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Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance
and Accreditation in Higher Education,
Chair of the Council, Prof Mary Koutselini
Nicosia, Cyprus

18 July 2017

Dear Professor Koutselini,

Subject: MSc Forensic Psychology - External Evaluation Report, following 20th of June 2017
evaluation visit

The UCLan Cyprus team is very grateful for the supporting report by the visiting team, arising from the external evaluation event for our MSc Forensic Psychology. The programme team aims to use the feedback from the external evaluation report to assess the quality of the programme and implement any recommendations. To encourage the progression of the MSc in Forensic Psychology, the programme team provides below their reply and comments, following the structure of the External Evaluation Report.

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Committee recommendations and response to the recommendations:

Recommendation: *Newly appointed staff should have specific expertise and more specific detail on staff expertise should be included in the documentation*

Response:

The team is in agreement with this recommendation. Although the programme is at very early stages, the School of Sciences has already provisioned the expansion of the existing programme team. The current team includes four full time lecturers (two in Psychology, one in Statistics/Research Methods and one in Law) and three associate lecturers, all with specific expertise in Forensic settings. The team also consist of a chartered Psychologist (certified by SEP Cyprus) to ensure that underpinning theory of forensic psychology may be applied in the workplace. At the same time, the programme team is supported by the corresponding UCLan UK programme team which includes academics with several years of academic and research experience in Forensic Psychology, many of them chartered Forensic Psychologists. The UCLan UK team assist the UCLan Cyprus team for the delivery and preparation of the curriculum and to ensure that students and staff have access on projects whose areas of interest cross over campuses. A brief summary of the expertise of each member of the team can be found in Appendix A. Overall, the existing UCLan Cyprus programme team undertakes a number of research projects in the forensic

psychology fields including: bullying, domestic violence, corruption, fear of crime, conflict management and cognitive interviewing, drug abuse etc. Staff members are also encouraged to regularly publish in leading forensic journals and present papers at both national and international conferences.

To further enhance the expertise of the team, we are currently recruiting for a candidate with strong experience in Forensic Psychology who is also a certified Forensic Psychologist. A number of CVs were received for the position and we are now in the interview process.

The team would like to note that all the associate lecturers are hired with the potential of full employment, once the programme receives its final validation and recruits well. Throughout their appointments, associate lecturers have the opportunity to participate in professional development trainings, especially for enhancing their teaching skills. For example, all associate lecturers can attend and complete the Teaching Toolkit to become fellows of the UK Higher Education Academy.

In addition to the existing programme team, additional visiting lecturers with specific expertise are recruited, who can deliver occasional lectures/workshops that fit their area of expertise. Students are taught by both, academic staff and professional practitioners in forensic psychology, to ensure that they develop the skills they need for their future professional careers.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

i. Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study

Recommendation: *Include additional programme learning outcomes that reflect each area that is taught on individual modules.*

Response:

As it was discussed during the validation event, the proposed programme is an inter-university programme and it is offered in parallel at UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK and our students receive a double award (Cyprus and UK award, both awards receiving individual validations). Although the MSc Forensic Psychology is a new programme for UCLan Cyprus, it has been validated, approved and running in UCLan UK for several years. The UCLan UK programme is also accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

The committee's recommendation to include additional programme learning outcomes is well respected, but at the same time, as this is an inter-university programmes, we cannot unilaterally introduce changes as this contravenes Quality Assurance Principles.

More specifically, implementing this recommendation will constitute a major change to the programme, requiring a revalidation of the UK award and UK External Examiner approval. Moreover, such a change will have an impact on the UK students and international students who are studying the current programme structure and arrangements. Also, this will have an impact on the BPS accreditation of the programme.

The University systematically reviews programmes following feedback from students, faculty, external examiners and other stakeholders e.g. Professional Bodies and thus, we continuously refine the structure, learning methodologies and assessment techniques in line with QA policies and best practise.

