

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 11/5/2024

External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Limassol
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Social Sciences and Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Psychology
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
Μεταπτυχιακό στην Εκπαιδευτική Ψυχολογία
In English:
MSc in Educational Psychology
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **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. Introduction

The onsite visit took place according to the following schedule:

9:00 – 9:10

A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

9:10 – 09:50

A meeting with the Rector/Head of the Institution and/or the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs

A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (Q&A Session)

09:50 – 10:50

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Coordinators of the programmes for a short presentation of the Department's structure

10:50 - 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Coordination Committee of the programme for the presentation of the programme Psychology (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))

12:00 – 12:30

A meeting with External Stakeholders ONLY .

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:30

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Coordination Committee of the programme for the presentation of the programme Educational Psychology (1,5 years, 90 ECTS, (MSc), E-learning)

14:30 – 15:00

A meeting with the Heads/Coordinators and members responsible for the E-Learning unit for a brief presentation and a Q&A Session.

15:00 – 16:00

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

16:00 – 16.30

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

16.30-16.45

Coffee Break

16.45-17.15

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

17.15-17.45

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

17.45-18.00

A meeting with the Head of the relevant department, the coordinators of the programmes - and the Director of Academic Affairs - 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 from the site visit

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	academic member + chair	KU Leuven
Martin CORLEY	academic member	University of Edinburgh
Teresa GUASCH PASCUAL	academic member	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Chara DEMETRIOU	representative professional association	
Elisavet PANAGIOTOU	student member	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *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.*
 - *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 utilises 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:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
 - *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy*

- *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- *benefits from external expertise*
- *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)*
- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *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*
- *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:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

In addition, the programme has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- o *Professional bodies validate programme 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 programme 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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b)*

whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?

- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making programme information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

Findings

1.1. Policy for quality assurance

The University of Limassol is reviewing its quality assurance process and creating the documentation of quality assurance processes and outcomes. With this aim, it has recently appointed a new Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance.

Following the criteria of EQUAL, ESG, CYQAA, ENQA, the university has set up internal quality assurance committees at the university level, and per school/department.

There is a school and department internal quality committee to ascertain and ensure the attainment of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (**PILOs**) and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (**CILOs**), Admissions Criteria, Student Evaluation Criteria, Teaching Quality, and Learning Material.

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

The department has a well-articulated system for designing and monitoring degree programmes. Course proposals are reviewed by the Internal Quality and Evaluation Committee (IQEC). The process for introducing a new programme of study is well established before its accreditation. The MSc Educational Psychology - Distance Learning programme comprises a total of 90 ECTS which correspond to 3 academic semesters of study. The programme consists of 9 compulsory courses, each course being credited with 10 ECTS. The program's courses address core topics in Educational Psychology (e.g., Introduction to Educational Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience in Education, Language Development and Language disorders) as well as Research Methods in Psychology and Skills acquisition (Development of Critical Thinking). During the course "Research Study" which is to be completed in the 3rd semester of the program, the students conduct an MSc thesis project under the supervision of an academic advisor. The programme's distance learning structure and the asynchronous mode of delivery, renders the programme suitable and attractive to working individuals who wish to deepen their knowledge in the field of educational psychology. The programme also includes live online cohort sessions and 1-1 meetings, also promoting synchronous interpersonal interactions. In line with the university's quality assurance policy, the programme will be reviewed periodically and the status and operation of its courses will be monitored annually. Students as well as internal and external stakeholders are actively involved in these processes.

1.3. Public information

The University of Limassol website provides a broad description of the proposed MSc programme and some information on admission requirements and learning outcomes. More information can be obtained by contacting the admissions office through e-mail, telephone or via a link on the website.

1.4. Information management

The documentation provided no clear information on the department's (planned) information management. Although Moodle systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, it is not clear to which extent the department will implement procedures for analyzing and evaluating such data or whether there is a relevant policy in place. Since no students have yet commenced on-programme, there are no further insights to offer for now. For this reason, we have graded information management as 'partially compliant'.

Strengths

- The MSc is clearly aimed at an identifiable target market.

