

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 20 January 2022

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
American University of Cyprus (AUCY)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty:** Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Psychology
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Ψυχολογία (4 Έτη, 240 ECTS, πτυχίο στις καλές τέχνες)

In English:

Psychology (4 years, 240 ECTS, B.A.)

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

In Greek: Concentrations



**In English: Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology,
Organisational Psychology, Educational Psychology**

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.

On 17/1/2022, a preliminary meeting of the EEC took place, in which first observations and comments on the application were exchanged.

The site visit took place on 18/1/2022 and was preceded by a briefing by the CYQAA officer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the visit was run remotely, following this schedule:

10:00 – 10:10

- A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

10:10 – 10:40

A meeting with the Rector - Head of the Institution and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs – short presentation of the Institution

A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee

10:40 – 11:20

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department.
Short presentation of the School's / Department's structure

11:20 – 11:30

- Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30

Program: Psychology (4 years / 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

The program's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the program's design and development

12:30 – 13:30

- *Lunch Break*

13:30 – 14:30

- A meeting with members of the teaching staff on each course for all the years of study (QA session).
 - Discussion on the CVs (i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, compliance with Staff ESG), on any other duties in the institution and teaching obligations in other programmes.

- Discussion on the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).
- Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the program according to the EQF.
- Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

14:30 - 14:40

- Coffee Break

14:40 – 15:00

- A meeting with members of the administrative staff.

15:00 – 15:20

- A meeting with students (current students from other departments)

15:20 – 16:00

- Discussion on the virtual visit of the premises of the institution (i.e. library, computer labs, teaching rooms, research facilities).

16:00 – 16:30

- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the program's Coordinator - exit discussion (questions, clarifications).

The EEC studied the following **materials**:

Document: 200.1 – APPLICATION FOR EVALUATION – ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME OF STUDY, including information about the programme's general profile, the programme's content (structure, course distribution per semester, course descriptions), teaching staff (qualifications, teaching periods, detailed biographical notes) and a SWOT analysis

+
virtual tour of the university premises

+
powerpoint presentations provided during the visit

Two colleagues who hold key roles in the development of the study programme were unable to take part in the discussion on short notice due to illness, as a consequence of which no detailed answers could be provided to some of the questions. Throughout the visit discussion time was limited, as the presentations tended to be very extensive (and partially overlapping).

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
Ute GABRIEL	academic member	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Natalia EFREM	student member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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.**

Clarification of the ratings. As the department is not yet accredited, no staff was employed at the time of the evaluation. The EEC was provided with MoUs for future employment under the condition of the BA-program's accreditation. Also, this university has only recently been established and general documentation at the university level is not yet fully accessible from the university's homepage. Against this background, the EEC decided to use *N/A* when there was not sufficient information available to assess an indicator, and mark 3 when intentions presented, that due to the early state in the process had not yet been implemented.

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*
 - *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*

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*
- *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*

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 of Quality Assurance

All new taught programs must be validated, using the validation process set out by the University. This is a key mechanism by which AUCY establishes academic standards, ensuring that:

- the academic rationale for new program is fully exposed and understood
- the requirements for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes are clear
- resources can be provided to deliver the program to standards acceptable to the university.

In addition to this, the validation process aims to ascertain that proposed programs are in line with the AUCY's overall vision and strategy and are responsive to market demands, and that the quality of a program is comparable to that of European and international partners.

The bodies involved in the program validation process are:

- Program Originators: develop an idea for a new program with the backing of the respective department within a faculty
- Department: responsible for considering approval of Stage 1 and Stage 2 proposals and making recommendations to the Program Validation Committee (PVC) through the board of the faculty
- Board of faculty: responsible for considering Stage 1 and Stage 2 proposals and making timely recommendations to the Senate through the PVC.
- Academic Program Quality and Resources Unit (APQRU): responsible for providing administrative support to academic staff in the planning stages of new courses to ensure that program of study offered by the University are in line with regulations, by-laws and university policies, whilst also considering their viability in relation to available resources and market demands.
- Program Validation Committee (PVC): responsible for recommending decisions for Senate approval after analysing the documentation submitted at both stages of approval.
- External Reviewer: responsible for providing expert independent feedback on various aspects of the proposed program.
- Senate: responsible for approving academic program offered by the University
- Council: responsible for approving additional funding for implementing programs of study (if required).

