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Date: 28/05/2025

# External Evaluation Report

## (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Limassol
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Social Sciences & Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Psychology
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

Πτυχίο Ψυχολογίας (Εξ αποστάσεως)

**In English:**

Bachelor of Science in Psychology (e-Learning)

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

In Greek: NA

In English: NA



**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

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The EEC visit took place on 27 May 2025. Because of a traffic issue the programme of meetings started late and several meetings had to be rearranged: At the outset of this report, we would like to thank our colleagues at UoL for accommodating several last-minute changes; especially the administrative staff who were flexible and efficient.

We held meetings with the Rector, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Head of the Psychology Department and Director of the e-learning programme, as well as with members of the Distance Learning Unit and IT support, the student support and counselling teams, international admissions, and the Librarian. Further meetings were held with programme stakeholders, current students, graduates of university programmes (though no Psychology or e-learning students), and the teaching staff of the Department of Psychology. The members of the Committee felt that the meetings were cordial and constructive, and offered much to learn about building a new programme from scratch as well as, hopefully, being of use to members of the Department and University.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Martin CORLEY</b>	Academic member	University of Edinburgh
<b>Christina ATHANASIADES</b>	Academic member	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
<b>Patricia BIJTTEBIER</b>	Academic member	KU Leuven
<b>Iordanis KAVATHATZOPOULOS</b>	Academic member	Uppsala University
<b>Fontini DEMETRIOU</b>	Professional Body member	Psychologist
<b>Nicoletta MICHAEL</b>	Student member	Cyprus University of Technology

## 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.***



*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*

### **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*

### **1.4 Information management**

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
- *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?*

### 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.*

#### **1.1. Policy for quality assurance**

The University of Limassol is currently revisiting and redesigning its quality assurance processes and creating comprehensive documentation of quality assurance processes and outcomes. All key stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of these policies.

There is an Internal Quality Committee, chaired by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, which meets once per semester. There is a School (and Department) Quality Committee, chaired by the Dean and co-chaired by the Department Chair, which meets twice a semester.

Key components of the internal quality assurance regulations for all UoL programmes are (a) program design and development; (b) curriculum and assessment; (c) faculty qualifications and development; (d) student support services; (e) infrastructure and resources; (f) quality assurance processes; (g) continuous improvement; (h) monitoring and evaluation; (i) ethical and professional standards; (j) documentation and reporting.

#### **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 BSc. in Psychology (E-Learning) programme comprises a total of 240 ECTS, representing four years of study. The programme has a compulsory part (comprising 172,5 ECTS) and an elective part (comprising 67,5 ECTS). The compulsory part consists of courses addressing core domains of psychology and psychological research methods, advanced seminars, a Practicum and an undergraduate thesis. The elective part consists of courses targeting specific domains of psychology and general education courses. In the proposed semester breakdown, the first four semesters consist of compulsory courses, whereas the fifth and sixth semesters mainly consist of elective courses. In the seventh and eighth semesters, students take general education selectives and advanced seminars, and do the Practicum and the undergraduate thesis.

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 description of the BSc programme (Conventional Mode) but not yet on the planned BSc programme (E-Learning mode).

#### 1.4. Information management

The documentation provided no clear information on the Department's information management. Although Moodle systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students and the Distance Learning Student Support officer checks the student's activities and progress weekly, 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

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

- The University and the Department have proper Quality Assurance policy and procedures in place.
- The proposed programme is internationally comparable and is served by a strong teaching staff.
- Careful consideration has been given to the target market, and for that reason the programme is offered in Greek.
- Care has been taken to integrate the programme with the community, with external stakeholders playing a significant part in planning and also offering Practicum experience to students.

##### 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 number of ECTS devoted to research methods and statistics is low compared to BSc programmes in research-intensive universities (a typical programme might dedicate 60 or more ECTS to these topics).
- A tweak to the programme might be to reshuffle the order of some of the courses:
  - "Developing Communication and Professional Skills" might be moved to a Semester, immediately preceding the practicum.
  - "Ethical Issues in the Social Sciences and Humanities" might be also moved to a later Semester and be aligned with the Practicum. That would allow students to discuss ethical issues they encountered during their practicum experience with each other as well as with the instructor (also see next bullet). In that stage of the programme, students also have acquired more knowledge of and insight in psychological phenomena and a higher level of maturity.
- It is highly commendable to keep the course on Ethics into the programme, as it is essential in preparing students to address the ethical challenges they will encounter in their professional lives. The course appropriately focuses on professional ethics, the use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, and includes the discussion of relevant cases and ethical dilemmas. However, in addition to moving it to a later semester, we recommend the inclusion of a practical training component. This should focus on real-life case studies and the development of a psychological competency necessary for managing ethical issues. Such an addition would equip students with a general and applicable tool to make decisions and find

satisfactory solutions allowing them to effectively navigate complex ethical situations in their future professional practice.

