Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 14/5/24

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

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

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Social Sciences and Education

- **Department/ Sector:** Psychology

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

  In Greek:

  Μάστερ στη Σχολική Ψυχολογία

  In English:

   School Psychology (3 years, 180 ECTS)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

09:00 – 09:10

A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

09:10 – 09:50

A meeting with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Professor Tatiana Eleni Synodinou, who is also the Chairwoman of the Internal QA Committee of the University

09:50 – 10:30

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Coordinator(s) of the programme for a short presentation of the School's/Department's structure

10:30 - 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:00

A meeting with the **Head of the relevant department** and the **Coordination Committee** of the programme for the presentation of the programme "

12:00 – 13:00

A meeting with members of the teaching staff **ONLY** on each course for all the years of study (QA session).

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch Break offered by the institution to EEC panel members and CYQAA officer

14:00 – 14:30

Site visit - Library

14:30 – 15:00

A meeting with members of the administrative staff **ONLY** (QA session)

15:00 – 15:40

A meeting with students and graduates **ONLY** (QA session: 5 – 15 participants).

15:40 – 16:10

A meeting with External Stakeholders **ONLY** .

16:10 – 16:30

Live attendance of course or recorded lecture (N/A)

16:30 - 16:45

Coffee Break

16:45 – 17:15

A visit to the premises of the institution (i.e. library, computer labs, teaching rooms, research

facilities) and discussion of the main issues with <u>IT Manager</u>, <u>Course Leader</u> and <u>Director of Academic Quality and Compliance</u> (N/A)

17:15 – 17:30

A meeting ONLY between the EEC members, to sum up and discuss for any additional clarifications needed, before the Exit Discussion

17:30 – 17:50

A meeting with the <u>Head of the relevant department</u>, the <u>coordinator of the programme</u> - and the <u>Director of Academic Quality and Compliance</u> : **Exit Discussion** (questions, clarifications).

The EEC studied the following materials:

Doc. 200.1 1. Application for Evaluation – Accreditation Programme of Study with several annexes + presentations and additional materials from the site visit

The evaluation was very well prepared by the department and the discussions took place in an open and constructive atmosphere. The recommendations and suggestions made in this report should be read within the context of a favorable evaluation of the program by the committee.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	academic member + chair	KU Leuven
Helen BAKKER	academic member	Utrecht University/RINO Amsterdam
Chryse HATZICHRISTOU	academic member	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Chloe YIANNAKOU CONSTANTINIDES	psychologist	Council of Registration of Psychologists
Stelios ZACHARIOU	student member	Open University of Cyprus

C. Report

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

Sub-areas

1.1 Policy for quality assurance
1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
1.3 Public information
1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the programme*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available?*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*

- o *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
- o *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- o *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- o *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- o *benefits from external expertise*
- o *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
    - ▪ *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
    - ▪ *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
    - ▪ *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
    - ▪ *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
    - ▪ *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- • *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*

- o *selection criteria*
- o *intended learning outcomes*
- o *qualification awarded*
- o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
- o *pass rates*
- o *learning opportunities available to the students*
- o *graduate employment information*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that
- o Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- o Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- o External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- o Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- o Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*
  - o *industry trend analysis.*
  - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - o *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - o *employer insights concerning career readiness*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

1.1.   Policy for quality assurance

The School Psychology program is subject to the rules of the University of Cyprus and the Graduate School, and the Department has statutory mechanisms for the support of its students at various levels, including the Master.

The program is continuously monitored by the program coordinator, who also serves as chair of the School Psychology Committee and the academic advisor of all students of the program. She is the first line of communication between the students, the committee and other faculty. She is responsible for daily program operation, monitors students' progress across courses and academic terms, supports students and intervenes when they need support.

The School Psychology Committee consists of 4 members: 3 faculty members and the practicum coordinator. It is responsible for broader issues related to the smooth operation of the program, resolution of significant problems, recommending modifications to the departmental council and implementing the changes, evaluating students' progress at key points and overseeing the coordination and completion of the practicum/internship and the final Professional Competency Examination.

Different tools for internal QA are being used. These include course/instructor evaluations by students, feedback from research and clinical supervisors, KPI data (dropout-rates, average study duration, success rate per course), curriculum mapping, etc.

