit the Ph.D candidate as the Ph.D thesis is not a Ph.D by publication but a research monograph. The risk is that the Ph.D candidate will be pressured to publish their research in less important journals with lower impact-factors to ensure they meet this particular requirement. The programme learning outcomes emphasis on forecasting international affairs limits the options Ph.D candidates have in selecting the research design of the Ph.D research and thesis.

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	Non-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.*

Findings

The Ph.D study programme is designed and intended to be launched after the process of accreditation has come to a successful conclusion. Hence, the report, application and findings do not concern staff experiences with an existing programme and its impact on their own professional development. During the on-site visit, staff provided some useful information about how Ph.D supervision works in other NUP programmes and the Committee also heard from current and recent Ph.D students, who overall expressed strong satisfaction with the levels of support offered during their studies.

Permanent staff in the Department of History, Politics and International Studies have a wide range of research and teaching expertise, particularly in traditional security issues, such as in relation to strategy, intelligence and aspects that concern defence and military challenges. It was explained to the Committee that this reflects the local and national context of a divided island that is geopolitically proximate to multiple conflict zones.

Since the End of the Cold War, the field of International Relations and Security Studies has expanded to include non-military, non-state-centric and more critical parameters, which are increasingly attracting more attention. These areas feature in the staffing profile of the Department, albeit far less prominently, with expertise in energy security and human security, among others.

Processes of recruitment and promotion appear to be compliant with regulations but need to be better communicated with staff.. Mentoring of junior staff is practiced, but on an ad hoc basis. Newly-recruited staff noted their satisfaction with the onboarding and training practices in place with regard to the delivery of teaching activities, which facilitates a smooth integration into the University. However, the training provisions available for staff to support research and supervision of prospective Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) were unclear and require further development.

This is crucial for the successful launch of a Ph.D programme, particularly since many of the permanent academic staff do not have prior experience in Ph.D supervision to completion. The Department expressed its commitment to move in this direction, with the provision of compulsory and certified training on how to supervise PGR students. It was also noted that its established networks and partnerships with External institutions (e.g. Haifa; Buckingham) offer opportunities to develop supervisory teams that include both Early Career and more experienced members, which will also facilitate knowledge transfer and career development for permanent staff in NUP.

During the visit, staff at various stages of professional development, expressed high levels of overall satisfaction with the conditions of their employment and enthusiasm about the prospect of being involved in PGR supervision. What the impact of this on their workload will be was less clear, and would also depend on the number of students they would be asked to supervise. The Committee was informed that each member of staff would supervise a maximum of 5 theses.

The Committee noted a gender imbalance in the profile of permanent staff - the ratio of female staff is significantly lower. The number of senior female staff is also disproportionate, which may reveal structural or unconscious biases.

Staff in the Department are research active, which will support PGR supervision. The Committee heard that there is scope and ambition to strengthen the research environment to create the facilitating conditions for Ph.D students to present their work, interact with each other and staff, and develop necessary skills for a successful academic career (e.g. on how to publish etc). The ability of permanent staff to attract externally funded projects, publish in journals with a high impact factor and engage in international collaborations will set the standards for Ph.D students as well, and strengthen, overall, the synergies between research and supervision.

The Department is still developing the links between research and supervision, which presents some substantive gaps in expertise or experience. The methodological expertise (e.g. in qualitative/quantitative methods; data collection/analysis; ethics) of permanent staff was not very clear from the academic CVs circulated. The Department appears to have restricted capacity, in terms of staff experience in supervision and research methods, to support Ph.D projects. This may be partly offset by its collaborations with external institutions and supervisors. The research environment, as well as the extent to which there are opportunities for staff/students to develop the required skills to supervise/conduct primary empirical research, was not clear in the documentation circulated prior to the visit, and there was limited time to clarify these elements during the on-site visit.

Strengths
- The Department has strong links with practitioners in international relations and security, both local and international, which can be an asset for conducting and disseminating research findings from Ph.D projects, and may also open pathways to policy impact.
- The Committee heard that colleagues in the Department are participating in an Erasmus+ Key Action 2 collaborative grant application on Diversity and Inclusivity in Security Studies. This may be identified as an example of good practice, which would enrich the research environment, support staff development and expand the focus and expertise of the Department towards more critical dimensions.
- Strong testimonials from Ph.D students/graduates from NUP.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Careful consideration is required as to how supervisory teams will be allocated. It should be compulsory that at least one of the three members of the supervisory team has prior experience with Ph.D supervision to completion. If this is provided by an external collaborator/ supervisor, it should be compulsory that at least one member of the supervisory team is a permanent member of staff at NUP. It is recommended that one member of the supervisory team is an Early Career Scholar, to facilitate career and personal development.

