Doc. 300.3.1/1

Date: 09-07-2021

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

● **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Nicosia

● **Town:** Nicosia

● **School/Faculty:** School of Humanities and Social Sciences

● **Department:** Department of Social Sciences

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

Programme 1 – [Title 1]

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

 BSc in Psychology (4-years, 240 ECTS, first cycle)

Language(s) of instruction: Language(s)

Programme 2 – [Title 2]

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

MSc in Clinical Psychology (3-years, 180 ECTS, second cycle)

Language(s) of instruction: Language(s)

Programme 3 – [Title 3]

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

 PhD in Psychology

Language(s) of instruction: Language(s)

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

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A.   Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have made it impossible to physically visit the facility. Instead, on July 1 and 2, 2021, virtual meetings were carried out with the following program:

Day 1

10:00 – 10:10

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

[10 minutes]

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

[15 minutes]

·   A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee

[15 minutes]

10:40 – 11:20

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

[40 minutes]

Maximum duration of presentation: 15´   Discussion: 25´

11:20 – 11:30

·   *Coffee Break*   *[**10 minutes**]*

11:30 – 12:30

Programme 1: BSc Psychology

·   The programme's standards, admission criteria for prospective students, the learning outcomes and ECTS, the content and the persons involved in the programme's design and development   *[60 minutes]*

Maximum duration of presentation: 20´   Discussion: 40´

12:30 – 13:30

·   *Lunch Break*   *[**60 minutes**]*

13:30 - 14:30

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

  o 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.

  o Discussion on the content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).

  o Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.

  o Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

  [60 minutes]

14:30 - 14:40

- *Coffee Break* **[10 minutes]**

14:40 – 15:10

- A meeting with students and graduates only (5 – 15 participants).

  [30 minutes]

15:10 – 15:30

- A meeting with members of the administrative staff.

  [20 minutes]

15:30 – 15:45

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

  [15 minutes]

15:45 – 16:10

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

  [25 minutes]

16:10 – 16:40

· Live streaming of courses.

[30 minutes]

In addition, the evaluation is based on the following materials:

- Application for departmental evaluation (date of submission: 24.06.2019)
- Presentations from Zoom meetings (July 1 and 2, 2021 and additional information in line with the committee's request
- Videos: Virtual tour of the university; KESY; Psychology labs

Course recordings (PSY-240 Abnormal Psychology; PSYC-510 Child Psychopathology)

B.   External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof. Ute GABRIEL	Academic member; Chair	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway
Prof. Roshan DAS NAIR	Academic member	University of Nottingham, UK
Prof. Patricia BIJTTEBIER	Academic member	KU Leuven, Belgium
Chloe Yiannakou CONSTANTINIDES	Representative from the Professional Association	University
Maria CHRISTOFOROU	Student representative	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
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 each programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
    - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
    - *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*

- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- ● *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*
  - o *qualification awarded*
  - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *pass rates*
  - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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- *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.

Findings for BSc Psychology

1.1. Policy of Quality Assurance

At the University of Nicosia, external quality assurance is provided through various bodies and standards/regulations/laws, e.g., The Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters of 2015, the European Guidelines and Standards for Quality Assurance, the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, the Private Universities (Establishment, Operation and Control) Law 109(1) of 2005, and the KYSATS – Cyprus National Academic Recognition Information Centre – NARIC Law.

Internal quality assurance is carried out by the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC), the composition, processes and responsibilities of which were recently updated to reflect the newest version of the European Standards and Guidelines of 2015. Through its subcommittees, the UIQAC assures quality at an institutional, departmental and programme level. The UIQAC consists of the vice rector of academic affairs (chair), one faculty representative from each school (at least rank of assistant professor), one faculty member who is actively involved in the delivery of distance learning programmes/course, one staff representative, the Head of Quality Assurance of the Medical School and two student representatives. In addition, each department of the university has a Quality Control Committee, composed of the head or associate head of the department, one faculty member and one student representative.

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

The program is designed with overall objectives (both general and specific) that are in line with the institutional strategy and it has explicit intended learning outcomes. The knowledge and skills the program aims at are aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Cyprus National Qualifications Framework. Educational guidelines in undergraduate psychology programs of European (EuroPsy) and American (APA) organizations were consulted. In 2011, the proposed programme was evaluated and approved by the Evaluation Committee of Private Universities (ECPU).