As a response to the committee's recommendation the team suggests to monitor the programme and propose the inclusion of any relevant new learning outcomes during the

next Periodic Course Evaluation (PCR) of the programme. According to the committee's comments the learning outcomes are covered throughout the programme (through individual modules), but are not reflected on the overall documented programme learning outcomes.

ii. **Structure and Content of the Program of Studies:**

Recommendations:

1. *Ensure Legal processes are embedded throughout all modules.*

Response: We agree with the committee's recommendations and acknowledge that given the continuous development of the field, forensic practitioners require knowledge on the policy and professional conduct of the legal system. Based on the programme specifications, a number of modules (e.g., PS4801 – Psychology and the Legal System as well as PS4805 - Psychological Investigation and the Courtroom) are devoted to interactions between psychology and the law. The programme also places emphasis on professional conduct to the legal system across other modules (e.g., PS4804 – Forensic Risk Assessment; PS4806 - Violent and Sexual Offenders: Intervention). The core areas of primary coverage include: appreciation of the legal framework of the law, psychology applied to the legal process, the civil and criminal justice systems, applications and interventions within criminal and civil justice systems etc.

The committee also commented that representation of legal processes throughout all modules is deemed essential for the programme to receive BPS accreditation. The team would like to emphasize that the corresponding programme running in UCLan UK already has BPS accreditation since 2003, demonstrating that the existing content of the programme meets the appropriate standards.

2. *Additional topics are covered/amended on the programme (including reflective practice).*

Response:

The committee mentions the need for the inclusion of topics such as child interviewing, vulnerability, and investigative interviewing. These topics are already included in the curriculum, but may have not been obvious from the module descriptions. For example, an introduction to working with child mental health as well as learning disabilities/difficulties are included at the PS4807 - Forensic Mental Health Module. Considering the "investigative interviewing", the subject is discussed and practiced through seminars, at the PS4803 – Professional Practice: Forensic Consultancy and Supervision.

The team also acknowledges the importance of reflective practice, a critical aspect for BPS accreditation as well. As mentioned earlier, the corresponding programme running at UCLan UK has been accredited by the BPS since 2003. Based on the common material taught at both campuses and the shared practices, we can ensure that subjects emphasised for the BPS accreditation, are considered and addressed in full length during the delivery of the modules at UCLan Cyprus. On another note, the structure of each individual module fosters graduate skills acquisition by practical application of knowledge to 'real life' examples and also, enhances employability by

providing key engagement skills. Furthermore, reading and reflecting upon specified lecture material and topics is emphasised throughout the course.

3. *Reconsider ECTS across some modules (perhaps compare with UK UCLAN credit distribution).*

Response: The team would like to emphasize that the UCLan Cyprus programme and UCLan UK programme are identical and have the exact same distribution of credits per module.

Moreover, similarly to our response for the recommendation under "Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study", changing the number of ECTS per module will constitute a major change to the programme, thus requiring a revalidation of the UK award and UK External Examiner approval, and such a change will have an impact on the existing students who are studying the current UK programme structure and arrangements. This will also have an effect on the UK programme accreditation by BPS.

The team suggests to consider the distribution of ECTS per module during the next Periodic Course Evaluation (PCR) of the programme.

4. *References should be up-to-date and relevant.*

Response: The Team agrees with the recommendation and believes that in general, it is important for individual module references, books as well as any other learning material to be updated regularly. As part of the programme, by the end of each academic year, all relevant bibliography for each module is reviewed and updated whenever necessary, to reflect the latest material and research findings in the specific area. Accordingly, in collaboration with the Library Services, appropriate student reading lists are created on each module's Blackboard space before the start of the new academic year.

5. *Due to the breadth of some modules (e.g., Forensic Mental Health), it would not be plausible to cover all relevant material. Thus, there should be a strong focus on relevant topics with a focus on evidence-based practice.*

Response: With regards to the Forensic Mental Health module, the module provides an introductory theoretical background and knowledge of mental illness and mental disorder and the implications for forensic psychologists. Also, the module includes seminars which allow students the opportunity to learn and employ practical skills that would be appropriate for dealing with clients with high levels of emotional distress, and also allow them to critically examine the ethical and practical issues that must be considered when working with this client group. Additional targeted lecturers, seminars and workshops are delivered by guest/visiting lecturers as well as current staff, to enhance the development of student skills necessary for a successful professional career.