1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The MA School Psychology Program comprises 180 ECTS and is structured to cover three main goals:

1. academic and theoretical foundation (97.5 ECTS; 12 compulsory courses and professional readiness (90 ECTS; structured series of supervised practical and clinical internships, together with interdisciplinary clinical seminars).1 restricted elective course (7.5 ECTS each)

2. research foundation (22.5 ECTS; compulsory master's thesis)

3. professional readiness (60.0 ECTS)

There is a progressive development of knowledge and skills over the period of study, integrating science and practice. The organization of practica and internships are very well structured, planned and monitored. The clinical internship is secured for all students in the Educational Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the context of a close collaboration over the Program and the Educational Psychological Services over the years.

Following up on the previous external evaluation, the program incorporated recommendations done by the EEC. This includes changing the thesis from an optional part to a mandatory part of the curriculum. Also, a research method course was included in the first year of study.

The Program complies with the Cyprus Legislation for professional psychologists, European and national standards for professional Practice (Europsy/the European certificate for professional practice of psychologists) as well as the international standards for the training of school psychologists (ISPA,International School Psychology Association).

1.3. Public information

The University of Cyprus website provides information on the profile of the program, its intended learning outcomes, the course breakdown per semester and several conditions of study (admission requirements, rules of study, graduation requirements, exam regulations and assessment/grading).

1.4. Information management

Information management procedures include applications, KPI's, student's profile and students' progress monitoring, drop-out rates ,etc

Strengths

- The program is constantly monitored by the program coordinator, and she is also the advisor of the students. This way there is a continuous feedback flow about how students perceive and experience the program, both in terms of content and in terms of workload. Thus, the program coordinator has a very central role in the program, for both students and staff.

- The department has faculty members with strong research expertise, who all are involved in teaching. This provides the students with excellent research opportunities and solid knowledge.

- Most of the faculty members are involved in teaching, having a good collaboration and a strong commitment to the Program's goals.

- There is a progressive development of knowledge and skills over the period of study, integrating science and practice.

- The formal evaluation of the students at the mid-point of the program and before starting the internship including feedback from instructors, research supervisors, the program Coordinator and the clinical supervisors.

- Practica and internships are very well structured, planned and monitored following European and international standards.

- The program's graduates are well prepared for the profession contributing to the development of school psychological services in Cyprus.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The role of the program coordinator is both the one of monitoring the program as well as the students. In combination with the high working load of all, including the program coordinator herself, this situation may not be without any risk.

- The role of the School psychology committee could benefit from a more clear description of the roles and responsibilities of the committee members (lines of accountability, status and authority, monitoring academic and student issues)

- It is recommended that more faculty members - with a background in School Psychology - serve as academic advisors to students in the program in order to facilitate sharing of responsibilities.

- It would have been helpful if the EEC had had access to evaluation data from the different components of the program.

- It is recommended that the program develops a process of internal evaluation and reflection on the content of the curriculum at the level of the program staff and put mechanisms in place that will help make these part of a consistent formative evaluation process of the program. This process will also allow and facilitate decision making on curriculum developments and changes, considering changing needs of student

population and society, locally, nationally and internationally. Consideration of standards for training in School Psychology in countries with a long history of provision of school psychological services might be helpful as well (ie. BPS standards, NASP Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists, 2020).

- It is recommended to include an introduction on the role of the school psychologists early in the program. This can be done in the form of a foundational course, introducing students to both the role of the school psychologists, school psychological services and (current) trends in the profession. Emphasizing the role as scientist-practitioner may also provide a framework of understanding for the students for the inclusion and relevance of the thesis in the program.

- Students indicated they would have appreciated more knowledge and skill development in the domain of psychological assessment before the start of the practicum (broader than measurement of intelligence).

- Regarding the content of courses, it is recommended that - especially in the foundational courses of the first year - more emphasis should be placed on the interconnection of knowledge, research findings and (professional) practice. Also an update of relevant references is needed (not all of the study materials used are up to date).

- It is the impression that the content of courses is largely determined by the expertise of the teaching staff members. Some key (and current) topics/models within the field and profession of school psychology could be addressed more explicitly in the courses of year 1 and 2 of the program. These include using a more transactional and systemic framework, and including different models of consultation, crisis intervention, effects of substance (ab)use, trauma and decision-making models, etc.

