Doc. 300.1.2

07.14.318.079

Higher Education Institution's Response

E-Learning Programme of Study

Date: Date

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Frederick University
- **Campus: Limassol**
- **School: Education and Social Sciences**
- **Department / Sector: Psychology and Social Sciences**
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme

In Greek:

Εφαρμογές Ψυχολογίας στη Σχολική Κοινότητα (3/4 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90/110 ECTS, Μάστερ (MSc), Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:

Applications of Psychology in the School Community (3/4 academic semesters, 90/110 ECTS, Master (MSc), Distance Learning)

Language(s) of instruction: Greek

- **Specializations (if any):**
  In Greek:

  In English:

Programme's Status: New

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

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.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*

  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*

  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*

  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

> 1.a. **Policy for quality assurance**
>
> (i) More frequent training sessions for staff and students on quality assurance processes could enhance understanding and involvement.
>
> (ii) According to European standards, external stakeholders should be involved in quality assurance. Although this happens at the university board level, it does not happen at lower bodies of quality assurance implementation.
>
> (iii) An ethics board for thesis route students should be put in place to ensure that their applications for research are meeting ethics standards. An ethics component should also be added in the research methods course.

Department's Response:

(i) For the University and School's postgraduate DL programs, scheduled training sessions are conducted every academic year. For the newcomers, the training takes place via self-paced course. Additionally, a series of both mandatory and optional seminars for faculty members cover teaching methodologies, assessment practices, and the use of new technologies in education [Please click here for the Personal Professional and Professional Development at Frederick University]. Please click here for the trainings that offered during the academic year 2023-22024.

Frederick University ensures that appropriate training and support is provided for the academic staff and that this training is enhanced in the light of technological and educational developments. The University gives great emphasis on staff training and development. Since the introduction of Distance Learning programs trainings are provided on a regular basis. The Distance Learning Committee (DLC) in collaboration with the Learning Support Unit (LSU) and the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching (CIET) organize and deliver regular training sessions and information days for the academic staff involved in distance teaching. Specifically, the initial basic training for new distance learning instructors it is scheduled and delivered at the beginning of every

semester. Follow up training sessions throughout the semesters are also organized based on the needs and demands of the new as well as experienced academic staff in distance teaching and learning. Additionally, various sessions are scheduled in light of any technological and pedagogical developments and advancements. Finally, information and training sessions are organized and delivered within the academic year, when considered necessary and upon request on a personal as well as group/program level basis. In order to better support the academic staff, a DL Instructors Portal, a DL Instructors Induction Course and Sample Distance Learning Courses are developed in LMS. Educational materials, videos, tutorials and guidelines are developed by the , CIET and DLU (Distance Learning Unit) and are provided to instructors (via the aforementioned portals and courses). The academic staff involved in distance learning programs is also welcomed to attend any other professional development training is provided by the University. The DLC in collaboration with CIET will continue to regularly organize professional development trainings for the DL instructors (newcomers and experienced), as well as to pedagogically and technically support them.

Internal quality assurance is regularly discussed in the department council, school council, and Senate meetings. Furthermore, academic staff is involved in preparing reports related to the University's quality assurance process, and the comments, and suggestions the head of the department receives from the dean and the quality assurance committee is presented in the departmental meetings. Student involvement is ensured through their participation in various University bodies. Finally, a proposal has been submitted to P2DF to conduct a seminar on quality assurance at a broader level.

(ii) Although the program was designed and submitted before the policy requiring the involvement of external stakeholders in program design was implemented, we agree with the EEC comments. Although this is a new programme that has not been accredited and offered yet, there are provisions for the integrations of the stakeholders into all the levels of the programme's operations. During the programmes design, meetings with industry stakeholders were conducted in order to gauge the market needs for the offering of the programme and take into account the required theoretical knowledge and skills required for successfurl employment upon graduation. Furthermore, the Department has collaborations for practical placements, mentorships etc for the other programmes of

studies it offers and upon successful accreditation these collaborations will extend to the new programme with all the relevant MOU's signed. Additionally, at the Department level, the Departmental Advisory Committee operates, that is composed by one (1) member of the teaching staff and five (5) stakeholders (academics from abroad, students, graduates, industry professionals etc). Their input is valuable for identifying strengths and weaknesses of the programmes of the Department and the improvement of the quality of education student receives. Additionally, similar of what is done to other Department programmes, students are encouraged to conduct industry based thesis in collaboration with the various stakeholders of the Department and stakeholders are invited to be panel members during the student's dissertation defense to offer their valuable insights and expertise.

(iii) In accordance with article 3 (1) of the Law N. 150 (I) /2001 The Bioethics (Establishment and Function of the National Committee) all postgraduate research proposals are submitted to the Cyprus National Bioethics Commitee (https://www.bioethics.gov.cy/). This ensures that postgraduate research meets ethical standards. It should be noted that a faculty member of Frederick University is a Member of the Cyprus National Bioethics Commitee.

1.b. **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

(i) The qualification awarded needs to be clearly specified and communicated. As is, the program does not allow students to become certified school psychologists but this information cannot be found in the application package.

(ii) The programme does not meet minimum requirements for a school psychology programme. If you decide to keep the name "School Psychology" you need to increase the minimum requirement to 120 ECTS including a minimum of 1000 hours of practical training of which 500 hours have to be an integral part of the study programme. An alternative would be to give a different name to the programme (e.g., Psychological Studies in Education; Psychology of Teaching and Learning). Note that

if you choose to change the name of the programme it cannot be called Educational Psychology, because that would require changes in the programme.