1.2. Design, Approval, On-going Monitoring and Review

There are two main stages in academic program planning:

- Stage 1 concentrates on the practicality and feasibility of the idea generated within the overall vision and strategy of the University.

- Stage 2 focuses on the design and detailing of the academic program given that the original idea has been approved in principle by the Senate (and Council if applicable).

Both stages are worked out in detailed steps (cf application document).

If an existing program of study is amended in a major way it should be submitted to the same process of validation as for new programs.

In order to obtain the Bachelor in Psychology degree, students need to acquire 240 ECTS credits, of which 198 ECTS in compulsory courses, 30 ECTS in elective courses of specialisation and 12 ECTS in free electives.

During the site visit, it became clear that the elective courses were organised into four concentrations (Clinical, Educational, Health, and Organisational Psychology). These were not specified in the submitted documentation. In order to realise these concentrations, a very large set of electives is planned (n=21), as a consequence of which no fewer than 54 new courses in total will have to be developed and taught.

During the site visit, it was clarified that the statement- provided in the application - that graduates of this psychology program will be eligible to register to the national registration system is not accurate.

1.3. Public Information

The AUCY website provides a broad description of the psychology program, but no details on selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, learning opportunities available etc. More information can be requested using a web form.

1.4. Information Management

During the visit, an information management system was briefly demonstrated. However this is not documented and the EEC was unable to make an evaluation.

Strengths

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

- The quality assurance systems appear to be well thought-through, but it was not clear to the panel whether these were fully implemented at the time of review.
- The program includes a comprehensive set of courses, including some (e.g., ELE422 *Psychology of Crisis Intervention*) not often listed in other institutions.
- Students are expected to complete a research project in their 4th year (Senior thesis).
- Courses are clearly documented.

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 processes for proposing, amending, and approving individual modules on the program remained unclear. During the visit it became apparent that most modules had been proposed in a top-down fashion (course descriptions produced by a small committee and then assigned to staff to edit and teach). This is understandable given that the programme is brand new, but we **recommend** that teaching staff, and students, be more fully involved in programme and module design as the department matures.
- The EEC had five major concerns about the design of the program, detailed below;
 1. *Overall program profile.* The overall program focus is not clearly articulated. Does the department have in mind a program focused on applied psychology? How much importance is given to the research focus? Also, it is not obvious how the overall program is in line with what is presented as a program mission (e.g., in what respect is the program ‘interdisciplinary’?) or as program objectives (e.g., in what sense are the graduates of this program ‘scientist-practitioners’?)
 2. *Number of courses offered.* The program as presented includes 54 new 6-credit courses, across four years, to be developed and taught initially by 14 staff. Whereas this has the benefit of offering choice to students, it spreads staff – and resources – very thinly. 13 of the proposed courses, for example, include practical elements which will necessitate interview rooms, video recorders, experimental equipment such as eye trackers and EEG, etc. There is no need to offer this degree of choice in the program. As AUCY teaches on the “American model” it may be instructive to take [the syllabus of UMASS Dartmouth](#), with whom a partnership agreement has been made, as an example. UMASS Dartmouth offers 26 courses, taught by 23 academics, serving an estimated 600 students.
 3. *Coverage of core psychological disciplines.* There was general agreement in the committee that the core areas of psychology (biological, cognitive, developmental, personality, and social psychology, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods) should be covered early, and in approximately equal proportions, in a modern psychology syllabus. The syllabus as presented gave very uneven treatment to these areas, and some were introduced into the syllabus surprisingly late (e.g., PSY306 *Social Psychology* is introduced in year 3, and has content which is primarily applied).
 4. *Progression.* Introducing Social Psychology late presents the issue that applied courses for which it provides a foundation (e.g., PSY210 *Psychology of Art*, PSY302 *Health Psychology*) will be taught without a proper context. A similar issue arises where PSY110 *Developmental Psychopathology* precedes PSY208 *Developmental Psychology II*.
 5. *Mapping of courses to staff.* Teaching from active research ensures that teaching is current, and (as a stated aim of AUCY) that staff can remain research active. The