- As doing a Practicum may not be feasible or desirable for every student, the team may consider making it optional (see also Section 2 below).
- Some courses that are now part of the electives might be made compulsory, as they commonly make part of the mandatory courses in international BSc programmes: Psychological Tests and Measurements, Neuropsychology, as potentially also Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology. This will increase the size of the compulsory part of the programme, which does not seem to be a problem. If the team wants to keep a larger part of the programme optional, it might consider moving more applied courses to the electives (Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Clinical Psychology).
- Given the compulsory nature of the thesis and the importance of academic writing in this respect, the team may consider adding a course on Academic Writing to the programme. In that course, attention can be given to how to build a rationale for your research questions (training of argumentative skills) as well as to the responsible use of generative AI in the writing process.
- Course descriptions seem to suggest there is a high load on theories in the design of the course and a lesser focus on empirical research and evidence.
- It might be worthwhile checking (unnecessary) overlap between courses (e.g., research methods/statistics/programming).

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>1.1</b>	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
<b>1.2</b>	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
<b>1.3</b>	Public information	Not applicable
<b>1.4</b>	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.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed 30 students per class.*

### **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.*

## 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.*

## 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

*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.*

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

The committee were satisfied that overall, the e-Learning programme follows all the guidelines and directives of the CYQAA. In particular, classes do not exceed 30 students, and teaching follows a variety of distance methods and interactive techniques that enhance students' engagement and interaction. In addition, both students and teachers are offered systematic and adequate support for the use of technology and familiarisation with the methods and procedures of distance learning. Overall, the educational process seems to allow students' autonomy in the learning process but at the same time, has a recognition of their specific needs.

## 2.2 Practical training

Although the programme is delivered in a distance learning mode, it includes practical training, allowing students to get introduced to a variety of workplaces and professionals, thus linking theory with practice. The internship is proposed as compulsory and accounts for 7,5 ECTS of the programme. It can be carried out in the region where each student lives.

The course also includes a dissertation worth 15 ECTS. With the advent of modern web-based technologies, it will be possible for students to gain experience with empirical studies. During discussions we also emphasised the possibilities for systematic reviews, and for shared data collection as a part of cohort-building.

## 2.3 Student assessment

Student assessment at the University of Limassol includes online proctored exams, quizzes, individual assignments, and group work. Course descriptions and syllabi provide details on assessment methods, weighting, and grading criteria before the course begins. Academic integrity is upheld using proctoring and plagiarism detection software like Turnitin, addressing misconduct including AI use. Policies ensure inclusivity, fairness, and consistent grading by faculty who also provide feedback. Specific rules and penalties apply for late or non-submission of assignments, especially for Distance Learning programmes.

Course evaluation procedures seem complete and sufficiently clear to the students. In particular, the final assessment follows a variety of activities such as class participation, assignments and final examination. Marking criteria and detailed marking rubrics have been created, and assessments look fit for purpose. It will be important to maintain a high standard of formative feedback.

If students receive marks which are lower than they wish, they have the right to appeal, which begins and ends with the relevant lecturer (the lecturer may be asked to change a grade but need not do so). Students are offered resits on failing courses, for a fee. Core courses must be passed (by re-taking if necessary). Failed elective courses can be substituted.

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Offering distance education is a relatively new initiative for the University. With limited prior experience in this field, the University recognizes the need to further develop a culture that fully supports and embraces distance learning. There are appropriate study guides for students and staff that direct them both in relation to the educational process and their navigation in the digital world (i.e., moodle analytics for instructors, distant learning guide, moodle learning guide, etc.). Study guides are fully aligned with e-Learning philosophy and methodology and the need for weekly student interaction.

### Strengths

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

- The distance learning methodology involves a series of varied and interesting activities which aim to enhance students' motivation and learning engagement.

- The programme includes a high proportion of asynchronous learning activities, which aligns well with students' preferences for flexible and self-paced learning, in accord with their personal needs.
- Students are provided with multiple opportunities to communicate and interact within the learning environment. In addition, many students report using private communication channels to engage informally with peers about academic matters, which indicates strong student support for peer interaction.
- Staff appeared to be enthusiastic and motivated to implement the above activities to the best of their ability and also to support students in the process.
- The University has implemented a proactive policy on academic integrity in relation to emerging technologies such as Large Language Models (LLMs). The institution has clear strategies in place to mitigate risks while also leveraging the educational potential of these tools to enhance students' critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Teaching staff have put substantial effort already into the development of marking rubrics.