(iii) In its current form, the programme cannot be offered in both Greek and English. EEC feels not enough information has been provided to evaluate a programme that might be delivered in English. The content of the provided course outlines is geared towards Greek students. New course outlines would need to be submitted for the programme to be suitable for English speaking students.

(iv) The programme is biased towards the social aspect of school psychology. Other important components of school psychology are missing (e.g., ethical and professional issues in psychological practice, cognitive neuroscience). The programme would also benefit from a course or courses on statistics since some students may choose to do a thesis.

(v) Even though this is a new program, the bibliography in several courses is outdated and focuses mostly on work published in Greek. EEC recommends that more recent and international literature is incorporated into the course outlines. Instructors should also update the course on Research Methods from APA 6th to 7th edition and use APA 7 style to list required or recommended bibliography in other courses.

(vi) The programme does not benefit much from external expertise. Increase the number of external collaborators (e.g., visiting professors) to offer a wider selection of courses that will cover a broader range of topics.

(vii) Neither students nor external stakeholders were involved in the process of the programme design. A formal consultation process with these bodies should be put in place.

(viii) Introduce more structured feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.

1.b. Department's Response:

(i) Frederick's University policy, is to always clearly communicate everything related to its programmes to interested applicants. To avoid possible confusion about whether the program is applied and not leading to certification as a school psychologist, accepting the EEC's recommendation we suggest changing the name of the programme to:

"Applications of Psychology in the School Community" (Εφαρμογές Ψυχολογίας στη Σχολική Κοινότητα).

(ii) The programme submitted is not an applied school psychology programme where the provisions mentioned need to be in place. We understand and accept the remarks of the EEC and suggest changing the title to "Applications of Psychology in the School Community" (Εφαρμογές Ψυχολογίας στη Σχολική Κοινότητα). Since the title of the program is not School Psychology, and it is clear that it is not an applied school psychology program, and does not need to meet the minimum requirements for a school psychology program, there is no need to increase the ECTS or the hours of practical training.

(iii) We accept the EEC comments. The current submitted programme will only be offered in **Greek**. Should the University decide to offer the program in English a new application will be submitted to the CYQAA for evaluation and accreditation.

(iv) With the change in the program's title, it becomes clear that the program is not an applied school psychology program, and thus, graduates will not practice as certified school psychologists, hence a course on ethical and professional issues for applied school psychologists is not needed.

Concerning the suggestion of a course in cognitive neuroscience, we have introduce a new elective course: DLSPS516, titled "Cognitive Neuroscience". Please refer to Annex 1 for the Revised Course Outline. A call for a visiting professor in the field of Neuropsychology has been issued. The elective course in Neuropsychology will be taught by a visiting instructor selected from the established registry (https://frederick.ac.cy/fu_documents/fu_jobs/24/10.2.pdf). The deadline for the submission of CVs by the interested applicants was extended to the 15th of June 2024. The Department is currently evaluating the applications received and prospective applicants will be notified.

Additionally, the Department already has a permanent staff (Neuropsychologist), Dr. Marios Kittenis, and Cognitive Psychologist Dr Stefani Pantelidou (for Dr Kittenis' CV, please refer to Annex 2).

The statistics course 'DLSPS503 - Research Methodology' is compulsory for all students whether they do a thesis or not. Furthermore, postgraduate students who will select the master thesis route, attend additional seminars on statistical methods of analysis organized in collaboration with the department's doctoral candidates (as is done for other DL programs of the School of Education and Social Sciences).

(v) We accept the EEC recommendation and the relevant material have been updated. Please refer to Annex 01 – Course Descriptions.

(vi) Positions have been advertised for visiting teaching staff in the Department of Psychology and Social Sciences across 7 different cognitive subjects. (https://frederick.ac.cy/fu_documents/fu_jobs/24/10.2.pdf). The deadline for the submission of CVs by the interested applicants was extended to the 15th of June 2024. The Department is currently evaluating the applications received and prospective applicants will be notified.

(vii) Please refer to previous response 1a(ii).

(viii)   The internal quality assurance process includes numerous procedures through which feedback is provided to the relevant bodies for improvement. Such as: feedback provided by the internal quality committee to the Departments, concerning the operation of their programmes and their Departments. Concerning feedback to the students, in relation to the students questionnaires, completed by the students at the end of each academic semester, a new measure is under development to satisfy the suggestions of the EEC where Departments are expected to report on students' comments and on how these comments are considered for the improvement for the operations of the department and their courses. Through this mechanism, a report will be provided to the students on an annual basis.

> 1.c. **Public information**
>
> (i) Clearly articulate and communicate information on qualifications awarded after the completion of the programme (see also point 1.2 above).
>
> (ii) Although public information about the programme is comprehensive and accessible, the visibility and accessibility of graduate employment information and learning opportunities could be enhanced.
>
> (iii) Enhance the visibility and accessibility of graduate employment information and learning opportunities.
>
> (iv) Regularly update the information to reflect the latest data and developments.

1.c. Department's Response:

(i) Please refer to previous response 1b(i).

(ii) We appreciate your feedback. As the CYQAA guidelines we cannot publish and promote any programme that has not been accredited. As the EEC noted the information available is comprehensive so upon accreditation of the program all relevant details will be publicly available.