- The program could benefit from reconsidering the choice of mandatory versus elective courses - for example a course in neuropsychological assessment now is an elective, whereas in the field this may be knowledge that will be expected of the school psychologist.

- There is a lot of discussion about the place, form and planning of the Thesis in the program. At the moment, the thesis is largely planned in year 2, with the data collection planned over summer - causing problems as schools are closed at that time. As a result, students do not all get to finish the thesis before starting the internship year - causing a lot of stress and adding to the felt workload. It is recommended to keep the thesis as mandatory part of the program but the EEC can give some suggestions to make it more feasible for students and/or staff:

  o increase the number of thesis topics on existing datasets

  o equally divide the supervision load across the team (either at the level of the program or at the level of the department)

  o in case data collection is needed, reschedule it to either the Fall or Spring semester so that no activities have to take place during summer.

  o have students work in teams for different (and maybe even all) aspects of the work (joint master's thesis, with clarification of each student's contribution to the product)

- o reconsider the overall planning of the thesis, preferably start up the process earlier, safeguarding room for 'unexpected situations or delays', so that students can finish before starting their internship year.

- o redefine the learning goals of the thesis - and align the expectations and guidelines, accordingly, providing realistic standards for the time allotted (22.5 ECTS in total) - it is important to keep in mind that this is a thesis that is part of a M.A. program (not a PhD program)

- o consider different types of research projects (e.g. more applied studies) and possibly also formats of reports (e.g. targeting the broader public rather than just the scientific society)

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

Findings

2.1. Process of teaching and learning and student-centered methodology

For the theoretical courses, a variety of teaching methods are used, such as lectures, individual and group project work and classroom discussions. In the clinical seminars, much time is devoted to the presentation and discussion of cases students bring from clinical internship.

2.2. Practical training

One of the main goals of the MA School Psychology program is professional readiness, which is accomplished through a structured series of practical and clinical internships that gradually lead to increasing independent work on the part of the student, together with interdisciplinary seminars. Per academic year, the department offers 10 positions to incoming students, based on a Memorandum of Collaboration with the Educational Psychological

Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which offers 10 placements per year for the Clinical Internship. During this supervised clinical practicum, students are placed in a psychological service, where they are supervised by a qualified and licensed psychologist.

The clinical practicum comprises of two phases. Phase one (approximately 200 hours) is a part-time placement, completed during the third and fourth semesters of study, in parallel with attending courses and the Clinical Seminar I. During this phase, students are expected to shadow experienced and licensed psychologists, performing their various professional activities and become familiar with the school system and the methods of assessment and intervention as used by the school psychologists. Phase two (approximately 1300 hours) is a full-time clinical placement taking place during the third year of studies, in parallel with the corresponding courses Clinical Seminars II (fall semester) and III (spring semester). During this phase, the students are expected to participate in assessments and intervention programs, as well as to be involved in prevention programs under the supervision of licensed psychologists. The supervision is individual and is conducted in regular weekly meetings with their supervisor to discuss their skills development. Also, the supervisor is expected to be available to the student to resolve critical or urgent issues. Students are evaluated, overall, by the supervisor, the Practical Training Coordinator and the Department, through the Clinical Practice Seminars I, II, and III.

2.3. Student assessment

Students are assessed in various ways, including case studies, teamwork, quiz, oral examination, presentations, simulation, midterm written examination and final written examination. The process, forms and criteria for student assessment are determined by the instructor, considering the content, nature, particularities and degree of difficulty of the course. The instructor must adopt at least two evaluation methods, one of which is the final examination, which can take different forms and may not exceed 60% of the grade.

The grading system is numerical, from 0 to 10 with increments of ½. The minimum

passing grade is 5. A student is allowed to repeat a course for grade improvement once, and the most recent grade is counted. The final total grade of a graduate student is calculated as the grade point average of all courses passed by the student. In a postgraduate programme of study, some courses can be graded as Success/Failure. These courses do not count towards the student's GPA, and may not exceed 25% of the programme's ECTS, with the exception of the dissertation units. All courses are presented in the Postgraduate Studies Prospectus. The diploma dissertation, thesis, research and writing stages are graded with Success / Failure. The final grade of the dissertation is registered in the last semester of its elaboration. Master level dissertations are evaluated independently by at least two evaluators (plus the academic supervisor) and calculated qualitatively as Excellent, Very Good, Good, and Failure.

