

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 08.07.25

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Limassol

- **Town:** Limassol

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

In Greek:

Ψυχολογία (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 180 ECTS,
Διδακτορικό, PhD)

In English:

Psychology (4 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctor of
Philosophy, PhD)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English & Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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 University has taken a positive first step with its policy on generative AI. Consider providing a standardized AI usage statement or disclaimer in all course syllabi (including in the thesis dissertation), alongside any assessment-specific guidance on AI usage, to ensure consistent expectations.	<p>We appreciate the Committee's recommendation regarding the standardized and transparent integration of generative AI usage policies. In response, UoL has taken the following steps to ensure that AI-related academic integrity expectations are consistently communicated while allowing flexibility across different pedagogical contexts:</p> <p>Tailored AI Guidelines in Each Course Description (attached): Instead of a one-size-fits-all disclaimer, we have opted for a more nuanced and course-relevant approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Course Description now includes an assessment-specific AI usage policy aligned with the learning outcomes and assessment types of the respective module. Faculty have developed these guidelines with support from the Program Director and QA Committee, ensuring consistency while allowing for disciplinary appropriateness (e.g., AI use in coding, data analysis, or writing support). These statements specify whether AI tools are permitted, under what conditions, and how students must declare their use transparently. <p>Example Topics Covered in Course-Level Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether AI can be used for brainstorming, summarizing literature, or data visualization. Requirements for citing AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, 	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>DALL·E, SPSS AI modules) in submissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification that non-disclosure or misrepresentation constitutes academic misconduct under the UoL Integrity Policy. <p>Integration into Research and Dissertation Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course <i>PSY801: Epistemology, Scientific Method, and Research Ethics</i> now includes a dedicated seminar on the ethical implications and responsible use of generative AI in academic research. Dissertation guidelines will include a clear policy on AI use in thesis development, including how and when it may be cited, and what constitutes inappropriate use. <p>Dissemination and Oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program Director will communicate the policy to all involved faculty, and implementation has been completed for the Course Description. 	
Ensure that external information has detailed admissions criteria that are programme-appropriate.	<p>UoL acknowledges the importance of providing clear, detailed, and program-specific admissions criteria for all study programs. In response to the committee's recommendation:</p> <p>The PhD in Psychology webpage, digital prospectus, and external-facing materials includes a dedicated section titled "Admissions Requirements", outlining in detail the following points (this will go live as soon as the PhD program is accredited):</p> <p>PhD in Psychology Admissions Criteria (to be displayed externally)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Master's degree (MA or MSc) in any field of 	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>Psychology or a related field from a recognized and accredited institution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong academic performance with a minimum GPA of 80% or equivalent. Exceptionally qualified candidates holding honours bachelor degrees may be considered on a case-by-case basis with approval from the PhD Faculty Committee, after an interview. <p>Research Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated competence in research methods and academic writing. First-author peer-reviewed publications will be considered as an advantage. Strong quantitative and/or computational skills, as evidenced by coursework or research output. <p>Application Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Statement of Purpose outlining academic background, motivation, research interests, and alignment with UoL's program. A preliminary research proposal (~1500 words), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research questions and significance Proposed methodology Key literature overview Preliminary timeline <p>References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three (3) letters of recommendation from academic or professional referees. <p>Supervisor Declaration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates must list preferred supervisors from the Department of Psychology during their application. These preferences are reviewed during the interview. <p>English Language Proficiency</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IELTS 6.5 / TOEFL (iBT 100, CBT 250, PBT 600) or equivalent. Special Provisions ○ EU applicants not meeting the above language standards will take the UoL Placement Test and, if necessary, complete a remedial English course. Non-EU applicants must provide certified proof of “Very Good Knowledge” in English (B2+ level). Interview ○ A successful interview with the PhD Faculty Committee, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Program Director ▪ Proposed supervisor ▪ A faculty member with expertise in the research field ▪ A faculty member specializing in research methods ▪ A psychology department member or faculty from a related field 	
Engagement with external stakeholders should go beyond the current discussions of potential PhD-based research collaboration to consider discussions about programme content such that students of this PhD programme can be trained via a syllabus which is informed in appropriate approaches to engagement with experts by experience and patient consultation groups.	<p>UoL acknowledges the importance of embedding meaningful stakeholder engagement and patient consultation into doctoral-level training, particularly within applied psychological research contexts.</p> <p>Actions Taken / To Be Implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of Advisory Board Role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, health sector partners, community organizations such as the Cyprus Stroke Association) will now be formally involved in periodic reviews not only of research themes but also of program content. 	Choose level of compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They will provide feedback on how modules could better prepare students for real-world interaction with patient groups and community beneficiaries. <p>2. Curriculum Enrichment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of PSY805: <i>Academic Research Design, Writing and Dissemination</i>, we will introduce a unit on public engagement, co-production of knowledge, and ethical collaboration with patient groups and community partners. ○ Students will be exposed to case studies on PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) and guided on how to integrate such practices into their dissertation design and methodology. <p>3. Training Opportunities for Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PhD students will be encouraged to attend or co-organize seminars or focus groups with service users, caregivers, or professional stakeholders, where relevant to their research. ○ Research proposal evaluation will incorporate a review criterion on engagement with stakeholders or ethical public involvement, where appropriate. <p>4. Supervision & Dissertation Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervisors will be encouraged to guide students in identifying opportunities for consultation with patient or public representatives, 	