(iii) Same as the Above comment "Enhance the visibility and accessibility of graduate employment information and learning opportunities." The program aims to develop knowledge and skills based on the integration of theory, research, and practical applications of psychology in educational settings in relation to: a. Learning, positive development, and student adjustment in school, b. Learning, adjustment, and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, c. Promoting positive attitudes and enhancing mental health and resilience within the school community, d. Implementing psychoeducational programs, prevention, intervention, and crisis management within the school community, e. Collaborating with all members of the school community within interdisciplinary teams, e. Recognizing and accepting diversity and advocating for the needs and rights of children.

Our program aims to train and educate psychologists and educators who will work in general and special schools (in Greece), intervention and assessment centers and

programs, child protection institutions, and education centers for children and adolescents, in local organizations such as NGOs, International Organizations, Foundations for people with disabilities, shelters for unaccompanied children, etc. (under the supervision of a registered applied psychologist if needed).

Furthermore, graduates may get involved with administrative positions where knowledge of the application of psychology in school settings will provide added value, as researchers or working in research centers, designing and implementing intervention and educational programs as part of a team, or within a team get involved in instructional design, curriculum development, prevention and intervention programs on classroom management, and student motivation, etc. Our graduates can also be employed, in research, policy development, and administrative positions at educational institutes like schools, universities and private research organizations.

Our graduates may enroll in doctoral-level programs of study.

(iv) We appreciate your feedback. As previously mentioned, upon successful accreditation of the program, all relevant information will be publicly available to the University's website. The website data is updated each academic semester to reflect the latest information.

1.d. **Information Management**

(i) Improve the frequency and comprehensiveness of data reporting to stakeholders.

(ii) Implement more robust feedback loops to ensure data-driven decision-making.

(iii) Include information on the career path of graduates.

1.d. Department's Response:

(i) Please refer to previous response 1b(i).

(ii) Through the internal quality assurance processes employed by the University, the Departments must submit to the internal evaluation committee a self evaluation report for each programme, on an annual basis. These reports include KPIS such as: profile of the

student population, successs and dropout rates, student progression etc. The internal quality committee evaluates these indicators and agrees with Department on the action plan to remedee possible weaknesses. The effectiveness of the decided measures, are examined on the next years programme's self evaluation report. Following the EECs suggestions on further monitoring these KPIs the procedure adopted examins KPIs for the past 3 years instead of only 1 year.

(iii) As previously mentioned the relevant information will be publicly available upon successful programme accreditation:

The program aims to develop knowledge and skills based on the integration of theory, research, and practical applications of psychology in educational settings in relation to: a. Learning, positive development, and student adjustment in school, b. Learning, adjustment, and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, c. Promoting positive attitudes and enhancing mental health and resilience within the school community, d. Implementing psychoeducational programs, prevention, intervention, and crisis management within the school community, e. Collaborating with all members of the school community within interdisciplinary teams, f. Recognizing and accepting diversity and advocating for the needs and rights of children.

Our program aims to train and educate psychologists and educators who will work in general and special schools (in Greece), intervention and assessment centers and programs, child protection institutions, and education centers for children and adolescents, in local organizations such as NGOs, International Organizations, Foundations for people with disabilities, shelters for unaccompanied children, etc. (under the supervision of a registered applied psychologist if needed).

Furthermore, graduates may get involved with administrative positions where knowledge of the application of psychology in school settings will provide added value, as researchers or working in research centers, designing and implementing intervention and educational programs as part of a team, or within a team get involved in instructional design, curriculum development, prevention and intervention programs on classroom management, and student motivation, etc. Our graduates can also be employed, in research, policy development, and administrative positions at educational institutes like schools,

universities and private research organizations. Our graduates may enroll in doctoral-level programs of study.

2. **Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment**

(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

2.a. **Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

(i) The distance education pedagogical framework is built upon a collection of theoretical frameworks, each of which is individually relevant. However, it is unclear if this combination of theories results in the most effective educational approach. Notably, some critical theories, such as the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, Theory of Transactional Distance are missing. Given the rapid advancements in online and distance education, it is crucial that this framework undergoes regular testing for effectiveness and continuous updates to incorporate the latest developments and research in the field.

(ii) The training materials need to be regularly updated to reflect the latest advancements in e-learning technologies.

(iii) Increase student involvement in the creation and evaluation of e-learning processes to foster a greater sense of ownership and engagement.

2.a. Department's Response:

(i) We would like to thank the Committee for their insightful feedback on the distance education pedagogical framework. Your observation regarding the integration of multiple theoretical frameworks is well-noted. It is essential to ensure that these theories create an effective and cohesive educational approach. Elements of the theories like the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and the Theory of Transactional Distance, are integrated in our framework and current practices, however we acknowledge that they need to be further enhanced and their presence should be explicitly visible at the framework. The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning emphasizes the efficient use of multimedia to enhance learning, which is particularly relevant in online education. There is an extensive development and use of digitalized interactive multimedia material in our distance learning programs. This educational material includes narrated presentations, interactive videos

and presentations, learning scenarios with interactive elements, digitalized gamification activities and self-assessment quizzes.