- An online approach affords flexibility for students who may be mid-career, and for international students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Some of the courses could usefully be renamed (e.g., Introduction to Educational Psychology → Psychology for Education; Learning Difficulties → Learning and Learning Difficulties). This takes into account that the course is at Masters level.
- The department clearly wishes to attract a broad range of students. While this is laudable, they might want to offer relevant courses from the BSc as induction material for those without backgrounds in Psychology or Education.
- The research dissertation is weighted at 10 ECTS, which is low compared to a typical 90-credit European Masters. A resolution to this issue would be to combine aspects of Research Methods/General Skills with the dissertation, resulting in a more substantial dissertation course starting in S2.
- Qualitative Research Methods are important in Educational Psychology and should be covered in the programme, perhaps through a standalone course.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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	Partially 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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
 - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***

- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

The pedagogical approach taken by the department encourages students to take an active role, and the assessment activities are designed for this purpose.

The teaching methodologies presented in the course descriptions are only lectures. However, the EEC verified during the visit and from the programme documents that they have planned to use a variety of teaching methodologies such as lectures, workshops, individual and group work, case study analysis, gamification, and student presentations. The teaching methods, tools, and materials described are oriented to provide support to the students in their learning process, and respect and attend to the diversity of students and their needs.

The courses also include videoconferences (non-compulsory) and discussion sessions to promote students' interaction.

The authenticity and integrity during the final assessment are promoted using proctoring software like Proctorio.

2.2. Practical training

The programme does not include an internship nor any other type of practical training.

2.3. Student assessment

All taught courses on the Master conform to an assessment template which combines self-assessment, interactive activities, individual and group assignments, and final exams. Students have to attempt all self-assessment activities to pass the course and receive a minimum total score of 60%, and 9/12 interactive activities to pass the course and receive a minimum total score of 60% from the selected activities which will count towards the final mark. Students have to receive a minimum total score of 60% in the final assessment (exam or assignment). Marking rubrics have been created, and assessments look fit for purpose. The Distance Learning Assessment Framework provides clear guidelines how to support students and give feedback during the courses.

2.4. Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

The course descriptions include clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner. Course materials are also presented, and references.

The self-assessments and interactive activities of each course are also detailed weekly.

Strengths

- There is a defined pedagogical model, and specifically, a Distance Learning Instructors & Staff guide, and a Distance Learning Assessment Framework guide, with detailed orientations for the teaching staff.
- Students' learning is monitored during the course (through assignments, synchronous videoconferences, etc.).
- Students' group size (maximum 30 students) is optimal to offer intensive support for learners, both at an individual and cohort level.
- Members of the department are clearly thinking about assessment and consistency of student experience. There has been substantial effort to develop marking rubrics, and there is a move to implement these in TurnItIn.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It is important to note that despite the fact that the Master's programme refers to the needs of the educational system for educational psychologists, the programme does not include an internship, and therefore does not lead to obtaining a professional licence.
- Although the university has declared an AI use policy, it is recommended that the course descriptions include how students can or cannot incorporate AI into their activities.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Not applicable
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Procedures for appointing staff are in line with international norms, and the department has been successful in recruiting at a high standard to date. Professional development plans include specific training for, e.g., online course delivery and inclusive teaching; more generally, staff are given an annual research budget, and the expectation is that new hires will be given reduced teaching loads.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

The department's teaching staff consists of 8 full-time permanent teaching staff (two associate professors, two assistant professors, three lecturers and one member of special teaching staff). One visiting professor in a relevant subject area has been confirmed since the documentation was submitted. A new hire is planned in the near future. All staff have PhDs.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

The department has a clear research policy, and a close understanding of its responsibilities with respect to research funding. Impressively, these responsibilities are also built in to its BSc programme in an extensive Ethics module. Staff are research active (current staff, mostly junior, have published 89 peer-reviewed papers in total). Research skills are embedded in the proposed degree programmes.

Strengths

- The university has been successful in recruiting a young (average 6 years post-PhD) and very talented cohort of academic staff.