6. *Module PS4806 – “Violent and Sexual Offenders; Intervention” Should be renamed Interventions with Offenders.*

Response:

Similarly, to our response for the recommendation under "Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study", this will constitute a major change to the programme, thus requiring a revalidation of the UK award and UK External Examiner approval, and such a change will have an impact on the existing students who are studying the current UK programme structure and arrangements. Additionally, such a change will affect the BPS accreditation of the UCLan UK programme.

Given that the change does not have any impact on the content of the module and the students' learning, as a response to the recommendation, the team suggests to consider the module title change during the next Periodic Course Evaluation (PCR) of the programme.

iii. Quality Assurance of the Program of studies

No Recommendations

iv. Management of the Program of Study

No Recommendations

v. International Dimensions of the Program of Study

No Recommendations

vi. Connection with the labour market and the society

Recommendation: *To ensure students are not disadvantaged, the programme team are encouraged to confirm placement opportunities are available before the start of the programme."*

Response: As the committee acknowledges, the team has already started the process of sourcing placements for the students through the signing of Memorandum of Understanding or service level agreements with local government, private, and community based organizations and facilities.

We currently have collaborations with governmental organizations such as the Cyprus Police department, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Social Welfare Services. Apart from the governmental organizations, we have collaborations with community organizations and private clinics such as the Anti-Drug Association and Veresie's Clinic. Finally, we have established collaborations with other academic and research institutions for the support of research activities, trainings and workshops for the students. Currently, the team is working with researchers from the University of Cyprus (also providing access to state of the art research equipment) and University of Crete, the Heraklion campus (specifically with Dr Olga Themeli who has extensive experience and expertise in correctional psychology (e.g. Mental Health in Prisons, suicides and self-Injury among inmates, incarcerated mothers with their Children in Prison, Children of imprisoned parents) as well as psychology and

the court system (e.g. stress in and out of courtroom, child witness testimony in court, suggestibility and accuracy of Children's memory, impact of legal investigation on sexually abused children)). Last but not least, the team has very close collaborations and active projects with the UCLan UK Forensic Psychology Research Group and Violence and Aggression research group.

Given the very low number of Certified Forensic Psychologist in Cyprus, many organizations are enthusiastic to collaborate with the programme to expand the available expertise for the country and address this need.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

There were no committee recommendations

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

Recommendations: *Like all professional courses, it should be clear what the admission acceptance level is (e.g., 2:1)*

Response: The standard admission criteria for the programme is a minimum of an upper second class honours degree in Psychology (or an equivalent Psychology qualification) recognised by the BPS and a minimum IELTS score of 6.5. The team has reviewed all the relevant programme documentation to ensure that the correct admission criteria are included.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Not applicable

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Not applicable

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The EEC have made various recommendations in the previous sections, but would like to add the following:

1. *Integrate all Forensic information into the handbook, including information on existing collaborations with external agencies.*

Response: A Paragraph of all existing collaborations was added at the course Handbook. Please see the paragraph below:

"The University acknowledges the importance of providing students with practical placements and it is continuously pursuing new collaborations with local government, private, and community based organizations and facilities. The University currently has collaborations with governmental organizations such as the Cyprus Police department, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Cyprus Ministry of Education & Culture and the Cyprus Social Welfare Services. Apart from the governmental organizations, the University has collaborations with community organizations and private clinics such as the Anti-Drug

Association and Veresie's Clinic. Finally, the programme's team established collaborations with other academic and research institutions (e.g. University of Cyprus, University of Crete, InSPIRE) for the support of research activities, trainings and workshops for the students. Last but not least, the team has very close collaborations and active projects with the UCLan UK Forensic Psychology Research Group and Violence and Aggression research group."

2. *Clarify the pathway for entrance to the course for individuals who do not have a first degree in psychology, as they would need to receive an award with a substantially different title.*

Response:

Since graduates of the programme receive a double (UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK), we cannot have different exit awards.