The educational material is developed by CIET in collaboration with the distance learning instructors. Similarly, the Theory of Transactional Distance addresses the pedagogical and psychological gaps that can occur in distance education, providing strategies to bridge these gaps effectively. To address these gaps, the 2nd pillar of our pedagogical framework focuses on synchronous and asynchronous interaction, communication, and collaboration. The synchronous aspect is addressed via 9-10 hours of ZOOM teleconferencing sessions (4-5 sessions in a sem ester of 13 weeks). The asychronous aspect is addressed via: the Get to know each other forum (week 0), the Q&A forum (week 0 and runs throughout the semester), chat-rooms sessions when needed, emails, and various collaborative activities using digital tools either integrated at the LMS Platform (i.e. forums, wikis) or external links to digital tools (i.e. collaborative documents, online digital boards).

(ii) Frederick University gives great emphasis to the development of the appropriate training materials. The training materials are regularly updated to reflect the latest advancements in e-learning technologies. For example, during the past two academic years 2022-2023 & 2023-2024 CIET operating under the guidelines of DLU proceeded with the following: use of AI tools and specifically of digital twins and avatars for the weekly summaries and welcoming messages use of AI tools to develop content material, i.e. self-assessment quizzes, weekly summaries and presentations; learning scenarios with the use of digital tools (i.e. Animaker), and the design and development of gamification activities. The gamification activities are developed by CIET as well as in collaboration with external collaborators (i.e. Cartedo, Startupwars. VasLabs - Game Development Company and Labster) . For 2024-2025, DLU aims to futher expand the use of AI technologies for content developmet and personalized learning and assessment. Additionally, collaboration with the aforemtnioned companies for developing gamified digitalized learning environments will be expanded throughout the DL programs of study at Frederick University.

(iii) In order to achieve the aforementioned, the distance learning students for the past three academic years, by May and June of each academic year, are given an online

questionnaire to complete in order to evaluate their experience in distance learning programs at Frederick University and provide their feedback. Through this the students are involbved in the evaluation and creation of the appropriate educational material and learning environment to address their needs and demands.

The students need about 15 minutes to complete it and it consists of 6 parts and overall 16 questions (10 close-ended and 6 open-ended questions): (i) Demographics (3 questions); (ii) Degree of usefulness of different presentations types (3 questions); (iii) Degree of usefulness of digital multimedia material (2 questions); (iv) Degree of usefulness of the synchronous online meetings (8 questions); (v) Usefulness of the Introductory week (1 question); and (vi) Assessment and self-assessment (2 questions).

The results are collected and analyzed to inform the action plan of the Distance Learning Committee for the upcoming academic year.

2.b. **Practical training**

(i) The University should encourage the students to have a practical placement, to ensure a strong link between theory and practice.

(ii) In order for the content of practical training to meet the needs of the stakeholders, it is strongly recommended that stakeholders participate actively in the design of the program and the learning outcomes. They should also have a clear understanding of the qualifications of trainees and graduates.

2.b. Department's Response:

(i) We accept with the EEC's recommendation and commit upon successful accreditation and operation of the programme to encourage students to participate in the optional practicum course.

(ii) Please refer to previous response 1a(ii).

2.c.	**Student assessment**
	(i) N/A

2.c. Department's Response:

N/A

2.d.	**Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**
	(i) Regularly update study guides to incorporate the latest research and pedagogical advancements.

2.d. Department's Response:

As per the internal quality assurance procedures of the University, the educational material is checked and updated (where applicable) each academic semester.

3. **Teaching staff**

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 3.a. **Teaching staff recruitment and development**
>
> (i) Consider course evaluations in promotions.
>
> (ii) Hire diverse staff expertise, e.g., hiring an educational psychologist, cognitive psychologist, dyscalculia expert and educational neuroscience would be useful.
>
> (iii) Teaching and research staff should increase their networks outside of Greece to the broader Europe and outside of the Eurozone.
>
> (iv) Increase the frequency of professional development opportunities focused on emerging educational technologies.
>
> (v) Enhance the promotion criteria to include more detailed metrics for teaching innovation and effectiveness.
>
> (vi) The staff should engage with international and European associations for School Psychologists (e.g. ISPA, EFPA etc.). This will keep them informed and up to date on sound psychological principles within the context of education globally.

3.a. Department's Response:

(i) We agree with the EEC's commend and we apologize if it was not fully clarified during the onsite visit. As part of the promotion and annual reviews the four pillars evaluated with equal weights are: (1) Teaching (2) Research (3) Administrative Work and (4) Social Contribution and Recognition.
The Teaching pillar is evaluated by various qualitative indicators such as development of course material, use of innovative teaching methods, student evaluation etc.

(ii) Please refer to previous response 1b(vi).

(iii) The Department has the existing collaborations with Universities outside of Greece:

Table 1 Collaborations with Academic Institutions

NAME OF COLLABORATING INSTITUTION	PURPOSE OF COLLABORATION
Universidad Catolica de Valencia	Mobility / Erasmus
Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania	Mobility / Erasmus
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Erasmus + KA2 Project
Eotvos Lorand University, Hungary	Erasmus + KA2 project
Universidad de Jaen, Spain	Erasmus + KA2 project
Klaipedas University, Lithuania	Erasmus+ KA2 project
University of Banja Luka, Bosnia Herzegovina	Erasmus + KA2 project

Table 2 Collaborations in Research Projects

International Body/ University / Research Team	Project Title
• Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture [Erasmus+] [2017-2019].	Women Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence or Abuse (DISCO)
• University of Crete, University of Tartu, Queens University Belfast	Development of "at a Distance" Counselling Skills for professionals in the field of counselling Women Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence or Abuse (DISCO)
• Know & Can (Bulgaria); CESIE (Italia); Folkuniversitetet (Sweden); University of Primorska (Slovenia), και Rinova (UK).	Hope for Children JudEx+: Towards a child-friendly justice in cases of sexual violence against children
• Wrolaw University (Poland), Parul University (India)	CABCIN Project (co-funded by Erasmus+). Strengthening the