- The teaching staff's enthusiasm and commitment to their new departmental home is impressive.
- The staff have made a huge amount of progress in the relatively short period since they were hired, not only in writing course documentation, but also in planning research.
- The staff are very collaborative, not only in their endeavor to set up the new department and develop the new programmes, but also in planned funding applications. Although this is a new team, it already seems to be very cohesive.
- The staff also seem to collaborate well with administrative staff.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The ambitious plans for student recruitment (admitting 170 students to two programmes, one of which is taught online in two languages, and both of which might require courses to be repeated across semesters, all this taught by 8–10 people) will threaten the highly valued aim to safeguard work-life balance.
- Also, the rapid ramping up of student numbers is incompatible with the clear mission of the department to make a name for itself in research. No member of such a small team will be able to remain research active under such a load.
- In connection with this it is imperative that teaching load is modelled more accurately, and not just in terms of contact hours. It takes around 10 hours to prepare a new hour-long lecture; it takes around 2 to revise it for delivery in subsequent years. It takes around an hour to mark 3,000 words of student coursework. Without factoring these numbers in, there is no way to realistically honour the contracts academic staff have signed, which specify the percentage of their time that will be devoted to teaching.
- There is no clear plan for how teaching staff recruitment will proceed. Reference is made to filling the needs of teaching with part-time teaching staff.
- There is a need for diversity in teaching staff specialties, so that current members of the department are not forced to teach courses outside of their research and clinical interests and expertise.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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*

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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

Admission requirements for entering the MSc in Educational Psychology - Distant Learning comprise:

- a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college;
- proficiency in the English language as evidenced from either an IELTS with at least 5.5 or equivalent or graduation from an English language institution;
- satisfactory quantitative skills as evidenced by quantitative courses taken during the bachelor degree study.

To apply for admission, students also need to provide a curriculum vitae (indicating the applicant's education, academic and professional experience, any publications, awards, extracurricular activities etc.), a satisfactory personal statement and two letters of recommendation. A personal interview is an integral part of the selection process.

Students can be admitted twice a year, in January and September.

4.2. Student progression

Students who do not complete the MSc programme within the allowable study period of two years may be only be permitted to continue their studies towards a MSc degree if they apply for and obtain permission by the Academic Committee to re-register. For each year of delay in the completion of the programme, 15 ECTS are lost per year of delay, up to a maximum of 50% of the credits already earned. Nobody will be permitted to resume his/her studies seven years after his/her initial registration.

4.3. Student recognition

Credits from relevant courses can be transferred, up to a maximum of 120 ECTS. The department's rules for recognition are in line with international standards.

4.4. Student certification

The documentation does not contain any specific information on student certification. The EEC sees no reasons for doubting that adequate procedures are in place here.

Strengths

- Students who apply for the programme go through a scrutinized selection process, in which not only academic qualifications but also personal statement and interview and – some cases – an additional admission test have a high load. This allows a case-by-case evaluation of applications, especially those by students who do not have a background in Psychology or Education.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The minimum required score for English proficiency is at the lower end compared the requirements to be admitted in English-language master programmes in other European universities (i.e. IELTS 5.5). It is more common to require a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (or higher).
- The EEC has some concerns about the very broad admission criteria, with possible access by students from very different backgrounds. It will be important to provide opportunities to catch up with some course content to students who lack basic knowledge (e.g. in core psychology disciplines, research methods or statistics). The department may consider building a preparatory programme using courses from the BSc programme.
- In terms of student progression, it is highly unusual to deduct credits when a student's studies are interrupted. The EEC recommends to revisit this rule.

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

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

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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
 - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
 - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
 - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

5.1. Teaching and learning resources

The University's library provides online access to research databases such as EBSCO and to ProQuest Central. Students can have access to these databases remotely. Moreover a librarian staff member is available to provide assistance to the users and they recurrently provide workshops to enhance students' literacy skills (database searching, citation management etc.). The library services guarantee access to the international literature and the training and resources needed.

The university has a Distance Learning Unit, featuring various activities focused on design, study materials, learning activities, assessments, and teacher training, centred on a student-focused approach.

The unit has already planned numerous training workshops addressed to all faculty staff and student support administration, related to course design and development, use of forums, digital supported assessment, etc.

5.2. Physical resources

Currently, at the Limassol branch where the Psychology Department is hosted there are 3 classrooms, 1 computer lab, 1 Library and 1 library study room, 1 board and seminar room, a cafeteria and lounge area. Specifically in regards to the Psychology Department, the Department has established collaborations with medical centers, other academic institutions and private companies to use their neuroimaging equipment. The Department has already secured some equipment for the conduction of psychology experiments and studies which is to be found in the branch's basement that currently functions as a lab.