Strengths

- All students complete their practice in the Educational Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture to ensure uniformity of skills and competencies. The close collaboration of the program with the Educational Psychology Services not only secures the internship positions, but also the quality of supervision and the monitoring of students' progress.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Due to the limited clinical practicum positions available, only a small number of students can be admitted each year.

- The process, forms and criteria for student assessment in the courses are fully determined by the instructors, without any coordination at the level of the program (neither in terms of assessment methods used nor with respect to the distribution of students work load across the semester) or peer review. It is not always clear to what extent the assessment methods are aligned with the learning goals of the particular course.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
> **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

The university's strategy for attracting academic staff involves the international as well as local advertising of available academic positions. The opening and announcement of academic jobs are mainly determined by the development goals and priorities of the university, the critical mass of academic staff and existing and future needs of each department, and developments in the external environment. There are clearly defined regulations that define the procedures the university has to follow for the recruitment, evaluation and advancement of academic staff in all ranks.

The university's Centre for Teaching and Learning organizes a wide range of activities in order to support teaching staff on matters relating to teaching and learning, such as seminars, training sessions and lectures. The Department also offers ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty to stay updated with the latest developments in school psychology. Finally, faculty are given opportunities to enrich their academic, research and clinical background through sabbaticals, sponsored visits to other institutions, and participation in local and international workshops and international conferences related to school psychology and connected fields.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Teaching staff, supporting all programs in the department of psychology (including the MA School Psychology Program) consists of 17 full-time permanent academic members: 8 professors, 4 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, 1 lecturer and the practicum coordinator. All staff have PhDs.

Next to the permanent academic staff, the staff includes a Practicum coordinator (with a permanent position) as well as special teaching staff - especially for courses related to the profession and professional skills.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Teaching staff have strong research profiles.

Strengths

- Teaching staff is very dedicated and shows clear ownership over the different programs organized by the Department.

- The Department has a strong international research presence and successfully acquires both national and international funding, benefitting from staff with ample international training and experience. The Department has organized local, European and international conferences, including ISPA Conference in 2021.

- In spite of the fact that having the master's thesis as an compulsory part of the program poses challenges to both teaching staff and students, the EEC definitely considers having an obligatory master's thesis as a notable strength of the program, also speaking to the strong research orientation of the Department. Suggestions on how to make it more feasible have been made in Section 1.

- The university financially supports teaching staff's research careers in several ways, e.g., by providing start up funding for new incoming academic staff and an additional annual funding for all academic staff.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Teaching staff's workload is very high, especially due to the high supervision load (bachelor's theses, master's thesis, PhD dissertations). This supervision load is not officially counted as teaching load and is also not equally distributed across the team. The EEC recommends revisiting this, e.g., by asking all staff members to propose an equal number of master's thesis topics (either within the School Psychology program or across the different programs in the department).

- As the thesis now is a mandatory part of the curriculum, with ECTS credits for students attached, it is recommended that supervising theses is recognized as a teaching activity, and that faculty are credited with teaching hours for thesis supervision,

- Teaching staff is now teaching in all programs of the Department, in spite of the fact that some faculty members have the very specific expertise in the domain of a specific program (e.g. School Psychology). The department may revisit this and consider increasing the number of courses faculty members with a background in school psychology teaches in the school psychology program.

- Care has to be taken to make sure the positions of Practicum coordinator as well as the special teaching staff are recognized and included. It was noted that the description of the special teaching staff is missing from the description of the teaching staff in the documentation, whereas they play an important role in the training of the students.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2 Student progression**
> **4.3 Student recognition**
> **4.4 Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

Findings

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

The admission procedure for postgraduate students at the University of Cyprus takes place through the Graduate School which announces available programs and places (for the MA School Psychology: 10 new positions per academic year, based on a Memorandum of Collaboration with the Educational Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture). In addition to announcing the number of places available in each field of study and the application procedure, the eligibility criteria for candidates are also stated.

The requirements for admitting students to the MA in School Psychology are the following:

a. Bachelor's degree in psychology, awarded by an accredited institution.

b. English language competency as evidenced by certificates.

Additional qualifications that are considered in the admission process are:

a. Prior knowledge in areas related to School Psychology (e.g., another graduate degree or work related to Educational Psychology, Learning Disabilities, Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, etc.);

b. Prior work experience with children, adolescents and/or school settings.

c. Personal maturity, professional readiness and/or academic accomplishment as evidenced by academic/scholarly awards, scientific publications or other professional credentials.