International Body/ University / Research Team	Project Title
	capacity and quality of teaching at partner HEIs in India.
• University of Bristol	Research Project: Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus: Social Policies and Social Work Practice
• IRCCS Centro San Giovanni di Dio, Fatebenefratelli, Brescia	COST Action CAPMED "Children and Adolescents of Parents with Mental Disorders: An European Action".
• Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	COST Action 15218 – "Measuring homelessness in Europe"
• Lahti University of Applied Sciences	Erasmus+ collaboration
• British Red Cross (UK), KMOP (Greece), Danish Red Cross (Denmark) and CARDET (Cyprus)	Project SAFE: Supporting un-Accompanied children with Family-based care and Enhanced protection.
• Al-Azhar University, Aswan University, October 6 University, Zagazig University, University of Crete, Bath Spa University	Refugee Teaching Certification Programme for Egyptian and Refugee Teachers Enabled by Blended Learning
• Utrecht University, Netherlands	Research project focused on emotional regulation and gender (non-funded)

Additionally, Frederick University is a member of the European University Alliance (EU-CONEXUS), a strong partnership between nine universities developing science and innovation into a hub of excellence on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS). Through this collaborations students and staff can participate in teaching / research mobilities, collaborations on research projects and development of new programmes of study and in general international networking and exchange of good practices and expertise.

(iv) Please see reply in 1.a.(i).

(v) Please refer to previous response 3a(i).

(vi) We appreciate the suggestion to engage with international and European associations for School Psychologists such as ISPA and EFPA. Enhancing our collaboration with these associations will ensure that our staff stays informed and up to date on current best practices and sound psychological principles in education globally. This effort aligns with our commitment to maintaining high standards in our programs.

3.b. **Teaching staff number and status**

(i) In order to ensure sustainability, we recommend that Frederick University hire more certified school psychologists in the teaching and research staff. The current situation with only one staff member who is a certified school psychologist can be risky. Should student enrolment increase, or should this staff become incapable of carrying out their duties due to extenuating factors, teaching and learning would be temporally disrupted. It could also lead to work overload.

(ii) Continuously monitor and adjust the number of teaching staff to respond to changes in student enrolment and program needs.

(iii) Enhance support for part-time staff to ensure they are well-integrated into the program and receive adequate development opportunities.

3.d. Department's Response:

(i) As mentioned in previous responses, the suggested revised title of the programme is "Applications of Psychology in the School Setting" to avoid confusion that might refer to an Applied School Psychology program. Additionally, as mentioned in point 1b(vi), we already made a call for a visiting faculty member specializing in School Psychology. and the applications are being evaluated by the Department.

(ii) For each course in the programme, one of the permanent faculty members of the University is assigned as the course coordinator. In the case of more than one cohorts are required (depending on prospective student population) there a number of Collaborative Academic Staff (CAS) member that can be used, in collaboration with the course coordinator, to implement the successful delivery of the course. The Department has inplace a list of potential CAS that have already been evaluated and are qualified to deliver the relevant courses.

(iii) Part-time staff participate in departmental meetings as well as other departmental activities. Part-time staff are also invited and participate in University activities such as trainings from PD2F (please see point 2.a.(ii)).

3.c. **Synergies of teaching and research**

(i) Involve MA students in research activities at the faculty/department. This would foster their academic growth and boost research activities at the faculty.

(ii) Teaching staff should be encouraged to use recent and relevant scientific literature in their courses.

(iii) Foster more interdisciplinary research collaborations to broaden the impact and scope of research activities.

(iv) Increase discipline-specific publications in high-impact journals and presentations at international conferences.

(v) The faculty should strategically expand their networks beyond Greece to the larger Europe and outside Europe. This will have a rippling effect on staff who in turn have to expand their networks in the wider world.

3.c. Department's Response:

(i) MA students are involved in research activities of faculty members and/or the Department, for example, we have involved postgraduate students in the following projects:

1. Frederick University (2024) Empowerment of Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (ESEE), 2023-2-CY01-KA210-VET-000176025, ΙΔΕΠ-Erasmus+ (Cyprus), Small-Scale Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training. Duration: May 2024 – April 2025. Budget: €60.000.

Two postgraduate students will participate in the training that has been organised in Tallinn (October 2024). These students are George Athanasiou and Athanasia Charalampous.

2. Hellenic Mediterranean University (2023) Building skills for enhancing hazard perception and safe decisions among teenagers (Road Safety) (SAFETeen), 2023-1-EL01-KA220-SCH-000160385, IKY (Greece) KA220-SCH-Cooperation partnerships in school education. Duration: October 2023 – September 2026. Budget: €400.000.

One PhD student (Andreas Christodoulou) will participate in the data collection process which will be implemented in September (2024) through focus groups in different schools around Cyprus.

3. Frederick University (2022) Entrepreneurial Skills for Social Sciences (ESSS), 2022-1-CY01-KA220-VET-000086829, ΙΔΕΠ-Erasmus+ (Cyprus), Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training. Duration: November 2022 – October 2024. Budget: €120.000.