present mapping of courses to staff requires many staff to teach in quite disparate areas (PSY202 *Learning and Behaviour* vs ELE419 *Psychological Perspectives on Leadership*; PSY308 *Counselling Psychology* vs PSY402 *Psychopharmacology* etc.). Moreover, some expertise is not being used (there is no *Psychology of Language* course despite the hire of a psycholinguist, for example).

The EEC **recommends** that the department consider a revision of the syllabus, building on fewer courses (for potentially higher ECTS), which map to core areas of psychology and staff expertise in a more transparent way, and free up staff time to remain research active.

We additionally **note** that the class-hours per credit (45-75 hours for 6 ECTS) are high, by European standards.

- The EEC **recommends** that the website be developed to include full details of the psychology program and syllabus.

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	Non-compliant
1.3	Public information	N/A
1.4	Information management	N/A

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

Sub-areas

- 2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 2.3 Practical training**
- 2.4 Student assessment**

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

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

- *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.*
- *pAssessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *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-Centered Teaching Methodology

All course description documents contain information on teaching methodology, referring to a subset of methods from a standardised list. Commonly used methods are

- reading and resolving problems
- working on problem-solving
- attendance and participation in the class
- monitor discussions
- writing and reply on objective type questions
- interaction and collaborative learning
- video watching
- solving unstructured questions and case studies
- reading and critical reflection in the discussion forum
- brief oral presentations
- homework for revision purposes
- classroom debates

A plethora of communication means is used to facilitate clear and direct communications between teachers and students (e.g. office hours, email, student portals and SIS, VLE, mobile app, website news and announcements,...)

2.2. Practical Training

The curriculum does not contain any type of field placement, in which students get the opportunity to learn by working in an applied setting. However, several of the proposed courses (e.g. applied research methods) include practical elements.

2.3. Student Assessment

The Student Assessment Policy and Procedure describes the general principles and procedures for the assessment of students' knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills at the AUCY. All Program Coordinators, faculty and administrative staff are responsible for the implementation of the policy.

There are different forms of assessment, serving different purposes, including:

- supporting student learning and performance through the provision of student feedback, mark(s) and/or grade(s);
- evaluating student knowledge, understanding, abilities, skills or competencies.

In addition, the AUCY aims to have effective procedures for

- constructing, approving, reviewing and monitoring its assessment policy and procedures on a systematic basis
- implementing thorough assessment policies and practice that ensure the objectives of the programme are set and met at an appropriate standard, and that student performance is properly judged against these
- assessing how academic standards are maintained through the assessment process, which also serves in encouraging effective learning and student development

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for ensuring Quality Assurance and Compliance of the assessment methods set out in the Policy. Independently reviewing and confirming the assessment process is conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness, at all times.

The Program Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of assessment methods and procedures to ensure they result in reliable and fair assessment as well as for monitoring and reporting to the Quality Assurance Manager on Quality Assurance of the assessment.

The Faculty members are responsible for conducting the students' assessment in line with the methods and procedures set out in the Policy as well as keeping complete and up-to-date records of student assessments. These records are available to the student and the Quality Assurance Manager, in line with the AUCY's Record Keeping Policy.

External Examiners are responsible for reviewing and approving the examination questions before the papers are set, reviewing the marks and the work of at least a sample of students, as such ensuring the quality of the programme is met.