In case candidates are admitted into the program but lack some basic knowledge relevant to the program's curriculum, they may be required to attend specific undergraduate courses to ensure their smooth transition into the program.

Applicants should submit an application form through the online system, together with a curriculum vitae, copies of university degrees, transcripts of grades, a short personal statement, at least two letters of recommendation from academics and a certificate of proficiency in English.

4.2. Student progression

In case of failure in a compulsory course, the student is obliged to repeat it. In case of failure in an elective course, the student is entitled to either repeat or replace it.

In the School Psychology program, student progress is formally evaluated at the mid-point of the program, between the third and fourth semesters and before the start of the practica and the internship. The School Psychology Committee receives feedback from all instructors, research supervisors, the program coordinator and the clinical supervisors to assess (a) academic and scientific knowledge, (b) research progress in the master's thesis, (c) personal readiness and maturity, (d) professional readiness and competencies and (e) other criteria that pertain to the individual needs of each student. The information is presented to the department's council and based on the council's evaluation students receive written feedback. The council can recommend remedial measures where needed to ensure the progress and professional development of the student, including repetition of coursework, independent study, additional practical training or referral for personal (mental health) support.

4.3.   Student recognition

The department has internal regulations regarding the transfer of ECTS credits that students accumulated in the context of previous, recognized postgraduate programs. Master's students can transfer up to 2 graduate courses, following the examination of the submitted requests by the School Psychology Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee of the department.

4.4.   Student certification

The final degree of a student is the weighted average of all courses the student has completed successfully, and the weighting is based on the credits of each course.

With the completion of all formal requirements, students earn the right to take the final Professional Competency Exam. This exam is administered orally by a three-member committee composed of licensed psychologists with a PhD (i.e. the practicum coordinator, the program coordinator and an external member from another university or a clinical setting). Students can take the exam after successful completion of (a) 1500 hours of practical training, (b) all courses in the program and (c) Clinical Seminar III and giving proof of competency and readiness as evidenced by the final review of progress by the field clinical supervisor and the student's final self-evaluation of progress. By making the professional competency exam an exit criterion, the program tries to ensure that upon graduation and entry to the profession, students will be able to function as school psychologists with an adequate level of professionalism, ethics, knowledge and utilization of psychological knowledge in their practice.

Strengths

- The admission process and criteria are clearly documented.

- Student progression and recognition criteria are clear.

- The university as well as the department are providing continued education / training for e.g. supervisors, regarding e.g. new developments (eg. when the WISC V was published). This way the department further supports the professional development of (school) psychologists

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- The Program could provide in-service training for supervisors on supervision

- Students might benefit from having different supervisors in their practica and internship placements.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**
> **5.2 Physical resources**
> **5.3 Human support resources**
> **5.4 Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

Findings

5.1. Teaching and learning resources

Apart from the face-to-face delivery of the program, the department uses an online learning platform where learning material is uploaded and is readily available to the students. Through this system, students also receive feedback on their projects and examinations.

Students have access to an up to date library, with an extensive collection (print as well as digital), containing most important psychology data bases and journals.

The Center of Teaching and Learning promotes and sustains the quality of teaching and learning, by organizing a wide range of activities, such as seminars, training sessions and lectures.

5.2. Physical resources

The university's building facilities comprise a total area of 114.719 m² at four different locations (Aglantzia Campus, Academy Campus, Shiacolio Medical School, Regional Buildings), including 95 classrooms, 193 research and/or teaching laboratories, 160 support rooms, recreation areas and a sports center.

5.3. Human support resources

The program is supported by the department's administrative staff as well as by the central administration services.

The department's administrative staff directly supports the operation of the program under the supervision of the chair and in collaboration with the program director. More specifically, administrative staff provides support with procedures for the selection and promotion of academic staff, student services, scheduling of courses, financial

issues, the website, student prospectus etc. Additional administrative staff supports the educational process by providing secretarial support.

The Graduate School provides administrative support for the announcement of study places in postgraduate programs, the submission of applications, the issuing of the diploma supplement to postgraduate students, etc.

Several other central administrative services of the university support the departments and programs of study: Quality Assurance Office, International Relations Service, Research and Innovation Support Service, IT Infrastructure and Applications Service, Human Resources Service, Financial Services and Technical Services.