#### 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.*

- Some students may not wish to take the Practicum, or may not be eligible, for safeguarding reasons. For this reason we suggest that the Practicum is made optional.
- Running a Practicum requires ensuring the safety (mental and physical) of the students who are shadowing professionals, the professionals themselves, and the professionals' clients. For this reason, it is imperative that all parties are properly protected, with formal memoranda of understanding, legal protections where required, and counseling support for students where needed. This is doubly important when the Practicum may take place in a different jurisdiction. We advise that, as well as creating the relevant documentation and procedures, the Department maintains a database of Practicum suppliers, to help with these processes in the future.
- The appeals process may need revising. In general, it is not a good idea to allow students to ask lecturers for a different grade. Grades should be final, and marks should be verified by a different member of academic staff (via a moderation process). Appeals should be adjudicated independently of the original marker.
- There is a need to foster more structured interaction among students. Introducing additional peer-review activities—both at the individual and group levels—can support more frequent communication and collaboration. For example, incorporating a mandatory peer-review task as part of each student's bachelor thesis could encourage critical engagement and academic dialogue.
- It is advisable to increase the number of asynchronous, peer-to-peer interactive activities, rather than focusing primarily on student-teacher interactions. Enhancing this aspect of the programme is likely to result in improved student engagement and higher levels of attendance.

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	Partially compliant
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

*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.*

#### **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. The staff are not experts in e-Learning but to facilitate the move to offering distance learning degrees, UoL has established a Distance Learning Unit (DLU), which is responsible for overseeing all aspects of e-Learning, including the training and ongoing support of both academic staff and students.

Academic staff benefit from individualized training and one-to-one support, not only regarding technical aspects but also in the effective integration of digital tools with pedagogical strategies,

and in inclusive teaching. Faculty are also encouraged to propose both new general and specialized training courses.

### 3.2. Teaching staff number and status

The Department's teaching staff consists of 9 full-time permanent teaching staff (one associate professor, four assistant professors and four lecturers). There is also one visiting professor. In the prospect of organizing the new program, three new staff members have been hired (starting in September 2025): one assistant professor and two lecturers. Also, the programme will welcome two additional visiting professors. All staff have PhDs.

### 3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

The University and the Department have a clear research policy and have introduced different avenues through which students are trained and engaged in the research process in conjunction with their courses and interaction with their instructors. It is ensured that distance learning students have equal opportunities to engage in research. Digital tools and platforms are used to facilitate virtual research mentorship, remote data collection, and access to virtual symptoms and webinars. The proposed BSc programme has a compulsory undergraduate thesis.

The Research Centre, as the main research management entity of the University, monitors announcements of research funding applications from the EU, the Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation and other sponsors. It identifies research calls that are relevant to the mission of each Department and of potential interest to its faculty. Initiates and involves teaching staff in the preparation and submission of research proposals and coordinates the research of teaching staff and collaborators. Each member of staff additionally gets an annual research budget of €5000 for participation in conferences and research activities.

The Psychology Department's teaching staff have a strong research profile, are research active and, notably, have been very successful in acquiring research funding during the last 8 months.

#### Strengths

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

- The University has been successful in recruiting a young and very talented cohort of academic staff.
- The teaching staff's enthusiasm and commitment to the Department and its programmes 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 for BSc and Masters programmes, but also in planning research and acquiring research funding.
- The staff are very collaborative, not only in their endeavor to set up the new Department and develop the new programmes, but also in research. Although this is a recently established team, it already seems to be very cohesive.
- The teaching staff also seem to collaborate well with administrative staff.

#### 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 ambitious plans for rolling out two new BSc programmes (the Conventional Mode, which has already been accredited, and the newly planned E-Learning Mode) carries the risk of threatening the highly valued aim to safeguard work-life balance as well as the mission to excel in research activities.
- In connection with this, it is imperative that teaching load is modelled more accurately. 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 (30%).

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

*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.*

#### **4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria**

Admission requirements for entering the BSc in Psychology (e-Learning) comprise excellent academic achievement as evidenced by one of the following:

- (a) a high-school leaving certificate with a minimum grade of 16/20 (for public schools) or 80/100 (for private schools)
- (b) three GSE A Level with grades ABB, or
- (c) International Baccalaureate with a minimum of 32 points.

To apply for admission, students also need to provide an English Language Proficiency Certificate with IELTS 5.0 and above or equivalent, or be a native speaker of English or graduate of a high school or university with English as the language of instruction.

#### **4.2. Student progression**

If a student gets below 55% in a course, (s)he gets a 'Fail' grade. Failed core courses must be retaken and only two retakes are allowed, with a maximum grade of 'B'. Failed elective courses need not be retaken, but can be replaced if the student wishes to do so. If a student gets two 'Fs', (s)he goes on probation. A third 'F' leads to referral to the Academic Committee for expulsion.