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	<p>especially for studies in clinical, health, and educational psychology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant external partners will be invited to serve in informal consultative roles, advising on dissemination, research design relevance, and community impact. 	
<p>We recommend that a period of study in research labs overseas be built into the programme as a mandatory requirement, and the appropriate resourcing arrangements be put in place to support this.</p>	<p>UoL appreciates the committee's recommendation to strengthen the program's international research orientation through a structured overseas lab experience. We fully support the value of such engagement for broadening methodological exposure, fostering global networks, and reinforcing a culture of collaborative psychological research.</p> <p>Planned Implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> New Mandatory Component: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short-term research lab visit (3-6 months) will be introduced as a mandatory milestone during the dissertation research phase (typically during the 4th or 5th semester). This visit will allow students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with international experts aligned with their research. Access advanced methodologies and technologies not available locally. Strengthen publication and dissemination outcomes. Develop professional networks and cross-cultural competencies. Resourcing and Support: 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UoL will allocate funding to partly support these placements, either through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicated mobility scholarships, or ▪ Co-financing mechanisms with partner institutions or funded research projects. ○ A dedicated staff member from the International Relations Office and the Department of Psychology will provide logistical support. <p>3. Academic Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The visit is be integrated into the PSY810: Dissertation Research – Data Collection & Analysis phase. ○ Students will be required to submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A lab visit proposal (host institution, objectives, timeline). ▪ A reflective report upon return summarizing activities, learning outcomes, and how the experience influenced their research. <p>4. Network Activation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The department already maintains active international collaborations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strathclyde University (UK) ▪ King's College London (UK) ▪ University of Florence (Italy) ▪ University of Pisa (Italy) ▪ European networks via EAWOP, EAOHP, and Marie 	
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	<p>Skłodowska-Curie projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These relationships will be leveraged to formalize a network of host labs. 	
<p>We recommend a review of the structure of the programme and whether the 3 year arrangement with the key checkpoints in regard to course completion, successful proposal and PhD dissertation development and submission are appropriate to the wide range of different PhD projects which could be undertaken. The particular concern here is to build into the programme an appropriate level of flexibility such that students are not held up in their progress due to the interaction between progress points and factors outside their control such as hold-ups in ethical review.</p>	<p>Context & Justification of Current Structure:</p> <p>The current PhD in Psychology programme at the University of Limassol is structured as a 3-year, 180 ECTS doctoral programme, aligning with the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF Level 8). The programme's structure includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1: Coursework (80 ECTS) Year 2: Dissertation Proposal & Initial Research Phases (30 ECTS) Year 3: Completion of Dissertation Research, Presentation, and Defence (70 ECTS) <p>This framework was designed to support a structured and supervised progression, while ensuring timely completion in line with standard European doctoral timelines.</p> <p>Incorporating Flexibility:</p> <p>We acknowledge the committee's concern regarding potential constraints posed by rigid progression checkpoints, especially in light of the diversity of psychological research projects. In response, the following enhancements were made:</p> <p>Adjustments for Greater Flexibility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Optional Extension Track (3.5–4 Years): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may opt for an extension semester or academic year without penalty if delays arise due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical review processes Data access delays 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fieldwork complications ▪ Supervisory or institutional availability <p>2. Revised Timeline Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Course Descriptions will clearly distinguish between mandatory milestones and recommended timelines, reinforcing that the programme is structured yet adaptable. <p>3. Ethics Review Contingency Clause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A formal clause is added to the PSY808 (Proposal) and PSY809–810 (Dissertation Research) modules, allowing automatic milestone rescheduling if ethical clearance delays are documented. <p>4. Advisory Committee Checkpoints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students will benefit from biannual advisory meetings (not just at proposal and defence stages), where any delays or anticipated challenges can be formally discussed and flexible adjustments approved. <p>5. Independent Research Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A <i>modular milestone</i> model will be introduced (e.g., Literature Review, Data Collection, Analysis), allowing students to move forward on non-contingent tasks while awaiting external approvals for others. 	
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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
There is no mention of training in open science, reproducibility, digital collaboration platforms.	<p>We acknowledge the importance of training PhD students in open science and digital collaboration. To address this recommendation, the following updates are implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Science and Reproducibility: These will be introduced through PSY801 and PSY805. Specifically, PSY805 now includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ An updated lecture on pre-registration practices, open data repositories, and open access publishing. ◦ Discussion and application of tools such as the Open Science Framework (OSF) and SPARC Europe guidelines. • Digital Collaboration Platforms: PSY803 and PSY806 formally integrate training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cloud-based platforms (e.g., Overleaf for collaborative writing, Miro/MURAL for brainstorming). ◦ Use of version control and file-sharing systems (e.g., GitHub and OSF). ◦ Peer-review workflows using online commenting, versioning, and structured response sheets. • Documentation: These additions are reflected in the updated syllabi. 	Choose level of compliance:
Despite the growing relevance of digital research ecosystems and hybrid learning, the programme currently shows limited integration of advanced digital	<p>We are enhancing our digital research ecosystem through a phased rollout of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-Level Integration: 	

