ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 15.07.2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution: University Neapolis Pafos**

- **Town: Pafos**

- **Programme of study Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
- **Programme 1**

  In Greek: Πτυχίο στην Ψυχολογία (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

  In English: BSc in Psychology (4 years, 240 ECTS, BSc)

  Programme Name

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2ⁿᵈ column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
As to BSc in Psychology: 1. Intended learning outcomes mainly focus on cognitive and emotional processes underlying behavior; it would be good to explicitly mention biological processes too (especially given the fact that some courses in the program do focus on biological underpinnings of behavior)	We thank the EEC for the comment concerning the learning outcomes and the biological processes. The word **"biological"** has been added to our BSc program Learning Objectives.	Choose an item.
2. Some curriculum choices are somewhat surprising. More emphasis could be put on some core subdisciplines of psychology (e.g. psychology of individual differences: largely limited to one course on personality theories) as well as to some key fields of applied psychology (e.g. health psychology: optional in the current program). It might be worthwhile considering if some of the currently compulsory courses might be turned into optional courses as they cover way more narrow fields (e.g. psychology of reading) as compared to some of the currently optional courses (e.g. health psychology)	Concerning this comment by the EEC, we went ahead and accepted the recommendation. Specifically, instead of Psychology of Health being optional, if a student chose to do an undergraduate thesis, the course is **now offered as compulsory.** The course of Psychology of Reading, which was compulsory is now replaced into optional in case of undergraduate thesis. Additionally, the above change resulted in another course, that of Psychology of Sexuality, to be placed in the fall semester (7th semester) and Psychology of Reading to be moved to the 8th semester as it builds on Psychology of Language offered in the 7th semester. Thus, this creates a better "flow" of the curriculum.	Choose an item.
3. Currently, the dissertation is optional; students can have it replaced by two additional courses and most students do so; the EEC recommends reconsidering this issue and move the dissertation to the compulsory part of the program. The EEC is aware of the fact that this may further increase the workload of the teaching staff. The EEC suggests reconsidering some of the currently time-consuming assessment practices (e.g. huge investment in final exams and grading assignments during the semester) in order to free up time for the supervision of the dissertations.	Based on the research-related learning objectives of our BSc in Psychology program, we aim to: a) Critically assess and evaluate scientific documents such as journal articles b) Develop critical understanding of scientific methodology and c) Ability to write scientific reports using APA standards. Even though the advice of the committee is to move our optional undergraduate dissertation/thesis component to compulsory, we strongly feel that our current offered courses significantly satisfy the above aims allowing for the dissertation/thesis to remain optional to the students that want to pursue this research aspect further by doing a formal dissertation/thesis. More specifically, our BSc in Psychology offers six (6) different courses that satisfy the above aims and learning	Choose an item.

	outcomes. We offer the courses shown below covering all areas of reading, analyzing and reporting of research, as well as experiencing and conducting research through the courses. GEED113 Composing and Presenting Assignments in Psychology PSYC107 Research Methods in Psychology PSYC315 Experiencing Psychological Research I PSYC320 Statistics in Social Sciences I PSYC316 Experiencing Psychological Research II PSYC321 Statistics in Social Sciences II Thus, we decided to retain our current curriculum as is, allowing for the option of an undergraduate thesis/dissertation to be in place.	
		Choose an item.
		Choose an item.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Across programs: 1. There is a high load on final exams as a major part of the assessment procedure. In order to promote a more competency-based assessment, the EEC strongly recommends 17 providing an array of different forms of assessment which address and permit students to develop assessment literacy and enhance their overall graduate competencies. 2. The high value of the final exam focuses the student to memorize the information for the exam. If a robust continuous assessment is designed to guide the student to solve complex problems during the course (i.e. project based), with significant weighting, the EEC strongly recommends decreasing the weight of the final exam (i.e. 30%), to orient the student to the learning process. 3. It is recommended that in all courses, the students complete the formative activities to do the exam. 4. It is suggested to review the type of the formative assessment activities designed along the course and reduce the weekly activities for problem based activities (less quantity but with deeper demand to the students). As to BSc in Psychology: 5. Apart from the practicum, the program is very theoretical and contains almost no hands-on training. For example, in the domain of	Points 1-4 have been addressed previously in our answer to the EEC above. Concerning points 1-4, we took the EECs recommendations very seriously. Therefore, we have changed our grading and assignment values. Specifically, about the percentage weights of the courses, we have decided to accept the recommendation of the EEC and have changed the weights of all our BSc, MSc in Educational Psychology and MSc in Counseling Psychology to be**: 50% of the course for final exam and 50% of the assignments/activities.** Additionally, a student must attain a minimum grade of 50% on each component in order to be considered that they have successfully completed the course. Finally, we have also divided our relative courses into three grading components, the activities, the coursework and the exam. This way, we encourage their ongoing assessment procedures throughout the semester and not give as much emphasis on the final exam component. Concerning Point # 5, it is possible that we may have not passed across all the variety of practicum training our undergraduate students come in contact with. Utilizing faculty and graduate students, the undergraduate students learn the initial clinical interview of a psychologist, conducting a suicide assessment, process and conceptualize case studies of individuals within an array of disorders, couples, families and specialized populations. Additionally, they are introduced to counseling videos of best practices as well as certain psychotherapeutic approaches (i.e. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). We did take into consideration the comment by the EEC concerning the psychometric tools however, so we will implement that in our future curricula.	Choose an item.

