ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar// enqa.

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 06/06/2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Theological School of the Church of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

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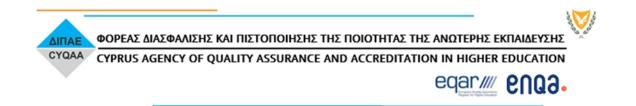 Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Εφαρμογές Ψυχολογίας και Συμβουλευτικής στην Κοινότητα (2 Έτη/120 ECTS, MA)
  In English:

  Applications of Psychology and Counselling in the Community (2 Years/120 ECTS, MA)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek

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

- **Concentrations (if any):** N/A

  In Greek: N/A
  In English: N/A

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

    - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
		Choose level of compliance:
Three minor areas for improvement are recommended. One is to consider clarifying (in the programme literature, for example) that the programme is focused on *skill* rather than on *knowledge* (that is to say, that the primary graduate attribute will be practical skills that students are able to make use of in their careers).	The recommendation of the ERC to clarify (for example, in the programme literature) that the programme is focused on skill rather than on knowledge (that is to say, that the primary graduate attribute will be practical skills that students are able to make use of in their careers) is evident throughout the description of each course, while the assessment of students (e.g. assignments) makes it clear that the MA focuses on skills rather than knowledge. The recommendation of the EEC has been adopted in the Graduate Study Guide.	
		Choose level of compliance:
The second improvement is to take under consideration some of the language used in the modules and in their descriptions. The committee acknowledge that our impression of language used is based on the translated application (the original application was in Greek; 2 committee members read the English translation) and that this suggestion should be taken in that light. Some suggestions would be to avoid module titles like *Individual Differences and Deviations* (*Individual Differences* is fine) or *Juvenile Delinquency* (what about *Adolescent Development*)? Terms like "retardation" (in module 610 descriptor) are also best avoided ("learning difficulties", for example).	The recommendation of the EEC to avoid module titles like *Individual Differences and Deviations* or *Juvenile Delinquency* has been adopted. The *Individual Differences and Deviations* section is renamed to **Individual Differences**. The Juvenile *Delinquency* section is renamed **Juvenile Delinquency, Developmental Challenges and Prevention.** Terms such as "retardation" (in descriptive section 610) are renamed "**special learning/emotional needs**". Note that the term in the original Greek Application is noted as «Νοητική υστέρηση» (not rendered in Greek	

	exactly as retardation), recorded in subsection B as follows: **Β. Ατομικές διαφορές πέραν του φυσιολογικού** «Νοητικές ικανότητες και μάθηση: Νοητική υστέρηση. Διαταραχή ελλειμματικής προσοχής και υπερκινητικότητας. Άνοια.» It is recorded as ***Νοητική υστέρηση***, which could be translated into English as Cognitive Disability instead of Mental Retardation, which may not be politically correct. Of course, in Greek, the term "Learning Difficulties" conveys a different meaning from the term "Mental Retardation", but as noted by the EEA, these are "minor areas for improvement", which in any case existed before, but were not identified during the initial evaluation of the MA (2019). The following recommendation of the EEC has been adopted: Instead of the term " ***Νοητική υστέρηση - Cognitive disability"***, the term **"Special learning/emotional needs"** is adopted as a more comprehensive, precise and concise term.	
Third, students interested in pursuing future research opportunities would benefit from access to an elective module providing a broader coverage of psychology (we understand that a suitable model may be found on the undergraduate syllabus).	Students interested in pursuing future research opportunities can benefit from access to an elective module that provides broader coverage of psychology (which, as the EEC notes, an appropriate model exists in the undergraduate syllabus). In the undergraduate syllabus, access to the course "**ΘΕΟ.411 Θέματα Ψυχολογίας - THEO.411 Topics in Psychology**" is provided, which can be taken by students who would like to benefit from such access. The recommendation of the EEC for those students who would like to	Choose level of compliance:

	benefit from such access has been adopted in the Graduate Study Guide.	

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

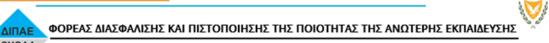| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The connection with placements that are held within the community would benefit from some further scaffolding. This would be to ensure that students are provided with appropriate support and supervision whilst engaging with community organizations. As discussed, checks of such work do occur but this is not formally recorded. A process should therefore be created so that a formal record of the institution's approval process is transparent and recorded.	The recommendation of the EEC has been adopted by recording the process in the official record "GUIDE TO COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE" (cf. **Annex 1**) where the process of approval of the institution is transparently recorded and the creation of a relevant official form to record is recorded, in a more transparent way, with the appropriate support and supervision for students, while working with community organisations. (cf. **Annex 1** in general. In particular: FORM 1: COOPERATION AGREEMENT, p. 26-30 FORM 6: STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT Page. 36 FORM 7: EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE (SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION) p. 37-38 FORM 10: PROTECTION AND SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT UNDER TRAINING p. 41-42 Cf. also GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION OF EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY, IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT AGENCIES p. 44-46 See also **Annex 2**, INTERNAL DOCUMENT FOR THE SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF A HOST ORGANISATION FOR EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY)	Choose level of compliance:

	Regarding the "appropriate support and supervision of students while working with community organizations", the students' protection and especially the confidentiality of information, see at **Annex 3** samples of "Confidentiality Agreement" that have already been used	
It is recommended that dual roles are considered further within some of the work related to the programme. For instance, it is recommended that individuals do not evaluate their own skills work within research projects and that programme staff do not take on supervisory roles of clinical work.	Under the procedures in place, individuals do not assess their own skills in the context of research projects. As documented by the EEC in the Programme Strengths: "the programme combines a variety of teaching formats and assessments. Such an approach enables the assessment of a diverse skill set of the students on the programme. The assessed work is all reviewed by multiple examiners. This helps to ensure consistency in the assessment of student work." Programme staff do not undertake supervisory roles of clinical work (The supervision that takes place is in no way related to clinical supervision). (cf. **Annex 1** in general and in particular GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION OF EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY, IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT AGENCIES p. 44-45)	Choose level of compliance:

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The unique status of the School and the programme may make recruitment difficult (for example, many research active psychologists will require access to laboratory facilities, which are not currently provided). This also means that some staff may be teaching outside their research strengths. Within the limitations of the PITE law, it may be sensible to pursue co-appointments with other institutions for some categories of staff.	Within the limitations of the PITE law, the recommendation "to pursue co-appointments with other institutions for some categories of staff" is adopted, to the extent that this would be feasible.	Choose level of compliance:

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The Committee recommends supporting the School's and the Programme's recognition in the local community by continuing to advertise its compliance with national and international standards for higher education.	It is particularly commendable that the EEC explicitly acknowledged the **compliance of the Programme "with national and international standards for higher education"**, and recommended that this be promoted to the local community to back up " supporting the School's and the Programme's recognition ". The School's MA Titles are already recognised by the relevant bodies and agencies where they have been submitted by titled graduates (The Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KY.S.A.T.S.) https://www.kysats.ac.cy/index.php/en/, Educational Service Committee https://www.eey.gov.cy/, DOATAP – Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center Home Page – ΔΟΑΤΑΠ (doatap.gr), ΔΟΑΤΑΠ – Διεπιστημονικός Οργανισμός Αναγνώρισης Τίτλων Ακαδημαϊκών & Πληροφόρησης (doatap.gr)). The recommendation of the EEC has already been adopted in the Study Guide.	Choose level of compliance:
The graduate students' profile makes it difficult to take advantage of mobility opportunities.	We agree with the EEA that "the graduate students' profile makes it difficult to take advantage of mobility opportunities". It is not feasible for MA students (e.g. someone working) to take advantage of mobility opportunities and opt for Semester mobility. There is, however, the possibility for 5 - 30 days mobility which makes mobility at the MA level more feasible. (see **Annex 4** - Action Plan)	Choose level of compliance:

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
As the coordinators of the programme already acknowledge, the School needs to employ a full-time/permanent member of IT staff in the near future. This will (a) support staff and students with technology issues and (b) provide support in cases of cyber attacks, which have become a common phenomenon in universities. Currently the School is outsourcing this service.	As mentioned, during the evaluation, from the very beginning the School outsourced this service (IT). With the gradual development of the School, successive attempts were made to recruit a permanent IT staff member (e.g. <u>one (1) post of Information Systems Officer - IT at the School of Theology of the Church of Cyprus (theo.ac.cy)</u>). In fact, a permanent IT staff member was recruited from 14/02/2022 to 16/05/2022 (cf. confidential "Εργάνη" table. ==*Caution - rights reservation: Submitted to the CYQAA within the framework of the relevant legislation and the relevant contractual obligations of the Foundation, but the disclosure of the data is strictly prohibited*==.) The institution has responded to this issue directly, as it was already part of the strategic planning for the development and staffing of the institution. Thus, on 22.4.2024, a new partnership between the Faculty and a part-time/(IT) staff member was initiated for a fixed term, with the aim of finalising this partnership and converting it into a full-time contract.	Choose level of compliance:
The School is part of the ERASMUS+ programme and encourages students to participate in international exchanges. Given that a large proportion of the MA students in full-time employment or mature students, there is low	We are pleased to see that the EEC finds that the School encourages students to participate in international exchanges under the ERASMUS+ programme. We also agree with the EEC's finding that "given that a large proportion	Choose level of compliance:

interest in participating in this programme.	of MA students are working full-time or are mature students, there is little interest in participating in this programme". Another reason that makes student mobility at MA level difficult is the uniqueness of a programme of study. Why would one do semester mobility to an MA that hardly corresponds to the MA one has chosen to attend, or why would one "miss" a course offered by the MA one has chosen! As mentioned above, there is the possibility for 5 - 30 days mobility which makes mobility at the level of the MA more feasible. As noted by the EEC, the T.S.C.C already encourages students to take advantage of this possibility. (cf. **Annex 4** Action Plan)	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
   (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