<p>tools to support collaborative and modern research practices. Tools such as qualitative coding tools, machine learning platforms for data analysis, cloud-based collaborative writing tools, and virtual lab simulations can significantly enhance both the research output and student engagement. Additionally, offering elements of online supervision or peer research forums can support students. The University is suggested to encourage digital literacy and digital ethics training as part of research methods modules. Consider piloting a digital research lab or virtual supervision hub.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSY807 (Scientific Programming) already covers machine learning and computational modelling in neuroscience. This has been further expanded to demonstrate cross-disciplinary applications (e.g., data pipelines in psychological research). ○ PSY806 (Qualitative Methods) incorporates RQDA for qualitative data analysis. ○ Virtual collaboration in PSY805 now includes structured peer manuscript reviewing using Google Docs. • Digital Literacy and Ethics: A new sub-unit in PSY801 covers digital research ethics, including issues of algorithmic bias, data privacy, and platform accountability. • Infrastructure Investment: The university will launch a Digital Research Support Lab (DRSL), serving as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A virtual lab space for cloud-based collaboration. ○ A central hub for methodological and technical consultations. 	
<p>Nearly all core dissertation-linked courses (PSY808–814) are assessed on a pass/fail basis, which may not capture the depth of doctoral progression or enable early identification of academic underperformance. A suggestion around this is to include at least formative detailed grading rubrics or evaluative comments for internal benchmarking.</p>	<p>We are retaining the Pass/Fail format to uphold flexibility and reduce performance anxiety at this level, but enhancing assessment transparency and feedback in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative Evaluations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of standardized progress rubrics at each checkpoint from PSY808 to PSY815. ○ Supervisors will complete structured progress reports each semester, commenting on research rigor, independence, and innovation. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking and Self-Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be asked to maintain a PhD Progress Portfolio, which includes written feedback, milestones achieved, and peer/supervisor evaluations. 	
Although individual supervision is robust, peer-based learning (collaborative workshops, peer reviews, journal clubs) is either optional or minimally integrated (only mentioned in PSY805/PSY804).	<p>To strengthen peer-based learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctoral Research Seminar Series: Monthly gatherings for peer presentation and critique. PhD Journal Club: To be scheduled alongside PSY804 and PSY805, linking course topics to real-world studies. Writing Circles and Mock Defences: As already included in PSY812. Course Descriptions Enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSY805 and PSY804 have been updated to reference mandatory peer workshops. Each student will participate in at least two peer-feedback sessions during Year 1. 	Choose level of compliance:
Most research progression is tracked through biweekly supervisor meetings. While valuable, this places significant responsibility on individual supervisors and may limit diverse feedback or early detection of student distress or disengagement.	<p>While supervisor-led guidance remains critical, we are building more structure into the feedback and progression system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalized Tracking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a PhD Progress Dashboard, monitored by the Program Director and Dissertation Advisory Committee, capturing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting summaries. Supervisor evaluations. Student reflections. Diversifying Feedback Sources: 	Choose level of compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mid-year group review sessions (virtual and in-person). ○ Annual presentation at the Doctoral Colloquium to gather multi-faculty feedback. • Student Wellbeing Checks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embedded touchpoints with Student Support Services for optional wellbeing check-ins, especially during high-stress milestones (e.g., PSY808, PSY813). 	
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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
Currently only two faculty members are employed at Associate and Full Professor level. It is recommended that PhD supervision should always be led by a faculty member at Associate level or above, who can guide the assistant professor through the process of PhD supervision and that a PhD supervision training course be implemented for staff who have not supervised a PhD student to completion, either by experienced faculty members at University of Limassol or staff attend courses held at other universities. Sufficient time should be allocated to mentorship.	<p>UoL acknowledges the importance of having experienced supervision for PhD candidates and agrees with the EEC's recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision by Senior Faculty: As per existing policy, PhD students will be supervised by faculty members holding the rank of Associate Professor or above. Assistant Professors may participate as co-supervisors but not lead supervisors. Staff Recruitment: One resident faculty has been appointed at the level of Professor. This is Professor Christos Lionis, MD, PhD, FRCGP(Hon), FESC, FWONC (Citations: 47,698; h-index of 70), Emeritus Professor at the University of Crete (expertise in Medicine, Ethics). Two more Visiting Professors have accepted our offer and will be onboarded in the next months. Professor Jan Vermunt (Citations: 23155, H-Index: 65), with previous appointments in Tilburg University and University of Cambridge (expertise in Psychology & Education) and Visiting Associate Professor Panayiotis Gkorezis (Citations: 2,243, H-Index: 27), who is an Associate Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (expertise in Organisational Behaviour/Psychology). Staff Promotion: One Assistant Professor is currently eligible for 	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>promotion and will be applying for it in October 2025. Others become eligible in September 2026, January 2027, and June 2027. This structured progression ensures that, by the time students begin dissertation work, the Department will be anchored by a well-prepared supervisory body spanning all academic ranks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship for Early-Career Faculty: The Department has already instituted a mentorship model where Assistant Professors are paired with senior colleagues (Associate or Full Professors) to guide their supervisory development. • Structured Supervisor Training: The Department has adopted a comprehensive 5-Year Supervisor Training and Mentorship Plan, which begins in September 2025 and extends through 2030. This plan ensures that supervision capacity is developed not only before the launch of the programme but also across the full duration of doctoral projects. Completion of PhD supervision training will be mandatory for any faculty member co-supervising a doctoral candidate for the first time (Appendix 2). 	
<p>The University should ensure that faculty have sufficient research time to engage actively in research so that a dynamic research environment can be created in which PhD students can thrive.</p>	<p>UoL is committed to ensuring that all faculty members have protected time for research. The typical (with some variations) faculty workload is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% Research • 30% Teaching • 20% Administrative Duties • 10% Community Outreach <p>Additional adjustments to reduce administrative loads for early-</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	career academics are already being implemented, especially for those engaged in research-intensive activities and doctoral supervision and for those holding administrative positions (i.e. Department Heads, Dean, Vice-Rectors). During the annual Strategic Week of the Department of Psychology every September workload is assessed and rebalanced where needed.	
Staff should make efforts to be involved in international research networks. We recommend extensive efforts be made to establish networks through staff mobility periods at other institutions, funded by the university or ERASMUS+ staff mobility funding. This will lay the groundwork for future Doctoral Training Network applications and increase chances of a successful application.	<p>We strongly agree with the EEC's recommendation and are already actively pursuing internationalisation goals: UoL encourages and funds international research collaboration and is actively pursuing Doctoral Training Networks under Horizon Europe and MSCA-DN schemes. Faculty have access to Erasmus+ Mobility Funding, and bilateral agreements with institutions in France, Germany, Italy, Greece, India, Brazil, and more.</p> <p>The Department implements Research Sabbatical Leave (short- and long-term options) to allow faculty to build strategic international networks.</p> <p>UoL has also established a working group to support grant writing and participation in EU consortia, offering administrative and editorial support.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
In many EU countries and beyond, it is an expectation that PhD students gain experience with teaching during the course of their PhD. This can be beneficial both for the student in terms of future employment opportunities, and for the institution, and promotes synergies between research-active teachers and course content. We recommend that the department considers ways in which they could integrate PhD	<p>We recognize the dual benefits of PhD student teaching involvement and are taking steps to support this responsibly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Year 2 onwards, PhD students may assist (i.e., Teaching Assistant) in undergraduate and Master's courses under faculty supervision. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading tutorial groups Grading formative assessments 	Choose level of compliance:

<p>students into teaching at the undergraduate or Masters level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing lab or research method support • From Year 3 onwards, PhD student can begin teaching courses in their entirety (no more than one course per semester) • All PhD teaching assistants will undergo a short pedagogical training workshop provided by the UoL Teaching & Learning Centre. • Their participation will be optional and tracked in their doctoral training log, providing teaching experience without compromising research progress. 	
<p>We suggest that careful consideration is required to ensure that workloads for the early career academics are balanced in a way to support the development of programmes of research which put in place adequate foundations for strong research career development. This is important to ensure a dynamic research environment for future PhD students.</p>	<p>We are committed to nurturing our early-career academics and recognize that unbalanced workloads can hinder both career development and student supervision quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New faculty are assigned reduced administrative duties during their first three years. • Research-active junior faculty receive individual mentoring plans, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research agenda development ○ Publication strategy ○ Grant applications • All junior academics are encouraged to apply for seed funding, conference travel support, and internal writing retreats to support publication and networking. • These efforts aim to cultivate a dynamic and supportive research culture, directly benefiting the PhD student environment. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The programme's current visibility and accessibility for international applicants could be significantly strengthened. At present, there is limited evidence of a targeted internationalisation strategy or bespoke support structures specifically tailored to international students. Furthermore, providing dedicated orientation sessions for non-Cypriot or international students, visa and relocation support, and accessible pre-arrival information (e.g., housing, healthcare, cultural adaptation) would significantly improve the experience and retention of students from diverse backgrounds. The University is suggested to develop and implement a targeted internationalisation strategy that includes international marketing campaigns, digital outreach in key regions, and the establishment of a dedicated international student services team.</p>	<p>UoL fully agrees that a more robust internationalisation strategy and enhanced support for international PhD candidates is essential for the long-term sustainability and global impact of this program. To this end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A targeted internationalisation strategy for doctoral studies is currently under development. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Digital outreach campaigns in key regions (e.g., MENA, South Asia, and Europe). ◦ Dedicated web content in English with FAQs on relocation, healthcare, visa processes, and housing. ◦ Virtual information sessions with faculty and admissions officers. • The UoL International Office will expand its remit to provide bespoke support for PhD applicants and students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Visa and immigration assistance. ◦ Cultural integration orientation at the beginning of the academic year. ◦ Ongoing access to language and intercultural workshops. ◦ Liaison support with national healthcare providers (e.g., GESY system) and accommodation agencies. • As part of the student welcome process, a Doctoral Orientation Program specifically tailored to 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>international students will be launched annually. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to Cyprus's academic culture and ethical research expectations. ○ Student testimonials and support group initiatives. 	
<p>While the programme documentation acknowledges the existence of relevant infrastructure, it lacks comprehensive detail regarding the specific research tools, psychological laboratories, testing environments, software platforms, or data collection instruments available to PhD candidates. In research-intensive programmes, especially in psychology, access to further well-equipped laboratories, qualitative/quantitative data analysis software, and clinical or field testing environments is critical. The absence of a detailed inventory may lead to uncertainty among prospective students about the feasibility and scope of their intended research. The University could include a detailed section in programme materials outlining available laboratory facilities, specialist software, and research equipment. Consider offering virtual tours or lab showcase sessions during open days and online admissions events.</p>	<p>UoL recognizes the importance of transparency regarding available infrastructure and equipment – particularly for research-intensive doctoral programs such as this one. To enhance clarity and accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PhD in Psychology webpage and admissions material include a detailed inventory of (webpage will go live as soon as the program is accredited): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available laboratory and testing facilities. ○ Licensed qualitative and quantitative software (e.g., R, Jamovi, RQDA, Python). ○ Available neuropsychological assessment tools and psychometric test batteries (e.g., WISC / WAIS, BDI, BAI, ADIS). ○ Access to virtual labs, EEG/VR tools, and clinical simulation tools via UoL and partner institutions. • A dedicated Research Infrastructure Guide is being prepared for prospective and enrolled students. It will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lab access policies and booking procedures. ○ Research support staff contacts. ○ Ethical approval process and collaboration guidelines with 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>clinical/community settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual lab tours and interactive open days will be hosted regularly to increase visibility and engagement, especially for remote applicants. 	
<p>While the academic standards of the programme are commendable, there is a missed opportunity in not explicitly linking doctoral training with post-doctoral career trajectories, both academic and non-academic. There is limited mention of structured partnerships with industry, NGOs, public sector organisations, or international research institutes that could offer internships, collaborative research projects, or placements. Furthermore, career development workshops, grant writing training, or post-doctoral fellowship guidance are not currently formalised within the curriculum. The University should attempt to establish a formal career development framework that integrates employability-focused activities, post-doctoral pathway mapping, and collaborative agreements with industry partners. Create a dedicated research and innovation hub to support grant applications, knowledge transfer, and impact-driven research projects.</p>	<p>UoL is committed to providing a coherent framework for career development beyond the PhD. The following steps are being implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the UoL Research Centre, students will be supported in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in collaborative EU research consortia. Accessing knowledge transfer platforms and IP-related services. Engaging in impact-focused research activities with public, private, and third-sector partners. The Department is in the process of formalizing MOUs with NGOs, schools, hospitals, and public sector agencies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internships and placements. Community-based participatory research. Policy-oriented dissertation collaborations. PhD students will also be given opportunities to contribute to undergraduate and master's teaching, thereby gaining teaching experience relevant for academic positions. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