Two PhD students (Ioanna Georgiou and Andreas Christodoulou) have participated at "Train the Trainers" event in Barcelona (January 2024) and will act as trainers for a group of social scientists in Cyprus.

Additionally, our postgraduate students are involved in publications, in cases as the first authors, indicative examples:

Georgiou, I. and Parlalis, S.K. (2024), "Social Services and Support Structures for Adults With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Their Parents' Quality of Life in Cyprus", Ciciurkaite, G. and Brown, R.L. (Ed.) *Disability and the Changing Contexts of Family and Personal Relationships* (*Research in Social Science and Disability, Vol. 15*), Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 103-120.

Georgiou, I. and Parlalis, S.K. (2023) *Preparation and training of parents of adults with ASD in the process of moving to and joining Assisted Living*, pp. 223-240, In: Koutoutsidou, Katsarou and Argyriades (2023) Integration and Education of Vulnerable and Vulnerable Social Groups. Athens: Publications Gutenberg.

Erotocritou, K., & Dimitriou, L. (2024). Caregiver Burden for Carers of Chronically Mentally Ill Patients: A Study With Families in Cyprus. International Journal of Social Science and Human Research, 7(5), 2833-2843.

Svirinakis, E., Loizidou-Ieridou, N., Plexousakis, S., Georgiadi, M., Tomprou, D. M., & Kyriakides, F. K. (2022). Past, present, and future of adults with Down syndrome: Views and experiences of families. International Public Health Journal, 14(4).

Kyriakidou, F. K., Massara, E., Economidou, D. K., Ieridou, N. L., & Zafiropoulou, M. (2023). Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and primary education: Meeting educational needs and parent involvement in Greece. International Journal of Child Health & Human Development, 16(1).

(ii) We accept and adopt the EEC reccomendatoins. Please refer to Annex 1 for the updated course bibliography.

(iii) & (iv) Frederick University faculty members are encouraged to be involved in research and develop interdisciplinary research collaborations to broaden the impact and scope

of research activities, in addition they are encouraged to publish in high-impact journals and presentations at international conferences. This is evident by looking into the University's strategic plan were one of the main pillars of the University's Strategic Plan is Research Excellence. The Department of Psychology and Social Sciences developed a 3-year departmental strategic plan (2022 – 2025) which was updated during Dec. 2023 to work more effectively toward specific actions for the achievement of our goals. In relation to Research and Innovation, among others, the Department's goals related to the points raised by the evaluation committee are to:

a. Promote and expand the Department's research activity and sustain collaborations with other research agencies.

b. Promote and Support Networking and Research Collaborations

c. Promote and expand the Department's research activity and sustain collaborations with other research agencies.

d. Increase the engagement of MA and PhD students in research projects.

e. Advancement of research output
   a. Increase the number of Scopus-indexed publications.
   b. Promote non-funded internal research within the department. Consider Ph.D. students for enriching the department's research activity; a multi-disciplinary collaboration between various departments could empower this action.
   c. Increase the number of funded research projects obtained by the department /Involvement in research projects as a partner.

(v) Please refer to previous response 3a(iii).

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> ### 4.a. Student admission, processes and criteria
>
> (i) Regularly review and update admission criteria to reflect evolving academic standards and industry requirements.
>
> (ii) Enhance outreach efforts to underrepresented groups to further promote diversity within the student body.

4.a. Department's Response:

(i) As per the University's internal quality proccedures academic matters are reviewed and updated yearly.

(ii) At Frederick University, we consider candidates for Admission on the basis of their academic qualifications and we employ positive discrimination policies for access to education. As part of its efforts, the Outreach and Admissions Office systematically collects and uses data in order to identify any gaps in its outreach efforts of reaching students from diverse and at-risk groups.

In particular, Frederick University has a number of partnerships both with the Industry and Non-for-profit Organizations to jointly offer scholarship schemes for candidates who come from underrepresented groups (examples include but are not limited to unaccompanied minors, trafficking victims, girls in engineering programs, refugees and asylum seekers). In addition, the majority of our DL students are first generation, mature students with multiple roles and responsibilities. Acknowledging the unique challenges faced by this group of students, the University continues to offer discounted DL fees, free digital training sessions and tailored virtual orientation sessions to support their studies.

Frederick University also offers scholarships and financial assistance schemes based on socioeconomic criteria, thus making sure that students who come from vulnerable groups can receive the assistance needed to reduce the financial burden. The

University also employs a Student Financial Advisor who advices students on individualized payment plans and informs them of resources and funding schemes in the community which are available for support.

In addition, Frederick University student support services offer a holistic support system. The Counselling Centre offers online counselling and mental health support targeted to students' needs as well as wellbeing workshops regarding stress management and mindfulness. There are available Disability services offered at the point of admission by meeting a Counselling Centre officer and creating an individualize support plan with reasonable adjustments during the semester and during exams. Other available student support services include the Peer Tutoring Centre, the Student Advocate Office, the Career Office, the Sports and Wellbeing Office and the Mobility Office.

Importantly, the Distance Learning Unit which is a central point of reference for all distance learning students has helped maintain clear and open communication for students to reach out and be referred to the appropriate University services. We have also established mechanisms, which we are trying to further develop, for students to provide feedback on their experiences and suggest improvements.

It should be finally noted that creating and maintaining an inclusive environment is one of the top priorities of the University. For that reason, the University operates the Equality and Awareness at Frederick Centre (EnAF), a dedicated Center on Gender Issues, Diversity and Equality, which together with the University's Personal and Professional Development Training Centre (P2DF), offers to all staff training on EDI issues. Currently the University is working with Advances Higher Education, to which we are members, in order to apply for the Athena Swan Award.