Detailed procedures for planning and conducting assessments, moderation of assessment results and reviewing the assessment policy have been worked out (cf. application document).

AUCY implements the principle of continuous evaluation for each course, in addition to a final exam. In fact, the performance of the student in each course is evaluated at the discretion of the teaching staff and with the approval of the Department, in two distinct methods at least. In the Bachelor of Psychology programme, most courses are evaluated using a combination of methods but always including a final exam (e.g., 10% participation, 30% midterm exam, 20% quizzes, 40% final exam). Frequently used methods are midterm exams, essays, oral presentations and quizzes.

All formal written examinations are graded anonymously (except for activities for which the anonymity of the candidate is not possible or desirable). All final examinations and a

sample of other forms of assessments (e.g., assignments / course work) are second graded for verification purposes.

Strengths

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

The procedures as described appear entirely appropriate, and the department is to be congratulated on promising a broad selection of formative and summative assessments 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.

Because the program is not yet running, it remains to be ascertained that these systems are implemented as promised. The panel **recommends** that the department (and University) now move to naming the holders of the various roles (QA, External Examiner, etc.) and to publishing the assessment regulations to students, as would be expected.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	N/A
2.3	Student assessment	N/A

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

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

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *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

Detailed criteria and procedures for the recruitment, screening, selection and hiring of academic staff in different ranks are in place.

3.2. Teaching Staff Number and Status

The teaching staff consists of 14 persons, of whom 10 have a full-time appointment. All except one person has already obtained a PhD. The distribution across ranks is as follows: associate professor (n=2), assistant professor (n=2); lecturer (n=7), visiting professor (n=2), special teaching

staff (n=1). Depending on the number of students, the department intends to hire 8 more full-time permanent faculty by Fall 2022.

Full-time and part-time faculty staff are expected to teach a maximum of 12 credit hours per semester, unless there is a need for teaching overload. Special scientists and visiting faculty are expected to teach the courses assigned to them based on the needs of the department. Faculty with administrative duties and responsibilities are expected to teach 6 credit hours.

3.3. Synergies of Teaching and Research

AUCY is committed to taking all necessary measures to ensure that research is promoted within the University and that teaching, and learning should be enhanced by research activities. Its target is to provide academic excellence, active participation in multi-disciplinary research, internationalisation and promotion of high-value research- oriented results.

The main research priorities of the AUCY according to its Strategic Plan and Academic Vision are (a) development and enhancement of research activities, (b) attraction of external research funding, (c) exploitation and dissemination of research results

In order to achieve these goals, AUCY will primarily collaborate, but not only, with the newly established AUCY Research Centre which is part of the AUCY and it will operate either autonomously or in co-operation with other entities, such as companies, research institutes, external researchers and academics. In addition, AUCY has already signed a Memorandum of Agreement with University of Massachusetts and CASS School of Management for Collaboration with the Research Centre and promote research at an international level. It also proposes the creation of research units under the umbrella of the Research Centre based on each Faculty. This will support the goal of promoting the interdisciplinary collaboration across the research units and to strengthen research excellence in different areas.

AUCY has further updated the research policy by including the provision of research incentives for faculty:

- financial incentives of €1,000-€1500 for novice researchers and academic staff in order to complete a project report and proceed into and publication of their results;
- financial incentives for participation with a Scientific Announcement (oral or poster) to conferences
- additional research activity funding for submitting proposals for external financing based on special criteria.

In addition, all Members of the academic staff (Faculty and special teaching personnel), will be encouraged to participate in additional activities, in alignment with University rules, including participation in External Research/Teaching Programs, either in European programs or in other international projects with external funding.

Research is among the top priorities of the academic personnel involved in the Program. The faculty members will be expected to be active researchers in their respective disciplines and they will be strongly encouraged and supported by the Institution to conduct relevant and applied research to satisfy the needs of the Cyprus market and beyond.