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
Limited Physical Library Holdings: While the digital library is strong, the physical library remains limited in psychology-specific holdings. It is suggested that the University continues expanding the physical collection of psychology texts and journals. Ensure the upcoming integration with Scopus and the Cyprus Library Access System is prioritised and completed as planned.	<p>UoL acknowledges the current limitations of its physical library in psychology-specific resources. While our digital holdings remain extensive and continually updated (including access to EBSCO, JSTOR, and ProQuest Psychology), we have already taken steps to strengthen our physical collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A budget allocation for psychology print materials has been approved for the next academic year. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core reference texts in clinical, cognitive, and educational psychology. Peer-reviewed journals (print editions) for use in faculty-led research labs and reading groups. The integration with Scopus and the Cyprus Library Access System (CLAS) is in the final implementation phase and will be completed before the next academic cycle, ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-institutional borrowing access. Full-text searchability for students across Cypriot university libraries. The University Library has also committed to quarterly updates of recommended course-specific readings, ensuring students have access to newly published psychology research in both physical and digital formats. 	Choose level of compliance:
Fragmented Communication of Student Services: Students are informed of services through various platforms (portal, handbook, faculty emails), which	UoL agrees that a more centralized approach is essential to improve visibility and access to student services. A Unified Student Services Portal (MyUoL)	Choose level of compliance:

<p>may lead to inconsistent awareness or underuse of resources. It is suggested that the University consolidates all student services (academic, personal, IT, and well-being) into a centralised digital dashboard or single portal with a searchable index and contact directory.</p>	<p>is currently being developed with IT Services and will launch in beta format by the start of the next academic year. The portal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as a single point of access to academic, well-being, IT, and advisory services. ○ Feature a searchable services index, visual guides, and embedded FAQs. ○ Include a live chat and contact directory for key service offices. <p>All students, including doctoral candidates, will be introduced to this system during orientation and receive regular reminders through institutional emails and Moodle integrations.</p>	
<p>Mental Health and Well-being Support Capacity: Current well-being services rely heavily on advisors and one wellness officer. There is a lack of dedicated mental health professionals for doctoral students who may face isolation, stress, or burnout. The University is advised to employ an additional registered mental health practitioner and consider establishing a peer-mentorship programme for doctoral candidates, particularly those balancing studies with employment or caregiving.</p>	<p>UoL recognizes the particular mental health challenges PhD students face, including burnout, isolation, and work-life pressures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoL has approved the recruitment of an additional registered mental health professional to begin by the new academic year. This expands our well-being services beyond the current model, which includes one wellness officer and student advisors. • The department will launch a Peer Mentorship Program for Doctoral Students that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voluntary training for senior PhD students to mentor junior colleagues. ○ Emphasis on well-being, research challenges, time management, and academic integration. • Faculty will also integrate check-in mechanisms during supervisor meetings and build flexibility for mental health-related absences into dissertation timelines. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students also have access to clinical psychology services through the national health system, i.e., GeSY. 	
<p>Resource Planning for Future Scaling: The institution anticipates growth, but detailed contingency planning for short-term increases in student numbers is lacking. It is thus suggested that a scaling plan for academic supervision ratios is formulated that will also include additional research facilities, and enhanced digital resources. This will ensure transitional resource allocation is in place before the new campus opens.</p>	<p>UoL is actively preparing for the anticipated growth in PhD enrolment and recognizes the importance of planning for scalable academic support and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Phased Expansion Plan aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain optimal supervisor-to-student ratios (currently 1:1 max for PhD supervision by Assistant Professors and 1:3 for Associate and Full Professors). Recruit additional faculty in line with enrolment targets and emerging student research interests. Additional investment in digital infrastructure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of access to cloud-based software for research collaboration. Enhanced Moodle integrations for dissertation progress tracking and feedback. UoL's new campus development incorporates dedicated postgraduate research spaces, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual and collaborative research areas. Quiet zones and doctoral candidate break-out rooms. VR-ready teaching and research suites. 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Physical research facilities: The research profiles of many of the faculty members proposed for PhD research supervision (especially under the "Neuroscience and Cognitive Psychology" topics among others imply significant requirements of equipment and software for</p>	<p>UoL acknowledges the need to strengthen infrastructure for specialized research in areas such as neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and virtual reality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive audit of research equipment and space requirements is already underway in 	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>supporting PhD research on this programme (e.g., VR, neuroscience methods). Although there are early stage gestures towards establishing such infrastructure (e.g., neuroscience analysis tools, a VR suite under construction), these are at an early stage of development. We recommend that a full analysis of these equipment needs and physical space requirements be carried out in order to present a more compelling case that staff research programmes can be supported in the context of PhD research.</p>	<p>collaboration with the Psychology Department and the Research Centre. The findings will inform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purchasing plans for equipment (e.g., eye-tracking devices, EEG systems, advanced VR kits). ○ Allocation of lab space and construction timelines aligned with dissertation research demands. • Interim measures already in place include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to partner institutions and clinical environments for data collection. ○ Use of portable neurocognitive assessment tools and secure cloud-based analysis platforms. • Doctoral students are also introduced to simulation tools and digital data environments within PSY805 and PSY807, enabling them to proceed with research even before the physical lab build-out is finalized. 	
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
According to the materials provided, The Academic Committee is chaired by a faculty member who is at the associate professor rank (or beyond), a guideline we support. Currently however, the program has only 1-2 such faculty members, which significantly constrains the choice options for the students as well as the content domain for doctoral work.	<p>We acknowledge the current limitation in the number of Associate and Full Professors in the Department of Psychology. However, we have already launched recruitment efforts to strengthen senior faculty capacity and supervision breadth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new position for a senior academic (Associate/Full Professor) is currently advertised to enhance supervision options and strengthen content domain expertise. • Two members will be proceeding for promotion to Associate Professor positions, within the next year. • Until the senior faculty pool expands, supervision teams will incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One Associate/Full Professor as Lead Supervisor. ○ Assistant Professors as co-supervisors or committee members. ○ A faculty mentorship system to support Assistant Professors in developing supervisory capacity. <p>This ensures that PhD supervision is compliant with both institutional policy and international best practices.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
While the curriculum appears strong, it lacks explicit reference to benchmarking against international PhD level programmes or frameworks (e.g., APA, BPS, or European Doctoral Programmes).	<p>We have conducted an internal benchmarking exercise comparing our curriculum with established doctoral frameworks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA (American Psychological Association) Doctoral Competency Benchmarks. 	Choose level of compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPS (British Psychological Society) Standards for Accreditation of Doctoral Programmes. • The European Qualifications Framework (EQF Level 8). <p>We will update our public-facing documents to reference this alignment.</p>	
To ensure that the research component of the PhD is aligned with international standards, the program may consider including a requirement that one member of the dissertation committee be external to Cyprus.	<p>We support this recommendation and will update our policy to include at least one dissertation committee member from a university or research institution outside Cyprus. This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure international perspectives in the evaluation process. • Strengthen alignment with international doctoral quality assurance standards. <p>External members must be experts in the thesis subject area and meet academic eligibility criteria.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
Lack of Dissertation Word Count and Publication Format Standards: There is no formally stated minimum or maximum word count or clear policy on dissertation formatting beyond structural expectations. The suggestion includes adopting and publishing minimum standards for dissertation length, chapter content, and formatting. Consider providing templates or examples aligned with APA or equivalent scientific style guides.	<p>We will revise the PhD Dissertation Guidelines to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recommended word count of 60,000–80,000 words, excluding appendices and references. • Structural expectations for each chapter (e.g., Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion). • Use of APA (7th edition) as the official formatting and referencing style. • Provision of a template and formatting checklist via Moodle. <p>This ensures transparency and consistency across dissertations.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
No Formal Cap on Supervisee Load per Faculty: There is no policy limiting the number of PhD students supervised simultaneously by a single faculty	<p>To safeguard supervision quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are instituting a formal policy limiting primary PhD supervision to 3 candidates 	Choose level of compliance:

member, potentially risking supervisor overload and diminished student support. The University should introduce a maximum supervisee ratio per academic year (e.g., 5 PhD candidates per primary supervisor) and monitor staff workloads annually to ensure effective student mentoring.	<p>per academic year per faculty member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is monitored annually via the Departmental Council and QA Committee. Additional co-supervisors will be assigned when necessary, ensuring appropriate faculty workload balance and continuous student support. 	
Minimal Guidance on Dissertation-to-Workforce Relevance: There is insufficient analysis of the labour market value of the PhD outside academia or structured links to public, private, or NGO sectors. It is suggested that the University provides a formal section in the dissertation guidelines that requires students to articulate potential societal, economic, or professional applications of their work. Consider adding applied research seminars or workshops on knowledge translation and impact.	<p>We are enhancing employability-focused elements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring a section in the dissertation discussing potential professional, economic, or societal impact of the research. Introducing a “Knowledge Translation and Research Impact” workshop under PSY805 to train students in research-policy translation and public engagement. Creating formal agreements with public/private/NGO sectors for collaborative dissertations, internships, or co-supervised work. 	
Peer Review and Supervisor Feedback Practices Could Be Strengthened: While peer feedback and supervisor interactions are frequent, they are not uniformly documented or structured in a transparent feedback system. Implement semesterly progress reports from both students and supervisors, using structured templates reviewed by programme directors. Add peer review workshops to support inter-cohort critique and scholarly collaboration.	<p>To formalize monitoring and feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biannual progress report templates will be submitted by both supervisors and students, reviewed by the Programme Director. We are expanding peer-based activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PhD Research Journal Club (monthly). Peer Review Workshops embedded into PSY805 and PSY812. Encouraged use of online platforms for peer discussion and co-feedback (e.g., Moodle forums). 	
Need for Plagiarism Policy Integration Across the Curriculum: While plagiarism checks are required at dissertation submission, earlier integration of academic integrity	<p>We are introducing formal training in Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Integrity and Research Ethics Workshop, delivered during the first semester (within PSY802). 	