B. Conclusions and final remarks

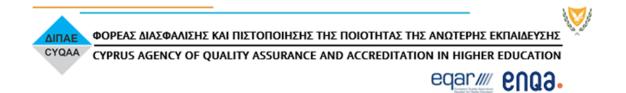| Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The committee would like to thank the School for its warm welcome and hospitality. Special mention should go to the administrative staff, who orchestrated a flawless visit, with access to all relevant information easily available.	The School would like to thank the EEC both for its response to the reception and hospitality as well as for the management of the evaluation process and for the extremely positive and praiseworthy comments and observations regarding the institution, its infrastructure and the MA.	Choose level of compliance:
We were impressed by the dedication of the staff we met to this unique programme. Thought has clearly gone into creating a degree designed to be pragmatically useful to those who might need to advise, or offer support, to those in their charge-for example, teachers, army members, and priests. The strongest evidence of the success of this approach came from students and graduates of the programme, who were able to very clearly articulate what they had gained from their studies. We formed the opinion that the skills gained could make a useful contribution to Cypriot society. Although the course clearly has a church-informed basis, the applications of the skills learned were not strongly limited by this.	During the visit of the EEC, the staff of T.S.C.C. and the students and alumni had an excellent presentation of their potential, infrastructure, procedures and support of the MA. We are particularly pleased that all of this was felt and evaluated with extremely positive feedback from the EEC.	Choose level of compliance:
One minor issue with the programme was some of the language choices made (NB., as earlier, we appreciate that this may be a matter of translation), addressed in §1 above. We also note that it is urgently necessary to hire an IT professional to maintain the School's network and mitigate cyber risks. A further recommendation is to adopt procedures that ensure student safety, and accountability for their welfare, when they are acting in the community in the School's name (see §2).	The Institution responded to the management of the issues that were raised by the EEC as minor issues. (cf. above, p. 3-5 of the Response, for the relevant references to §1 of the Report). In particular, with regard to the language choices (which, as the EEA points out, are related to translation), we note that the original text in Greek prevails. Two members of the EEC were English-	Choose level of compliance:

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enqa.

	speaking and two members were Greek-speaking. It should be noted that the terms highlighted by the EEC were already in use (since the original external evaluation - 2019), without any issue having been raised.

Although this is indeed a minor issue, the institution has adopted the recommendations and has already made changes (see above, pp. 3-5 of the Response).

On the issue of recruiting a permanent IT staff member, the institution has also responded, as this was already part of the institution's strategic plan for development and staffing. (cf. above, p. 10 of the Response, for the proposal to resolve the issue already adopted).

With regard to the further recommendation of the EEC (cf. §2 of the Report) " to adopt procedures that ensure student safety, and accountability for their welfare, when they are acting in the community in the School's name " see above, in general, pages 6-7 of the Response and in particular pages 41-42 of Form 10 of **Annex 1** and also 44-46 of the same Annex, as well as **Annex 3**. | |
| Ultimately, what the creators of this programme have done is to identify a need (or perhaps a "gap in the market") and to create a unique proposition with which to fill it. On the basis of the present review, we believe that the effort has been quite successful. For those who, explicitly, are not seeking a professional degree, but who would benefit from upskilling in emotional support, this is a well-constructed, pragmatically-oriented, programme. | The conclusion of the EEC best rewards the five-year offer of the MA and prescribes its successful transition into the second five-year period as a well-built, realistically oriented unique MA proposal. | Choose level of compliance: |

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Olga Solomontos-Kountouri	• Professor • Director of Academic Affairs • Academic Head of the Department of Psychology Studies - MA "Applications of Psychology and Counselling in the Community (2 Years / 120 ECTS, MA)" • Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of the PGPS Psychology • Member of IQC	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)
Archimandrite Gregorios Ioannides	• Associate professor • Academic Head of the Department of Theological Studies – GPS & PGPS • Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Faculty of Psychology • Member of IQC	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)
Protopresbyter Kyprianos Kountouris	• Assistant Professor • Director (President of IQC) • Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Faculty of Psychology	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)
Mar;ia Pavlou	• Assistant Professor • Academic Internal Quality Assurance Officer • Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Faculty of Psychology • Member of IQC	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)
Chrysovalantis Kyriakou	• Lecturer • Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Faculty of Psychology • Member of IQC	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)
Maria Petridou	• Lecturer • Member of the Coordinating Committee of the Faculty of Psychology • Member of IQC	(HAS BEEN SIGNED *)

*   *The Answer with the original signatures is submitted separately to the DIPAE Agency.*

Date: 04.06.2024