5.4. **Student support**

Student support mechanisms exist both at the level of the department and at the level of the university (through the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service (AASWS)).

At the level of the department, an academic advisor is appointed for each student. This advisor is a member of the department's faculty, who follows up on the student's academic progress and guides him/her, particularly in connection with any problems related to academic performance.

At the level of the university, the AASWS support students with various administrative matters as well as in relation to health, social and psychological problems. The Social Support Office ensures equal access to the learning process for all students, taking care of students with abilities or social or financial problems. The University Mental Health Center, which is under the Department of Psychology's auspices and staffed by the department's graduates and doctoral level trainees in clinical psychology, offers free psychological support and counseling services to all students facing difficulties in learning or adjusting to university life.

The Career Center supports students in different ways in order to boost their employability. It does so through help in soft skills development, networking with employers, gaining work experience and finding work opportunities. Also it provides guidance for postgraduate studies.

Strengths

- Physical resources and infrastructure are excellent.

- State of the art labs and lab equipment adequately support both the research programs and the study programs of the faculty.

- The Center of Teaching and Learning provides excellent support for teachers, related to both curriculum and course development, teaching methods and assessment. This is especially valued by starting teachers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Staff indicates that the number of scholarships to financially support students is very limited. Together with the fact that the internship is unpaid, this makes some students needing to seek employment during their studies, compromising fluent progress in their program of study.

- Due to the workload of administrative staff supporting all programs in the Department, an increase in the number of permanent positions of administrative staff might be considered by the University.

- The knowledge and expertise available at the Center for Teaching and Learning does not always seem to find its way to staff and courses or curriculum. This may be partly due to the aforementioned workload. Both staff and students might benefit from finding a structure in which the available expertise can be actually used in the full range of teaching related activities.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The Master program in School Psychology is a very strong program, providing students with the knowledge, skills and professional competencies that allow them to start working as a school psychologist.
The evaluation process took place in a constructive and open atmosphere, with clear and well prepared documentation beforehand, and open and constructive discussions during the visit.
Recommendations from the previous EEC evaluation (in 2019) have been incorporated, including making the thesis a mandatory part of the curriculum, and adding a course on research methods.

The overall structure of the curriculum is clear, with three main building blocks: theoretical foundations, research, professional readiness. At the curriculum level, some specific recommendations are being made (including some suggestions for reshuffling, strengthening the explicit connection between theory, research and practice in the courses, the alignment of courses within the overall curriculum and inclusion of some current and central topics in the field, etc). However, the recommendations and suggestions made should be read within the context of a favorable evaluation of the program by the committee.

The program is carried out by the department of Psychology, with a strong and dedicated team that is committed to both the program and the department. Most of the staff members have been at the UoC for a long time already, speaking for their commitment to the department. The department staff represents a very strong degree of expertise in research, providing students with a solid basis and research opportunities.

The School Psychology Program manages to fulfill criteria at different levels: criteria for Cyprus Legislation for professional psychologists, criteria of the generic framework for professional psychologists in Europe (Europsy), and international training standards for school psychologists (ISPA). This results in a program that provides students with a very solid basis for their future profession.
A very strong aspect of the program is the practical training, gradually building up from 2 practica to a 1-year internship, carried out in collaboration with the Educational Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This collaboration guarantees internships for all 10 students of the program, and guarantees supervision by experienced and qualified supervisors.
Overall, the program staff is well aware of its responsibility to society: to deliver graduates who will be ready for responsible and competent service delivery.

It is clear that there is a very high work load for the staff members, a high load of thesis supervisions (not only students from the School Psychology program, but also from the other programs of the department) and the high standards set by the individual staff members. Also, supervising theses is not credited as teaching time, meaning it adds to the other responsibilities, including an already full teaching load.
The high work load also pertains to the administrative staff. The number of staff members is limited, and the work - within this active and dynamic department - is difficult to handle given the temporary contracts.

Overall, the EEC is very positive about the program and wishes the department and its dedicated staff all the best with its future development.

E.Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	*patricia bijttebier*
Helen BAKKER	
Chryse HATZICHRISTOU	
Chloe YIANNAKOU CONSTANTINIDES	
Stelios ZACHARIOU	STELIOS ZACHARIOU

Date: 14/5/24