<p>training is limited in documentation. The University is suggested to introduce formal workshops on academic integrity, referencing, and responsible conduct of research in Year 1 (e.g., in PSY802 or PSY803), including the use of plagiarism detection software for interim work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Turnitin for all formative and summative submissions from the first year. • Integration of research ethics, referencing styles, and proper citation practices into the assessment rubrics of PSY803 and PSY805. <p>Students sign such a Declaration through Moodle.</p>	
<p>Formal arrangements for collaborations with stakeholders should be spelled out - including in terms of publication rights and authorship etc.</p>	<p>To ensure clarity and fairness in collaborative research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All dissertation collaborations with external stakeholders will follow formal MoUs outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Data ownership, publication rights, and authorship criteria (aligned with ICMJE and APA ethical guidelines). ◦ Ethics approval obligations and intellectual property terms. • These agreements will be reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee and Legal Office. <p>A Stakeholder Collaboration Protocol will guide students and supervisors.</p>	

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
Limited faculty at Associate or Full Professor level. No cap on supervisee loads. Lack of supervisor training.	Targeted recruitment of senior academic staff approved. Promotion of two of the existing staff from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor New PhD Supervision Policy: max supervisee cap, co-supervision for Assistant Professors, structured supervision training program launched.	Choose level of compliance:
Research infrastructure lacks clarity – no published inventory of psychology-specific tools or labs.	Detailed online Research Facilities Portal is being developed. All psychology-specific resources (VR, neuroimaging tools, testing labs) to be listed in brochures and web materials.	Choose level of compliance:
No dissertation length/formatting standards. No labor-market or impact focus in dissertations.	Dissertation formatting standards adopted (APA 7, min/max word count, structure). New requirement: each dissertation must include an impact and relevance section. New seminar: “Knowledge Translation and Impact.”	Choose level of compliance:
Curriculum lacks open science integration, reproducibility practices, and digital collaboration tools.	PSY803 & PSY805 now include: • Open science principles (e.g., pre-registration) • Reproducibility training • Digital tools: NVivo, SPSS/R, cloud-based collaboration, GitHub. Digital Research Hub being piloted.	Choose level of compliance:
Weak peer learning structure – no journal clubs or peer-review forums.	Peer Research Workshop Series introduced. Monthly Journal Club launched (student-led). Annual Doctoral Colloquium added for scholarly exchange.	Choose level of compliance:
No international benchmarking (e.g., APA, BPS, ESG).	The programme is benchmarked against key international standards including: • The American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines for doctoral education	Choose level of compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British Psychological Society (BPS) research training framework • The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 8 descriptors <p>This benchmarking ensures that students are trained to international standards, facilitating academic mobility, cross-border recognition, and career competitiveness.</p>	
General concern: programme not yet fully compliant with European doctoral norms.	<p>Institutional PhD Improvement Roadmap initiated with quarterly monitoring.</p> <p>Strong institutional backing for research-oriented doctoral training.</p> <p>All gaps identified by the EEC are being addressed systematically.</p>	

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Theodore Panayotou	Rector	
Prof. Andreas Artemiou	Chair of the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Prof. Doron Sonsino	Dean of the Social Sciences and Humanities School and Head of University Research Committee	
Dr Kyriaki Mikellidou	Assistant Professor of Psychology and Quantitative Methods and Department Chair of Psychology	
Dr Eva Pettemeridou	Assistant Professor and Program Director of the BSc in Psychology and PhD in Psychology	
Ms. Vasiliki Moti	QA and Program Accreditations Manager	

Date: 08.07.25

