



mulDoc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: Date.

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Limassol
- **Town:** Limassol
- **Programme of study Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
Πτυχίον Ψυχολογίας
In English:
BSc in Psychology
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Κλινική και Συμβουλευτική Ψυχολογία, Γνωστική και Συμπεριφοριστική Νευροεπιστήμη
In English: Clinical and Counseling Psychology, Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience



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



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The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].



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.*

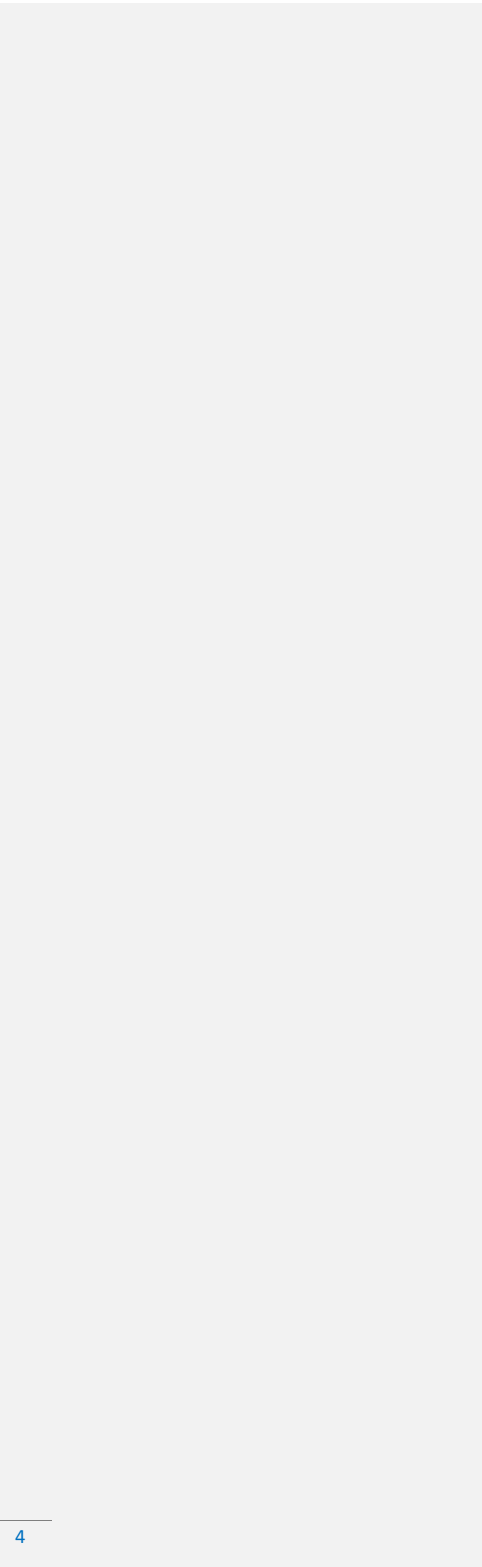


1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The number of ECTS devoted to research methods and statistics is low compared to BSc programmes in research-intensive universities (a typical programme might dedicate 60 or more ECTS to these topics).	We have revised the curriculum to increase the ECTS allocated to research methods and statistics by splitting the Research Methods in Psychology course into two separate courses: (1) Qualitative Research Methods and (2) Quantitative Research Methods. See Annex 13 -> Core (CD_*respective names.docx) This adjustment will ensure that our students receive comprehensive training in these crucial areas, bringing us in line with the standards of research-intensive universities. Furthermore, by adding these modules we have achieved 60 ECTS dedicated to research-related subjects: 1. Qualitative Research Methods - 7.5 ECTS, 2. Quantitative Research Methods - 7.5 ECTS, 3. Statistics in Psychology I - 7.5 ECTS, 4. Statistics in Psychology II - 7.5 ECTS, 5. Undergraduate Thesis I - 15 ECTS, 6. Undergraduate Thesis II - 15 ECTS.	Choose level of compliance:
Given the target number of students (n=30-50), offering four concentrations may be infeasible; once a student has chosen a concentration, relevant courses will have to be kept open even if enrollment falls below the target minimum (n=8), leading to large inefficiencies in teaching.	We have decided to streamline our offerings by reducing the number of concentrations to two: (i) Clinical and Counseling Psychology and (ii) Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience. This decision may be reviewed after the graduation of two student cohorts. This change will allow us to maintain efficiency and ensure that all courses are adequately staffed and attended, providing a more sustainable model for course offerings.	Choose level of compliance:



<p>For the sake of efficiency, the department might consider reshuffling the content of semesters 5 to 8 (e.g., making it possible to take electives in semester 7 and 8 too and organizing some of the electives only bi-annually). Other tweaks to the programme might include moving the Practicum to semesters 5–6, allowing students to concentrate on this one year and on their dissertation in the following year.</p>	<p>We have reorganized the curriculum for semesters 5 to 8. Electives will now be available in semesters 7 and 8 too, and some may be offered bi-annually. The Practicum has been moved to semesters 5 and 6, enabling students to focus on their dissertation in the final year. This restructuring will enhance the learning experience and optimize course availability.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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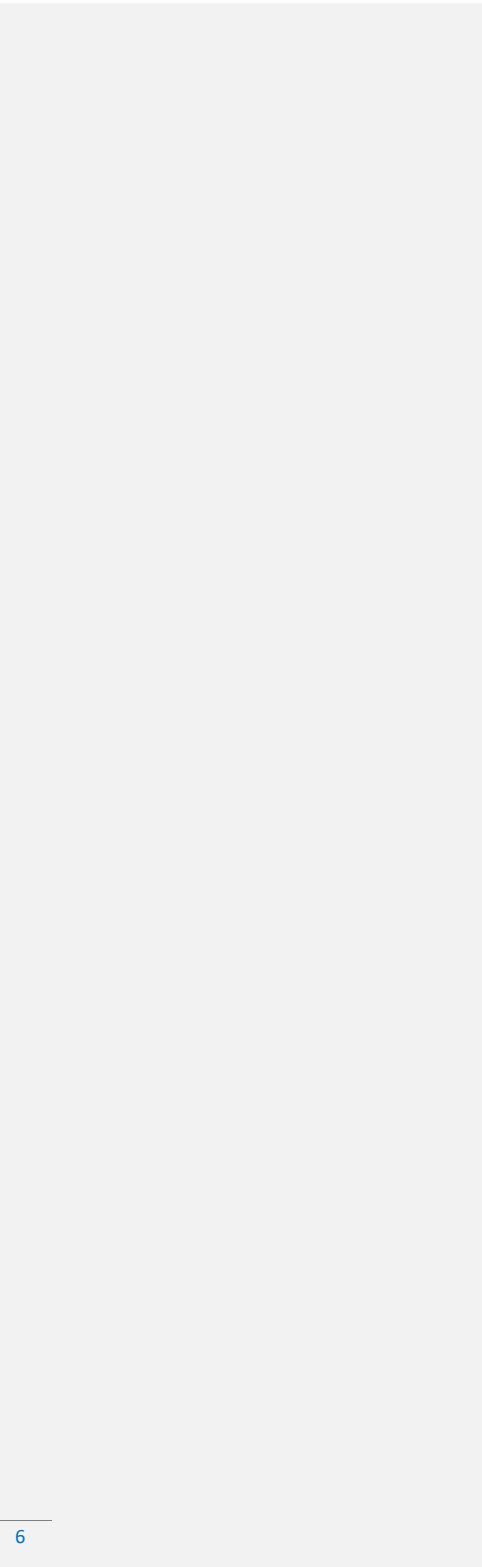


2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The Practicum involves placing potentially vulnerable students with vulnerable clients; care needs to be taken that all parties are safeguarded (and some clarity may be required on the legal position should anything go wrong).	We have created a consent form that students will sign prior to commencing their practicum and respective obligations (see Annex 12-> Consent Form). Protocols and additional training for students and supervisors involved in the Practicum will be designed and implemented. Legal and ethical guidelines have been clarified, and support systems have been strengthened to ensure the safety and well-being of both students and clients.	Choose level of compliance:
The department may need to consider developing the Practicum for students who speak English but not Greek.	Additional Practicum opportunities for English-speaking students are developed, including placements with English-speaking supervisors and clients. This ensures that all students, regardless of language proficiency, can benefit from practical experience.	Choose level of compliance:
Course outlines contain around 25 Learning Outcomes each. Given that Learning Outcomes form the basis of assessments (a course's assessments must match the Learning Outcomes) this is a hostage to fortune. We suggest that the Learning Outcomes are revised, to a maximum of five per course, in line with common international practice.	We have revised all course outlines to limit the number of Learning Outcomes to a maximum of five per course. This revision aligns with international best practices and ensures that assessments are clearly focused and manageable. See Annex 13 for all courses (Core and Electives).	Choose level of compliance:
The appeals process may need revising. In general, it is not a good idea to allow students to ask lecturers for a different grade. Grades should be final, and marks should be verified by a different member of academic staff (via a moderation process). Appeals should be adjudicated independently of the original marker.	We understand that allowing students to directly request grade changes from lecturers is not ideal. In alignment with practices at other universities, we propose that grades should be final and will be verified through a moderation process by a different academic staff member. To tackle such issues we have created an Appeals procedure (see Annex 6).	Choose level of compliance:



<p>The Distance Learning Assessment Framework guide could usefully be adapted for the conventional programme to ensure consistency of feedback and student support.</p>	<p>We have employed the Distance Learning Assessment Framework for the conventional program, and we will be standardizing the material across all classes with each instructor implementing the following, on a weekly basis: provide students (1) with one multimedia source i.e. video; (2) one interactive exercise; and (3) two reading sources. This adaptation ensures consistency in automated feedback and continuous student support across all modes of delivery and across courses enhancing the overall quality of the educational experience and without any additional load to the instructor.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The ambitious plans for student recruitment (admitting 170 students to two programmes, one of which is taught online in two languages, and both of which might require courses to be repeated across semesters, all this taught by 8–10 people) will threaten the highly valued aim to safeguard work-life balance.	We have adjusted our recruitment targets to more realistic numbers, by admitting only 20 students for the fall semester. Also, we will be increasing our teaching staff gradually in the coming years. This change ensures that we can maintain a healthy work-life balance for our staff while delivering high-quality education.	Choose level of compliance:
Also, the rapid ramping up of student numbers is incompatible with the clear mission of the department to make a name for itself in research. No member of such a small team will be able to remain research active under such a load.	In line with our adjusted recruitment targets, we have also restructured our staff workload distribution to ensure that faculty members have sufficient time for research activities (see Annex 2). This adjustment supports our mission to excel in both teaching and research.	Choose level of compliance:
In connection with this it is imperative that teaching load is modelled more accurately, and not just in terms of contact hours. It takes around 10 hours to prepare a new hour-long lecture; it takes around 2 to revise it for delivery in subsequent years. It takes around an hour to mark 3,000 words of student coursework. Without factoring these numbers in, there is no way to realistically honour the contracts academic staff have signed, which specify the percentage of their time that will be devoted to teaching.	Thank you for highlighting the importance of accurately modeling the teaching load, considering not just contact hours but also preparation and grading time. In recognition of the significant commitment required from academic staff to deliver high-quality teaching, we have developed an accurate framework of Teaching Load Calculation (see Annex 2). These will allow us to honor the contracts our academic staff have signed, ensure the high quality of their teaching and research endeavors, and promote a healthy work-life balance.	Choose level of compliance:
There is no clear plan for how teaching staff recruitment will proceed. Reference is made to filling the needs of teaching with part-time teaching staff.	We are hiring one more staff member to start in September 2024. This adjustment aims to safeguard the highly valued goal of maintaining a healthy work-life balance for all faculty members. With increased student intakes the following academic years, we plan	Choose level of compliance:



	<p>to hire a minimum of two additional full-time faculty in 2026 and two more in 2027 to meet our teaching requirements. In addition, some requirements (up to 30% of the classes) will be taught by talented Specialised Teaching Faculty (STF). The Department has already a Roster of highly qualified STF specialised staff that can be utilised in the future, as the need arises.</p>	
<p>There is a need for diversity in teaching staff specialties so that current members of the department are not forced to teach courses outside of their research and clinical interests and expertise.</p>	<p>We have recruited and will continue to recruit new faculty members with diverse specialties to ensure that each course is taught by staff with relevant expertise. This strategy minimizes the need for faculty to teach outside their areas of interest, enhancing the quality of education.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



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

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The minimum required score for English proficiency is at the lower end compared the requirements to be admitted in English-language bachelor programmes in other European universities (i.e. IELTS 5.5). It is more common to require a minimum IELTS score of 6.5.	We understand the importance of maintaining high standards for English proficiency in our program. Therefore, we have raised the minimum English proficiency requirement to an IELTS score of 6+. This change aligns our standards with those of other European universities and ensures that students have the necessary language skills for academic success.	Choose level of compliance:
The rules for student progression (a requirement to maintain a 70% average) are highly unusual for a BSc programme. The department should reconsider these. A standard approach would be to determine progression in terms of ECTS passed at the end of each year (allowing for resits). In many universities students who fail a single course in the first two years are awarded the credits anyway and allowed to progress.	We recognize that requiring a 70% average for progression is stringent for a BSc program. In alignment with standard practices with international universities, we have created a Progression Flowchart (see Annex 9).	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 programme increases in size the department may wish to focus on proactive support for students (e.g., uploading lecture slides at least 24 hours in advance to allow all students to benefit from a preview).	We recognize the importance of proactive support as our program grows. We will ensure that lecture slides and materials are uploaded at least 24 hours in advance, implement regular communication updates, and introduce Student Learning Advisors to provide additional support. These measures, informed by best practices from international universities, aim to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, enhancing student engagement and success. We will continuously gather and act on student feedback to improve these initiatives.	Choose level of compliance:
There is a single welfare officer, who appears to support students and staff, develop workshops/psychoeducation, ensure reasonable adjustments for learning and emotional difficulties, and provide one-to-one support sessions. Although the university remains small, there is a risk that one person can't handle such a workload effectively.	This is a valid observation, and we recognize the diverse range of responsibilities welfare officers undertake to support students and staff. UoL is currently small but as it grows larger, we have put in place a plan to hire additional staff to maintain high quality services and a realistic workload for our welfare officer(s). We anticipate the hiring of a second welfare officer by the start of AW 2025-2026.	Choose level of compliance:



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>This is a new programme which has clearly been designed with consideration for the market and for the role of a psychology programme in Cypriot society. It is to be taught by a young and talented team of research-active staff. Preparation is well underway, especially with regards to the academic content of the programme and its courses, and with regards to delivery (in terms of lectures with online support, interactive activities, etc.). Student support systems are in place; admirably, staff are being trained in student support and inclusivity.</p>	<p>We appreciate the positive feedback on the design and preparation of our new BSc in Psychology programme. Our team has worked diligently to ensure the programme meets the needs of the market and fulfills its role in Cypriot society. We have focused on creating robust academic content and effective delivery methods, including online support and interactive activities. Additionally, our commitment to student support and inclusivity is reflected in the ongoing training of our staff. We are dedicated to maintaining these high standards as we move forward.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>There are some issues, however, which will require attention before the degree launches. Most urgently, the student progression rules need to be rewritten so that they are suitable for a BSc (this will presumably be a university-wide undertaking).</p>	<p>We acknowledge the need to revise the student progression rules to ensure they are appropriate for a BSc programme (see Annex 9).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Similarly, the rules for student appeals should be revisited.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the student appeals process and have implemented changes to ensure it aligns with best practices (See Annex 6).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Many of the rest of our recommendations most likely stem from the huge enthusiasm shown for this programme by everyone the EEC met. There are several cases where more has been done than is necessary to get a programme underway. This could of course be seen as a positive, but with a small staff and a large amount of activity, we see reasons for caution (we have detailed the risks to the staff more explicitly in the review of the department).</p>	<p>We appreciate the recognition of our enthusiasm and dedication to launching this programme. However, we understand the need to balance enthusiasm with practicality. We are taking measures to ensure that our staff are not overburdened and that the programme is sustainable in the long term. This includes prioritising essential activities and carefully managing the scope of the programme.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>




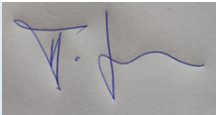

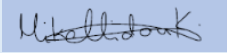

<p>One area of abundance is the number of pathways to be offered from the outset. We do not think it feasible, or necessary, to formalise these pathways at this stage. Instead, the degree can be advertised as allowing students to access the relevant expertise. In section 1, we have detailed the risks of offering several pathways at the outset. More generally, the department has a current list of 57 courses to be taught by 8 individuals. This is inadvisable: Even designing and listing courses which may not run carries a cost which is best avoided.</p>	<p>We have decided to simplify the programme structure by reducing the number of formalised pathways initially offered. This approach allows us to focus on core areas of expertise and ensures that we can deliver high-quality education with our current resources. Additionally, we have reviewed the course offerings and reduced the number to a more manageable list, prioritising those that are essential and sustainable.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Another example of the exuberance with which this degree has been designed concerns learning outcomes. Given that these form the bases of assessment, we advise strongly against listing courses with 25 or so learning outcomes. Five would be an appropriate maximum, and making this change may also help with horizontal and vertical review.</p>	<p>We have revised the learning outcomes for each course to a maximum of five. This change ensures that assessments are focused and manageable, and it will facilitate more effective horizontal and vertical reviews. This adjustment aligns with international best practices and enhances the overall coherence of the programme (see Annex 13).</p>	
<p>Finally, we suggest making psychology-taught elective courses available across semesters 5–8, for both pragmatic and pedagogical reasons (making more use of existing courses; giving students a greater breadth). Other tweaks to the programme might include moving the Practicum to semesters 5–6, allowing students to concentrate on this one year and on their dissertation in the following year. These are considerations rather than required changes, but we hope that this paragraph will act as a reminder of the constructive discussion on these topics during the EEC meeting.</p>	<p>We have taken these suggestions into consideration and adjusted the curriculum accordingly. Elective courses will now be available across semesters 5–8, providing students with greater flexibility and breadth in their studies. Additionally, we have moved the Practicum to semesters 5–6, allowing students to focus on their dissertation in the final year. These changes enhance the pedagogical and pragmatic aspects of the programme, reflecting the constructive discussions during the EEC meeting (see Annex 13).</p>	

C.



D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Commented [KM1]: Theo please add relevant table with signatures here.

Name	Position	Signature
Theodore Panayotou	Rector	
Vasilis Polimenis	Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance	
Doron Sonsino	Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities School	
Kyriaki Mikellidou	Vice-Chair of the Department	
Veronica Georgiades	Academic Affairs Manager	
Andreas Mathikolonis	President of Student Council	Andreas Mathikolonis

Date: 07.06.2024