3. *There needs to be clear guidance provided in the student handbook and on the university Website, for students originating from the Turkish-Cypriot community, with regards to the optional modules, for Clinical Practice.*

Response:

The team believes that this is not an issue only for Turkish-Cypriot prospects, but for international prospects as well. The Clinical Practice module is optional for people who would like to become licensed Forensic Psychologists in Cyprus. Thus, the module is applicable only for Cypriot (and EU) citizens and international people with Cyprus working permit.

To address the committee's recommendation, the team included a statement in the programme documentation indicating the above.

4. *The University's Website should be enhanced and improved to include up-to-date information on modules, various routes and methods of assessment to be used.*

Response: It is the University's policy that all programme related material are uploaded and made available after a programme is validated (receives final approval). The course handbook as well as the module handbooks, which includes specific details of the programme, are made available to all students. The module handbooks also include a more detailed lesson planning and assessment information for each module.

5. *A budget should provide the purchase and training for standardized, reliable risk assessment tools, such as HCR 20, WAIS 4, PCLR and RSVP ETC.*

Response: A budget of €5000 has been allocated within the programme budget for the purchase of relevant standardized tests.

We would like to take this opportunity again to thank the external evaluation committee members for their valuable and constructive comments and suggestions towards enhancing the MSc Forensic Psychology programme at UCLan Cyprus. We feel that we are fully equipped to grow the course and enhance the positioning of our School, UCLan Cyprus and Cyprus as an international education hub.

We remain at your disposal for any further questions and clarifications, in relation to our responses

Yours sincerely,


Professor Irene Polycarpou,
Head of School of Sciences,


Dr. Lilia Psalta
Director of MSc Forensic Psychology


Professor Panikkos Poutziouris,
Acting Rector, UCLan Cyprus

Cc: Mr Floros Voniatis
Chair, UCLan Cyprus Council

Appendix A

UCLan UK Team

Dr. Carol Ireland – Course Director

- Registered psychologist with the Health Care Professions Council.
- Past Chair and past Vice-Chair of the Division of Forensic Psychology, part of the British Psychological Society.
- Research: Wide range of research interests, including: Violent and sexual offenders; cognitive deficits in sex offenders; mentally disordered sex offenders; attitudes towards sex offenders; coping and health among offenders and conflict management.
- She regularly undertakes a range of research projects, including in the NHS.
- Winner of the 'Excellence in Forensic Psychology' at the Medical Livewire Global Awards 2016

Prof. Jane Ireland

- Assoc. Fellow - British Psychological Society - Chartered Forensic Psychologist
- Accredited Expert Witness (Court Appointed Consultancy)
- Chair- BPS Division of Forensic Psychology
- Violence Treatment Lead and Highly Specialist Clinician Grade, Ashworth High Secure Hospital, Mersey Care NHS Trust 2005
- Research: Social psychology. Member of the Forensic research group and the Aggression research group.

Dr. Roxanne Khan (Course Director of BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology)

- British Psychological Society (Associate Fellow; Chartered Scientist; Chartered Psychologist; Affiliate Member of the Division of Forensic Psychology)
- Fellow of the International Society for Research on Aggression (IFAS)
- Trained in delivering Life Minus Violence treatment programme
- Trained in domestic violence risk assessment using the SARA
- 15 years' experience of working with perpetrators and victims of violence, in secure and community settings.
- She has worked with forensic clients and patients (including mentally disordered offenders) within the community, prison settings, and high-security hospitals.
- She has delivered both individual therapy and group-based psychological interventions, as well as individually-tailored interventions to increase awareness of sexual offending for non-offending parents (whose children who are made subject to a child protection order due to sexual abuse).
- Additional Research interests: family violence (e.g., sibling assaults, 'honour' violence, domestic and sexual abuse).