Students will be encouraged to participate and collaborate with faculty in research projects during their 3rd and 4th years of their study at AUCY. They will also be encouraged to collaborate with other academics from other institutions in Cyprus and abroad, i.e. the USA, Europe, etc.

Strengths

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

The department has done well to recruit a number of internationally-competitive academics. Teaching appears to be well-supported.

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.

There was little clarity on the onboarding process (will more junior colleagues be given a reduced teaching load in the first year? Is there a mentoring system?).

It was also difficult to determine the recruitment strategy (the panel were informed by the dean that a Psychology BA was “less scientific” and that there was a wish for “highly interdisciplinary research”, but several of the recruits are cognitive neuroscientists). There doesn’t seem to be a detailed support plan for recruited staff (for example several of the staff use EEG but there is no concrete plan to acquire equipment; nor were there plans for interview rooms, developmental testing labs, etc. etc.). As previously described, there appears to be a disconnect between teaching and research, that stems in part from a wish to offer more courses than is strictly necessary.

The EEC **recommends** that the department produce a five-year strategic plan, outlining priority areas for recruitment, plans for staff development and research support, key external funding targets, etc.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Non-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

Applicants must hold a school leaving certificate or its equivalent, as determined by the Cypriot Ministry of Education, in order to be eligible for the Sophomore or First-Year Class. All applicants must have completed their secondary school education or the high school program, consisting of (or equivalent to) twelve years of schooling, to be considered for admission to an undergraduate program.

The general admission requirement for entry to an undergraduate program of study is a High School Leaving Certificate or equivalent of at least 15/20 and recognized by the Cyprus Ministry of Education.

English is the main language of instruction at our University. Students may be required to take AUCY's English free of charge entrance examination, before registering for classes. In case they have passed an internationally recognized English exam indicating a satisfactory passing grade, then students will directly be admitted to their program of

study. English language proficiency criteria, as indicate in the application (slightly different from those currently on the website) are:

- TOEFL: 534 and above
- computer-based TOEFL: 201 and above
- internet-based TOEFL: 73 and above
- IELTS: 6.0 and above
- Cambridge exams (first certificate): B2 and above

Foreign applicants must fulfil requirements specified by the Admissions Office in accordance with the rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education.

3.1. Student Progression

The department has processes and tools in place to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression. But given that the programme has not yet started, effective implementation cannot be evaluated.

3.2. Student Recognition

Applicants who have completed at least 30 credits in their First Year level outside AUCY with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0/4.0 beyond their secondary school education, and have been accepted by AUCY's Admissions Office to register for a full-time load during the Fall or Spring semester, are considered transfer students. Courses earned at other institutions recognized by the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Higher Education, graded "C" or higher, and matching courses offered at AUCY, are considered transferable.

3.3. Student Certification

AUCY's programmes are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), one credit unit corresponding to 25-30 hours of student work. In addition to credits earned by successfully completing academic courses, students get the opportunity to be awarded with credit units by attending public lectures, for blood donation and for participating in AUCY's sports team and/or competition. A degree is awarded after successfully completing the curriculum.



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	N/A
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

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

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.

5.1. Teaching and Learning Resources

Computer labs are established for the needs of each degree (for Department of Psychology: lab with 25 laptops). An IT department is fully dedicated to help students with their research, SIS, applications and all software needs.

5.2. Physical Resources

The library provides access to an expanding collection of core reference and circulating materials in print, manuscript, electronic, audio, visual cartographic and other formats. It also provides individual and group study space for more than 100 simultaneous users, and Information Commons with appropriate support and access to information and technology resources and a classroom for library instruction and for quiet, individual study. An E-library will be hosted at AUCY connected to all E-libraries in the world. A sports office is established to promote athletic activities on campus accessible to all students. Clubs are introduced taking into consideration all major students' interests. The organisation of students' clubs will be coordinated by the Student Affairs Office.