psychological assessment, students mainly get theoretical information on tests and observe others while administering tests. The EEC recommends considering the inclusion of some "hands on" training already in the undergraduate program (e.g., standardized administration, scoring and interpretation of intelligence tests).		
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3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	*Actions Taken by the Institution*	For official use Only
Across programs: 1. Over the last couple of years, there has been a considerable staff turnover; it appears to be difficult to keep staff on board for a longer time, possibly in part due to the fact that Pafos is located in a remote corner of Cyprus; also, the fact that all programs are taught in Greek limits the market for recruitment; as a consequence of the large turnover, current staff consists of mainly junior faculty (8 out of 10 staff members are lecturers) 2. Teaching and administrative load are very high, as a consequence of which there is very little time for research; during the visit it became clear that all current staff is already at maximum teaching load; moreover, given the fact that the university and its programs have been established quite recently, programs and courses are still in development; according to the documentation, staff can devote only 1% to 5% of their time to research activities. 3. Although staff members teach in their domains of expertise, teaching assignments have a very broad scope; several staff members teach in multiple subdisciplines of psychology (e.g. developmental + cognitive + ...); as it is almost impossible to keep track of recent insights in so many domains, this may compromise the extent to which teaching is research-based.	Concerning Point # 1 above, we have previously addressed it as well. Specifically, we thank them for addressing our difficulty in recruiting staff to our university. We had a fruitful discussion with our new manager of our HR department with some good suggestions to us for improving our recruiting percentage. Concerning point # 2, we refer the EEC to our Policy (NUP Procedure 06.120), (see **Annex 4**) that makes detailed reference to our recruitment procedure as well as the advancement of faculty. Indeed, the range of salaries depending on the rank of the faculty is not mentioned and this will be discussed with the university administration. Concerning Points 2 and 3, once again it has been addressed previously. Specifically, the university has considered the suggestion of the EEC and has already announced two positions for immediate hiring (see https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Lecturer-or-Assistant-Professor-in-Psychology-.pdf). Additionally, a Special Teaching Staff will be hired in September 2022. Upon completion, of the application process and the hiring of these positions is filled, two more positions will be announced based on the new needs assessments conducted by the department, depending on what two specialties are hired. These hirings will also allow for more specialty-specific courses to be taught by faculty as well. Finally, a needs assessment for faculty further research development was conducted. The results were discussed with the administration of the university and a plan of action in fulfilling these needs was implemented,**(see Annexes 5-13)** Furthermore, research seminars will be conducted bimonthly by the department to aid each faculty in their research growth and incentives were added to the research policy of the university, as can be seen in the equivalent attached NUP Policy 4.100, **(see Annex 2)**	Choose an item.

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

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5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Findings of the EEC Overall, the evaluation process was very well prepared by the department. The documentation provided was clear and up to date and contained most of the required information. During the visit, presentations are clear and concise, leaving enough time for questions and exchange of thoughts. The discussions took place in a constructive atmosphere and staff were very open to suggestions. Overall, the programs are well-designed. Looking at course descriptions, the content of most courses seems to put much emphasis on theories as compared to empirical evidence. For the BSc and the MSc Educational Psychology, the EEC recommends moving the dissertation / master's thesis to the compulsory part of the program, as this is deemed indispensable to meet international standards. We have identified both strengths and areas of improvement. We will not reiterate all our comments but highlight just a few of the most important ones. First, teaching staff is highly motivated and shows clear ownership over the programs and the courses. However, the team is quite junior and there is a need to recruit additional staff members. Currently, teaching load and administrative load are very high, leaving almost no time for research. The EEC strongly recommends to give priority to the enhance opportunities for research and career	We thank the EEC for identifying our strengths that we also agree with. We also thank them for all their invaluable feedback on improving our program. We believe that we have sufficiently addressed all points and we made the necessary amendments where needed to improve all our programs of study, making our curriculum more student-centered and significantly more efficient for faculty, staff and students alike.	Choose an item.

development, which will also strengthen the teaching-research nexus. Second, across the programs and courses, the EEC feels that student assessment too heavily relies on final exams. The EEC recommends for all programs a stronger focus on formative assessment and less emphasis on the final exams.		
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C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	*Position*	*Signature*
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
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