4.b. **Student progression**

(i) Expand scholarship opportunities and consider introducing awards for various types of achievements, such as leadership, community service, and research.

(ii) Graduate students should be more involved in first-authored publications.

4.b. Department's Response:

(i) Frederick University offers a number of scholarship opportunities for prospective students both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as continuing student scholarships based on academic performance. Various scholarship schemes are provided by the industry such as corporate scholarships and professional association scholarships as well as in partnership with the University, for example Girls in STEM to tackle the underrepresentation of women in Engineering and Technology courses. Scholarships and tuition reduction are also offered for incoming students based on their high school degree, on their field of study, on their professional capacity, for University alumni and their families and more.

The University awards students based on their outstanding achievements, adherence to our core values, and significant contributions to society, reflecting our commitment to fostering excellence and societal impact. Annually, the Michael Frederickou Excellence Awards take place to honour our University community's actions towards excellence in teaching, research and contribution to society. Since its implementation four years ago students, graduates and alumni are awarded for their contribution to research through their thesis and dissertations, their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals and for their overall impact on society. Together with the MF Awards, students and graduates of each program of study receive awards and monetary prizes, in collaboration with the industry and professional associations, for their academic excellence and contribution and innovation in their field of study.

Initiatives like the Frederick University Living Lab (FULL) – a project-based learning in collaboration with the community, co-curricular units and research hubs all of which complement the academic curriculum, play a crucial role in the holistic development of students providing them with opportunities for leadership and soft skills enhancement, academic success, networking and career preparedness, and community engagement.

These types of initiatives also help the University to highlight and showcase student and alumni success and to promote student success through narratives and publications in order to inspire others.

(ii) We appreciate the valuable suggestion regarding the involvement of graduate students in first-authored publications. In order to foster a research environment that leads to publications we have a compulsory Research Methods course for all students. Via their coursework students practice in small scale projects leading to the final thesis. We provide comprehensive support for thesis and dissertation work, ensuring that these research efforts are of publishable quality. Students receive guidance on framing their research questions, methodology, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. Each graduate student is assigned a dedicated research mentor who is responsible for guiding them through the thesis research process. These mentors provide one-on-one support and ensure that students are making progress toward their publication goals. Regular progress meetings between students and their research mentors are scheduled to review research advancements, address challenges, and set milestones for manuscript preparation and submission.

Additionally, Frederick University offers seminars / workshops focused on the publication process, covering topics such as selecting appropriate journals, writing and structuring manuscripts, responding to reviewers, and understanding the editorial process. We encourage team-based research projects where graduate students can collaborate with faculty and peers. These collaborative efforts often lead to co-authored publications, with clear pathways for students to take the lead and earn first authorship. To promote students' publications, the University has in place a funding scheme for the conference participation and journal publication fees. These scheme also includes the case of students.

4.c. **Student recognition**

(i) Increase awareness and accessibility of recognition procedures among students and staff.

> (ii) Streamline the recognition process to reduce administrative burden and processing time

4.c. Department's Response:

As mentioned in the EEC's findings on these comments: *"Frederick University has established regulations for the fair recognition of qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning. The recognition procedures are aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles and involve collaboration with external institutions and agencies to ensure coherence and fairness".*

Faculty members are provided with relevant regulations concerning prior recognition and transfer credit evaluation. Furthermore, training sessions are scheduled for faculty, in matters related to the above stated procedures and regulations.

As far as the students are concerned, students requesting transfer credits recognition, are provided with the transfer credit evaluation made by the Department prior to their enrolment.

The process is handled with great attention to ensure that students with transfer credits will not face any recognition problems with the Council of Recognition of Higher Qualifications (KYSATS) after the completion of their studies.

> 4.d. **Student certification**
>
> (i) Increase minimum requirement to 120 ECTS including a minimum of 1000 hours of practical training of which 500 hours have to be an integral part of the study programme.

4.d. Department's Response:

(i) Please refer to previous response 1b(ii).

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

eqar//// enqa.

5. **Learning resources and student support**

   (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 5.a. **Teaching and Learning resources**
>
>   (i) The DL students could benefit from online career guidance workshops including guest speakers from various related fields/industries from both Greece and Cyprus.
>
>   (ii) The ECC suggests to systematically perform tests on the user-friendliness of the platform with small and representative samples of its main final users (i.e., students and teachers).
>
>   (iii) Learning Analytics provide information on student interaction (and partially on participation), but not on students' cognitive engagement (e.g., time-on-task could be misleading in a DL setting), therefore teachers should avoid overreliance on Learning Analytics.

5.a. Department's Response:

  (i) We appreciate the suggestion to offer online career guidance workshops for our distance learning students, including guest speakers from various fields and industries in Greece and Cyprus. This is a fantastic idea that will greatly benefit our students by providing them with valuable career insights and networking opportunities. We will work towards implementing this initiative to enhance our students' career readiness and professional development in the next academic semesters.

  (ii) We acknowledge the importance of ensuring our platform is user-friendly for both students and teachers. We systematically conduct usability tests with small, representative samples of our main users to identify any issues and improve the overall user experience. This proactive approach aligns with our commitment to continuous improvement and providing an optimal learning environment for all our stakeholder.