5.3. Human Support Resources

An academic advisor is assigned to each student through his/her academic journey at the university. In addition, faculty members can assist students with respect to their academic performance. A psychologist is available to support students with psychological or learning difficulties.

5.4. Student Support

AUCY's student support services are based on four pillars, which include personal development and support, academic support, financial assistance and career guidance and assistance. These support services are provided before the beginning of studies, during and after the completion of studies.

In the Counselling Service, staff members with an educational background provide assistance and support in coping with personal, family or even financial matters that hinder students' progress. If needed, counsellors refer students to professionals in the private sector according to the nature of their problems.

The Careers Office provides professional guidance, resources and access to employment opportunities to students and alumni.

The Mobility Office organises student exchange within Europe and the US.

Strengths

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

Plans are already in place to provide key resources, such as library materials, psychological test banks, etc. There appears to be a strong computing infrastructure; the campus has a great deal of space which will hopefully accommodate labs etc. as Psychology's needs grow.

There are detailed plans to support students, both academically and pastorally, but few of these have been implemented to date (the intentions are admirable).

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.

It wasn't clear to the panel what the consultation process was for purchases (e.g., software, journal subscriptions, test banks). Of note, no software to run experiments has yet been purchased (E-Prime or similar). However we note that Psychology as a worldwide discipline is moving quickly towards open-source software (R instead of SPSS; PsychoPy, OpenSesame, or jsPsych instead of E-Prime) and AUCY may also wish to choose this route (resourcing support rather than software licences).

As mentioned previously in this document, proper research support necessitates equipment and space, and we would expect AUCY to consult with Psychology about this as the department develops. In discussions, it wasn't clear what the policies or strategies for big-ticket items were; these could be clarified.

The panel **recommends** that a research development strategy (and policy) be produced. Note that this directly impacts teaching, since high-quality teaching depends on high-quality research.

Because few of the student support systems have yet been implemented, the panel **recommends** that a progress report be produced in 24 months' time, detailing the implementation of the many planned resources and systems in the submission.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	N/A
5.4	Student support	N/A

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 EEC is thankful to the AUCY staff for the hospitality and interesting discussions throughout the visit. We recognize and appreciate the huge amount of work the foundation of a new university and the development of new programmes of study requires. We are impressed by the high degree of dedication displayed by the founders of the university and faculty as well as the future teaching staff of the department and bachelor's programme. We believe that AUCY has recruited a number of promising young scholars who are well qualified to develop a high-quality programme of study.

Unfortunately, evaluation of the program was made harder for three reasons. First, in our understanding, the department doesn't quite exist yet (most, if not all, staff have signed MoUs dependent on successful recruitment of students to the degree programme). This document is designed for the evaluation of a department as a going concern, and for that reason the panel was not able to provide meaningful ratings in all of the categories requested. Second, the head of department was, unfortunately, mostly absent (due to illness), leaving many questions to be answered by a visiting professor from another university. Third, a number of things appeared to have changed between the submission of the documentation and the site visit (perhaps inevitable over eight months in a rapidly-developing university), but staff didn't always appear to be aware of what the documentation said.

Just as Rome wasn't built in a day, the establishment of a new department and the development of a new program of study are large and time-intensive enterprises, and key conditions must be met in order to guarantee a safe program start. After having studied the documentation as well as the additional input from the presentations and discussions during the visit, the EEC feels that a start-up of the new program this Fall might be too early. If time and resources permit, it would be judicious to postpone the program's launch for one academic year, appointing a small group of future teaching staff to take care of the recommendations above. In particular, we recommend that attention is paid to:

1. The structure and simplification of the program
2. The mapping between staff expertise and teaching assignments
3. Planning an infrastructure which serves the practical needs of students and staff



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	
Martin CORLEY	
Ute GABRIEL	
Natalia EFREM	
Click to enter Name	
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Date: 20 January 2022