#### **4.3. Student recognition**

Students can transfer up to 50% of their completed credits if the degree they have already obtained is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree. The University's rules for recognition are in line with international standards.

#### **4.4. Student certification**

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.

### Strengths

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

- Compliant procedures for student progression, recognition and certification are in place.

### 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 minimum required score for English proficiency is at the lower end compared to requirements in other European universities (i.e. IELTS 5,0), especially if the programme would be offered in English. In that case, it is more common to require a minimum IELTS score of 6,5.
- The rules concerning expulsion (page 14 of the application) are currently ambiguous. It is not clear whether a student who obtains a first F on each of 3 courses would be considered for expulsion. We note (again) that the rules seem much harsher than those of many other institutions. For this reason we have marked progression as partially compliant.

**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	Partially 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.*

*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

*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.*

The necessary infrastructure to support online education is already in place. This includes: The Moodle e-Learning platform, and Proctorio, a secure online examination system for monitoring and verifying online assessments. Moreover, at least for the time being, there seems to be sufficient support for both the learning processes as well as the digital interaction. In a similar vein, comprehensive digital library services are in place, providing remote access to textbooks and scholarly publications.

For the moment, student support is adequately provided, either online or at the campus, by resources such as the library, the Erasmus and mobility office and the career counselling and

guidance services. However, should the programmes grow further and student numbers increase, there will be a need to increase the number of IT support and administrative staff.

The meeting with students highlighted their satisfaction with distance learning processes that take into account their specific/personal needs, as well as challenges, such as the lack of community and interaction between them.

A clearly defined policy is also in place addressing the special needs of students with disabilities or other learning accommodations in the context of distance education.

### Strengths

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

- The University of Limassol has a dedicated and committed staff, both administrative and academic, to contribute to the success of its programmes and growth efforts.
- e-Learning is currently well-supported, with appropriate software, good documentation, and appropriate support channels.

### 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 University could enhance activities that would contribute to the engagement of students with the educational processes and to a sense of community among them or between students and staff. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, more diverse voluntary student groups (related to art, theatre, sports etc.) or other activities such as volunteering, community outreach, advocacy, and so on.
- A plan for rapid growth in student numbers will need to be matched by growth in student support services.

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<b><i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i></b>
<b>5.1</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Not applicable
<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	Student support	Compliant

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

The University of Limassol has a serious ambition and a clear commitment to delivering high-quality education. Throughout our visit, the representatives we met were driven, focused, and highly competent. If a University is its people, Limassol is clearly on the right track. However, development is happening fast (a theme we will return to) and, among a well-considered set of policies, some areas are naturally still under development. An important institutional goal will be to nail these down soon so that everyone—staff and students alike—knows exactly where they stand.

The e-Learning Bachelor's in Psychology is well-designed, building closely on the face-to-face BSc, previously approved by CYQAA. During the meeting, we discussed several options for restructuring elements of the programme, including moving *Ethical Issues* and *Developing Communication & Professional Skills* to later in the curriculum, to lead better in to the Practicum, and making the Practicum itself optional (to accommodate that minority of students who may not wish, or may not qualify for, this experience). Consideration will need to be given to the Practicum itself, particularly with regard to safeguarding issues. The University will need legal cover and formal memoranda of understanding with its stakeholders, and in this context, it would make sense to maintain a register of potential Practicum hosts.

The issues to do with course content are largely issues for the future; for example, if the course starts in 2025 the first Practicums will take place in 2029. However, the future also holds challenges, which will need serious consideration over the next year or two.

The most obvious of these concerns is workload. For example, the support from the DLU is excellent, but members of the teaching staff are already concerned that it will not be able to be maintained as courses start to roll out at pace. Eventually, the unit will have to grow substantially in size, possibly with dedicated staff for the larger departments. Much the same can be said for many of the administrative positions that are currently centrally provisioned.

This situation is even more acute when it comes to academic staff. Psychology at UoL has managed to attract a hugely talented, young, research-active staff. They are buzzing with potential, but other employers will realise this and this cohort is competitive on the European market. Rolling out a number of academic programmes on a tight schedule is likely to overwork them, *unless* their time is properly accounted for and more new colleagues are hired to accommodate workload. To take an example, it is important that delivering “the same” course in a different modality in a different language is time-costed as producing a “new” course, given the number of differences. Without these actions, there is a risk that Psychology will start to lose its best assets; and without further reports such as this, Psychology's voice may get lost in the competing demands of the University, which is why we also recommend an increased presence on Senate for the department.

Although the risks are real, we believe that UoL recognises the dangers and will—as it has to date—continue to take proactive action to avert them. So long as this is the case, the e-Learning Bachelor's in Psychology is likely to be a successful addition to the growing portfolio of an impressive university.



**E. Signatures of the EEC**

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**Date:** 28/05/2025