- Consideration needs to be given to recruitment strategies which address the current gender imbalance of staff.

- All supervisors should receive regular and compulsory training on the pedagogical aspects of PGR supervision. Further consideration is also required of the ethical aspects of conducting Ph.D research, which extends from how students engage with potentially high-risk subject matters to the ability of supervisors to provide guidance and support in this process.

- Further consideration is required as to the methodological expertise of staff, and how it will be matched to the requirements of supporting the needs of a Ph.D project.

- To enrich the research environment at NUP, staff should be encouraged and supported to apply for external grants, following the example of the Erasmus + application noted above. The Department should also establish a regular research seminar series, which will integrate PGR students in addition to the current ad hoc activities it organises.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially 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*

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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.*

Findings

The applicants to the Ph.D programme will need to fill out a particular form, submit a research proposal, and a CV. The admission criteria and the process of admission to the Ph.D programme in International Relations and Security are clearly presented in the guide for the Ph.D programme. The selection of Ph.D candidates will be done by a competent coordination committee. The student will upon completion of the Ph.D thesis and a successful defense of the thesis be awarded a Ph.D. The Ph.D thesis will be graded with one of the following grades: Distinction, Excellent, Very Good and Good.

Strengths
- The admission criteria are presented.
- The process of admission is transparent.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- The EEC considered that the annual progression report could be more rigorous given that the overall award is based on a single final thesis and there is no interim award. The EEC would recommend that in the annual progress report the reviewing panel are presented with a substantive chapter or other output, e.g. publication, that emanates from the Ph.D project. This will also flag concerns about student progression at an early stage.

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	Partially 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.*

Findings

The EEC had the opportunity to review the physical and electronic resources provided by the University, including library resources. The EEC were not given specific information relating to rooms or resources that were specifically available for research students and therefore it was less clear as to the exact provision of learning resources that were differentiated between Masters and Ph.D students.

The mode of learning for the Ph.D is primarily that of independent study, with at present only one course that is provided in relation to research methodology. The research methods course was scheduled for online delivery. It was not clear what the exact training would be provided for Ph.D students and the modes of delivery that might capture different types of student.

The EEC would have welcomed more detail in relation to how the learning resources for the Ph.D programme would be developed, such as in relation to the financial support for research students, the investment in specific academic journals and resources, including such books as on how to be a research student. In general terms there was a lack of clarity with regard to the resource provision for Ph.D students and how they differentiate from taught postgraduate students.

While the EEC were made aware of the wider research environment in terms of conferences, the EEC felt that there was a requirement for more specific information. This includes expectations in terms of engagement with research networks as well as support and training in writing and presenting research findings. The latter is important given the requirements in the programme to give international conference papers and write journal articles. However, it was not clear how students would be supported to achieve such outcomes and the inference was that students would be supported in a more informal manner. The EEC therefore had some concerns that the Ph.D programme had requirements in terms of conference papers and presentations where it was not

clear how students would be supported (both financially and academically) to meet these expectations. The EEC were also surprised that in the published information relating to the Ph.D programme that there was insufficient emphasis on the importance of research training and development, including skill development.

In the discussions with the Department and the University, the inference was that the learning environment was one where it was the responsibility for the student to organise supervision meetings as opposed to the supervisor. While the EEC recognised the significance of the Ph.D as an independent study programme, the Committee considered that there was a need for a stronger sense of expectation and obligation in terms of the Department's responsibilities.

Strengths
- Pleasant teaching and research environment, with committed members of staff.
- Positive endorsement from current and recent Ph.D students at NUP.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- There is a requirement for the documentation relating to Ph.D supervision, training and development to provide more granular detail and also to provide a sense of the scaffolding of the support being provided over the duration of the degree programme.
- There is a need to ensure that the documentation for the Ph.D reflects the contemporary learning environment. For example, Ph.D student are requested to submit their thesis on a compact disk. This is an old data storage format and most students will not have computers that have a compact disk drive.
- There is a need to make it clear what the exact research environment is for research students. For example, do research students have access to dedicated study space? Do research students have access to financial support?