A university campus is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in the academic year 2027 where the UoL will function.

5.3. Human support resources

The University currently employs administrative staff whose primary aim is to support the BSc programme and its students (e.g., librarian, IT manager and support providers, student welfare officer, student support administrators, admissions coordinator, academic affairs personnel).

5.4. Student support

An induction week runs in the beginning of the academic year to introduce the students to the University and their study program.

Regarding matters of learning differences and neurodiversity as well as matters of disabilities, both administrative and teaching staff in the department aim to maintain a case-by-case approach where, depending on the students' needs, respective adjustments will be made (i.e., allocation of extra time for exams, allow recording of the lectures when needed, use easily-readable fonts etc.).

The Psychology Department has a mobility/erasmus officer and a coordinator and have established agreements with other European and non-European HE institutions for student and for staff exchanges.

Currently there is one student welfare officer available to students as a consultant for matters of mental and social well-being as well as for academic and career matters. The welfare officer is currently planning to hold informative events for the students, to encourage mobility among students.

Strengths

- There is a professional and dedicated administrative support team.
- Access to relevant textbooks and journals has been secured.
- The small size of the university allows support to be individually tailored to students' needs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is a single welfare officer, who appears to support students and staff, develop workshops/psychoeducation, ensure reasonable adjustments for learning and emotional difficulties, and provide one-to-one support sessions. Although the university remains small, there is a risk that one person can't handle such a workload effectively.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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

This programme is part of a rapid expansion by UoL into online learning, supported by a newly-established Distance Learning Unit. Detailed course descriptions have been written; a Moodle-based learning infrastructure is in development; and the University is already offering detailed guides on Distance Learning and Assessment to staff. This is a supportive environment in which the Psychology staff can develop an online MSc.

As we have indicated in our report on the department, our chief concern is that rolling out the MSc in two languages, with two start dates, in a year in which a BSc is already being started may affect the staff, adversely affecting their capacity to research and also their work-life balance. With a more cautious roll-out plan (starting for example with one intake in one language in the first academic year), staff will also be able to address some of the issues we have identified in this report, ensuring the long-lasting success of the programme.

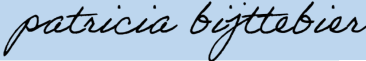


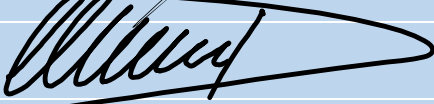

Chief among the issues we have noted is the light weight of the dissertation compared to the European norm. This appears to be in part because the designers of the programme wish to serve two distinct constituencies: Those interested in continuing professional development (CPD), who may have little stomach for a large-scale research project, and those whose ambitions tend towards research and perhaps PhD study. We have made some suggestions in section, but a more radical suggestion would be to consider two routes: For example, a 60-credit CPD Diploma with an optional 30-credit research training and dissertation leading to a Masters. This would have the additional benefit that the staff would not need to supervise so many dissertations.

Insofar as research is taken seriously in the department and in the Masters programme, it is important to properly introduce qualitative methods, as well as quantitative methods. In many departments qualitative methods would constitute a course on their own; at any rate they deserve more than the single lecture that has currently been allocated.

A final consideration concerns recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds. One way to support this would be to offer relevant courses from the BSc as induction material to those without Psychology or Education backgrounds.

Many of the pieces are in place for this to become an excellent online Masters, catering for a wide range of potential students. Once again, our major concern is the speed with which it is being rolled out by a relatively small academic staff, in tandem with other projects. As we have said elsewhere, we were very impressed with the staff that we met, and it is tempting to suggest that if anyone can pull off such a Herculean feat, they can; but at a risk to their research activity, which will ultimately affect the department's reputation and its ability to recruit high-calibre students to its programmes. Equally, a slower start will allow the department time to consider some tweaks to the programme, perhaps in line with our suggestions, for its improvement.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	
Martin CORLEY	
Teresa GUASCH PASCUAL	
Chara DEMETRIOU	
Elisavet PANAGIOTOU	

Date: 11/5/2024