Dr. Nicola Graham-Kevan

- Chartered Psychologist, British Psychological Society (BPS)
- Associate Fellow of BPS, Member of the Division of Forensic Psychology
- Fellow of the International Society for Research on Aggression
- Research: She is an aggression researcher specialising in intimate partner violence. She also works with offenders with aggression management difficulties and design interventions. Her research interests also include risk factors for aggressive behavior; family violence, early adverse childhood experiences and adult functioning, psychological trauma and violence, stalking; personality and aggression.
- Leader of the Aggression research group at UCLan

Dr. Rachel Worthington

- Research: Violent and sexual offending; Staff-client relationships and burnout; Prison Officers; actuarial versus clinical decision making; Forensic cultures; Personality Disorder; Suicide and self-injury; Trauma; Aggression; Therapeutic Interventions for Personality Disorder (including dialectical behavior therapy, schema therapy and EMDR).

Dr. Joanne Bryce

- Member of the Evidence Group, UK Council for Child Internet Safety
- Member of the British Psychological Society
- Member of the Youth Commission of the World Leisure Organisation (WLO)
- Member of the Virtual Forum Against Cybercrime (VFAC)
- Research: Focus on the psychological, social and forensic aspects of the Internet and related technologies, with a specific focus on their use by young people, associated risk exposure and esafety. Other interests include: the role of ICTs in the commission of criminal offences; online privacy and security; online piracy and filesharing.
- Director of the Cyberspace Research Unit at UCLan and Member of the Aggression research group.

Dr. Jeannie Judge

- Research: Focus on cognitive and neuropsychological aspects of behavior, including issues related to laterality and hemispheric differences/interactions, along with interests in literacy skills, working memory and inhibitory control. She has been focusing on exploring individual differences in cognition through a series of studies examining visual selective attention.
- Member of the Cognitive Research group at UCLan

UCLan Cyprus Team

Lilia Psalta

She is research active within the area of **neuroscience and psychology** for the study of **neural and behavioural** assemblies that underline **facial and emotional perception**. She has worked with Police Officials in Cyprus and FBI graduates in Cyprus to endorse knowledge on issues of Corruption in the law enforcement officers. She also has experience with cognitive behavioural measurements for the investigation of combining approaches which can improve the **accuracy of face recognition**. Her research considers emerging techniques that have the potential to further our understanding of face recognition investigative tools like EvoFIT.

Militsa Nikiforou

She is research active in the areas of **Bullying and Victimization**, Parent-child relationship, adolescence, childhood, Cyberbullying; adolescents' problem behaviour; internalizing and externalizing problems in children; Sources of Parental knowledge; Parent-child conflict; delinquency; **antisocial behaviour during childhood and adolescence**; attitudes towards society.

Costas Antoniou

He has educational **background in Criminal and Forensic Psychology**. His current research interests are in the **facial composite systems, eyewitness testimonies, Forensic Lie Detecting and Restorative Justice**. He recently started working with Dr. Charlie Frowd (Preston, UK) in the Facial Composite systems area and more specifically to EvoFit.

Tasos Tziambos

He is a **certified Psychologist in Cyprus**. His research interests are within the field of **forensic and educational psychology**. His work focuses on various forms of **offending behaviour and substance abuse intervention programs** including young adults and adults. He participated in various intervention programs, including street work for the support of drug addicts. He worked with Andy-drug associations and clinics in Cyprus as well as the Barlinnie Prison in Scotland.

Nasia Hadjigeorgiou

Module leader of **Criminal Law** on the LLB (the undergraduate course in law) and has also been the module leader of **International Criminal Law** on the LLM (the postgraduate course in law). Part of her research focuses on the **impact of law, including criminal law, on societies that have suffered from serious crimes on a mass scale.**

Milto Hadjikyriakou

Statistician. Course leader of **BSc (Hons) Mathematics (with pathway in Statistics)**. She has experience with applying statistics in the Psychology setting and served as the module leader for Psychological Research Methods and Introduction to Methods and Psychological Inquiry

Alexia Zalaf

Her research focused on the cross-cultural examination of attitudes towards animal welfare and its **implications in animal abuse**, the interplay between **personality, morality and delinquency** within the above field and finally the implementation and assessment of a humane education programme in primary school children. Her research interests currently include the investigation of the animal welfare field within the scope of **dark personality traits and domestic violence in Cyprus.**