(iii) We value the insight regarding Learning Analytics and its limitations in assessing students' cognitive engagement, especially in a distance learning setting. While Learning Analytics provide valuable data on student interactions, we understand the need to avoid over-reliance on metrics like time-on-task. Moving forward, we will encourage teachers to supplement this data with qualitative assessments to ensure a holistic understanding of student engagement. This balanced approach will support our efforts in enhancing the quality of education and student learning outcomes.

5.b. Physical resources

(i) N/A

Department's Response:

N/A

5.c. Human support resources

In general, the student experience needs to be equally good for both groups of students those studying face to face with those studying online.

(i) There seems to be only one librarian for the whole campus in Limassol supporting the students studying in conventional programs. The EEC did not have the opportunity to clarify whether the same librarian also supports the DL students associated to the programs offered by the departments located in the Limassol campus. If this is the case, then the EEC feels that the workload of the librarian is excessive and therefore the ensuing recommendation is to enhance the student experience by investing more in the recruitment of librarians.

(ii) There seems to be only one certified school psychologist who can officially mentor students during their practicum. Therefore, the ECC recommends to have in place more certified school psychologists so that the practicum will not be discontinued in case of parental leave, sick leave, sabbatical and so on; but also, in case that

> this role will need to support two cohorts of students in the future (as mentioned by the university representatives).

Department's Response:

(i) There is full-time Librarian in the Limassol campus who is supported by two part-time assistant librarians. All distance learning programs are supported by the main library team in the Nicosia campus so the proposed program does not put any additional burden to the Limassol campus library.

(ii) Since the program is not an Applied program of School Psychology, the academic supervisor for the students' practicum could be a faculty member with the academic domain in School psychology, like Dr Nataly Loizidou Ieridou for example, or in Educational Psychology, like Dr. Chrysa Nitsiou for example. Additionally, at a second level of supervision, there are mentors who are already working at the relevant structures (see Practicum Guidelines). Finally, when and as required, new staff members will be employed to facilitate the practical training of students enrolled in the program.

5.d. **Student support**

(i) N/A

Department's Response:

N/A

6. Conclusions and final remarks

6.a. The School Psychology (MSc) programme at Frederick University demonstrates a comprehensive approach to quality assurance and public information dissemination. The programme design aligns with institutional strategies. The information management system is effective, with active involvement of students and staff. However, in its current form, the program design, the language of delivery and the qualification awarded after the completion of the program need to be significantly revised.

The programme is well-aligned with ESG standards, demonstrating strong compliance across all sub-areas of student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment. The program effectively integrates e-learning methodologies, practical training, and comprehensive assessment frameworks. **Study guides are well-structured and support a dynamic and interactive learning environment**. While the program is robust and effective, there are opportunities for enhancement in the distance education theoretical framework. Overall, the program is commendable for its thorough approach and dedication to quality education.

The programme demonstrates strong compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) in the area of teaching staff. The recruitment and development processes are fair and transparent, ensuring the competence and qualifications of the staff. **The number and status of teaching staff are adequate to support the program, and there is a healthy balance between permanent and visiting staff**. The university effectively promotes synergies between teaching and research, enhancing the quality of education and contributing to the academic field. While the program is robust, ongoing efforts to enhance professional development and interdisciplinary research will further strengthen its offerings.

The evaluation of Frederick University's student admission for the programme, progression, recognition, and certification processes demonstrates a robust framework designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and support for student success. The university provides clear and consistent regulations for student admission and progression, utilizing data-driven strategies to enhance student retention and achievement. Recognition procedures are well-aligned with

international standards, promoting mobility and fair acknowledgment of prior learning. However, the area of student certification requires significant improvement, particularly in clarifying and communicating the requirements for becoming a registered school psychologist. Addressing this gap will enhance the transparency and comprehensiveness of the certification process, ultimately supporting the university's commitment to quality education and student outcomes. Overall, the university's practices are largely compliant, with targeted recommendations for further enhancement.

Adequate and accessible teaching and learning resources are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study program. Technical support services are available to assist students in troubleshooting issues. The IT infrastructure and technical support are appropriate for a distance learning environment. Human support resources, including qualified administrative staff and access to counsellors, contribute significantly to the student experience, although there is room for improvement in librarian support and the availability of certified school psychologists. The university accommodates a diverse student population and enhances its support services based on feedback.

Final conclusion:

The School Psychology (MSc) programme at Frederick University demonstrates strong alignment with institutional strategies and ESG standards, ensuring quality assurance and standards of recruitment and development. The program integrates e-learning methodologies, practical training (optional), and comprehensive assessments. Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification processes are well-structured, promoting transparency and student success. However, the certification requirements for becoming a registered school psychologist should be taken into account for this program to become operational. **Overall, the programme is commendable for its quality education, effective resource provision, and responsive support services, with targeted recommendations for improvement.**

Department's Response:

We would like to sincerely thank the External Evaluation Committee for their dedicated work and invaluable comments, proved both within their evaluation report and during the frank discussions held through the visit. All suggestions made by the EEC have been adopted and implemented as seen by the answers throughout sessions 1-5.

We are particularly pleased that the External Evaluation Committee is supportive of the accreditation of the new programme with the improvements suggested implemented, and we are committed in providing an innovative programme with a top quality of education to all prospective students. We are especially grateful for the EEC's concluding statement for the many strengths and examples of good practices of the University and the academic staff.

B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. George Demosthenous	Rector	

Date: 08/07/2024