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*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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> - *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.*

Findings

Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission to the programme in International Relations and Security, as well as how the selection procedures are defined. The criteria for admission require a post-graduate degree, a research proposal that is indicating original research, and a CV. However, it does not require grades above average or similar.

The stages of the doctoral degree programme are vague and only distinguish between 7,5 ECTS research methods course, the research phase, and the writing of thesis. The guide for the Ph.D programme clarifies the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme (3-5 years) with the possibility for extension in exceptional individual cases. The criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree are presented.

The final examination of the Ph.D thesis and the defence follow the rubric evaluation assessment that is clearly outlined. It also sets out the requirement of publishing two peer reviewed articles on topics of the Ph.D thesis in Q1, Q2 or Q3 international journals, and conference presentations.

However, the programme does not specify the examination forms for the research methods course.

Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the Ph.D proposal and the dissertation are vague. For example, the chapters that are required, the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography are not specified. The minimum word limit is not specified but the maximum word limit is 120 000 words. The requirements in terms of 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 are not outlined.

The composition, the procedure, and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are not outlined beyond that the Ph.D candidates research should be in line with or closely related to the supervisor's expertise. The procedure for selecting the members of the examining committee is not clear. The duties of the supervisors include: take part in regular meetings, give feedback on annual report, support the writing of the thesis. The maximum number of Ph.D students per supervisor is five.

Strengths
- The rubric evaluation of Ph.D thesis and defence is comprehensive.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The requirement to publish two peer-reviewed journal articles on topics from the Ph.D thesis in Q1, Q2, or Q3 journals may not benefit the Ph.D candidate as the Ph.D thesis is not a Ph.D by publication but a research monograph. The EEC sees a risk in that the Ph.D candidate will be pressured to publish their research in less important journal with lower impact-factor to ensure they meet this particular requirement.
- The stages of the doctoral degree programme need to be outlined more clearly and not only distinguish between 7,5 ECTS research methods course, the research phase, and the writing of thesis.
- The Department may also want to reconsider the presentation and interpretation of "original research" in a Ph.D thesis.
- The Programme may also need to consider research ethics in more detail, including in relation to research methods.
- The EEC suggests that the Ph.D programme outlines the composition, the procedure, and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee as well as for the examining committee. The Ph.D programme requires that the Ph.D student will submit the Ph.D thesis on a CD. This needs to be updated to reflect contemporary technology.

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	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Partially compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The present report highlights areas of strength and areas where we identify room for further improvement.

The Committee was impressed with the overall ambitions of Neapolis University Pafos to develop a Ph.D degree programme in International Relations and Security that offers significant opportunities for potential students to upskill, as well as making a significant contribution to the local and regional economy and society. However, the Committee considered that there were a

number of weaknesses in the proposal that were not fully clarified in the discussions during the site visit.

The EEC were concerned with the capability and the capacity of Department of History, Politics and International Studies to move towards the awarding of the Ph.D in the context of the current resources available and the support to be provided to students and staff. In general terms, the EEC considered that the information provided in advance of the visit and also the discussions on the day demonstrated the ambitions of the Department with regard to the Ph.D programme, but were less clear on the details relating to how students and staff would be supported. This specifically relates to the research training provided for students, the nature of the detail required for progression reports, and the level of confidence in relation to the provision of support for staff to ensure that they had the necessary support and skills to enable them to be successful Ph.D supervisors. The EEC considered that the presentations in relation to the Ph.D were light in detail in terms of the technicalities of supervision and were at times blurred by more ambitious language that was not always supported by substance.

The Committee were particularly concerned about the way in which the degree programme had insufficient attention to research methodology and an absence of clear content and structure in the programme to train the Ph.D candidates. This is not up to the required standards.

Nonetheless, the Committee did gain confidence from the interactions with staff and students on the day, including the testimonies from recently completed Ph.D students. The Committee considers that the issues that are identified in this report are significant, but they are nonetheless within the capacity and capability of the Department to address with proper reflection and consideration.

The Committee was grateful for the support provided by the University and the Department on the day and the materials that were distributed in advance. We are grateful to the contributions from staff and students, which was a pleasure to meet, and are particularly grateful for the excellent support from the CYQAA, in particular Emily Alexandridou.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Alasdair Blair	
Professor Annika Björkdahl	
Professor Georgios Karyotis	
Ms Anna Tzamantaki	

Date: 4 March 2023