Following the University of Nicosia Academic Rules and Regulations, all programmes and courses undergo periodic review. Based on feedback from the industry, alumni, students and professional associations, the review can result in a re-engineering of the program. When creating a new course or updating an existing one, several people are involved: several faculty members (instructor of the course, department faculty and head) participate in the design process and advisory council (consisting of representatives of professional associations and the Cyprus market) provides additional input in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Through regular consultation sessions, stakeholders are able to provide recommendations and feedback on the development of new programs and courses, the strategy to be developed on the delivery of programmes, and the quality of the programmes offered.

The program consists of 240 ECTS, of which 180 ECTS compulsory courses and 60 ECTS elective courses. Students have the option to replace two electives by a bachelor's thesis (12 ECTS). The first year is designed such that students mainly attend courses outside of psychology.

The program is delivered in Greek as well as English, creating opportunities for international students (other than Greek) to participate.

Course/faculty evaluation questionnaires are conducted every semester (at a minimum). Online facilities and services are available for students to provide feedback and express complaints. Feedback is analyzed and answers are provided within set deadlines. "Board of studies" meetings allow students to interact with their instructors at the beginning and halfway through the semester to discuss issues pertaining to their studies.

1.3. Public Information

All information regarding the program of study such as duration, ECTS workload, learning outcomes, course syllabi, semester breakdown, assessment methods etc. is available through the University of Nicosia website in a clear, transparent and structured manner.

1.4. Information Management

Data on student applications, registrations, progression and drop-out have been presented in the documentation and during the visit.

Findings for MSc in Clinical Psychology

1.1. Policy of Quality Assurance

The quality assurance procedure of the degree is governed by the general quality assurance regulations of the University of Nicosia Internal Regulations. Student Workload and Learning Outcomes and Competences are outlined and map onto the course syllabi, which are prepared in the ECTS format. There is a clear description of the courses and corresponding ECTS credits.

Relevant stakeholders have had some input into the programme development process. We saw some very good evidence of how student feedback was incorporated within various aspects of the programme. Apart from the possibility of service user feedback from the clinic, it was not clear how their input could/was incorporated within the development or quality assessment of the programme, the selection or assessment of students, or the research they conduct. This, we understood, was an area of development for other such courses in the country, but the Department has the ability to be an early adopter of such initiatives and the leading authorities in this area in the country. Service user involvement can be seen as another opportunity to increase quality assurance.

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There is a clear pedagogical support structure. This offers additional quality assurances. We were assured during the visit that there were clear contractual agreements with external practicum providers to ensure that students' learning needs are met, the course's learning objectives met, and that the students are treated in accordance with the ethos of the university's vision and mission.

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

The MSc Program in Clinical Psychology was developed based on guidelines from European (EuroPsy), British and American professional organisations in Psychology (e.g., BPS, APA), and meets the legal requirements of the Republic of Cyprus for registration in the Registry of Professional Psychologists with a specialisation in Clinical Psychology. The programme was designed based on the Bologna Process Declaration and the Tuning Methodology in Developing and Evaluating Programmes.

The MSc programme draws inspiration from the experiences of the faculty, based on their own training experiences from universities and courses in other countries. This is a strength. It would be useful to continuously update the programme with the latest innovations in teaching and assessing clinical psychology programmes. Important choices made tend to be somewhat 'outdated', e.g., strong emphasis on theoretical perspectives and their associated therapeutic approaches (rather than evidence-based interventions targeting - often transdiagnostic - mechanisms), focus on DSM-based disorders rather than dimensionally conceived psychological problems, predominance of attention to clinical assessment and therapy with little or no attention to prevention and primary care.

We understood that the neuropsychology component of the programme was embedded within the psychopharmacology course. It would be more useful to have the psychopharmacology course embedded within a neuropsychology course. Also, it would be useful to map the learning objectives of this course onto clinical psychology theory and/or practice.

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The process for approving the programme is clearly outlined, and there was nothing in the visit which suggested that due process was not followed. There are clearly outlined criteria for evaluating programmes, which include internal and external processes.

The Internal Programme Evaluation Process is initiated 2 years after the accreditation of a programme by the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency. There are internal and external reviewers who are appointed to evaluate the programme.

1.3. Public Information

The course details outlined on the relevant University of Nicosia website are clear and accurate. Prospective applicants can click on relevant links to access details of individual courses. Staff profiles are clear, and almost all include a brief CV, which is useful for applicants.

1.4. Information Management

During the visit, we were presented with relevant information about the number of applicants, completion rates, etc., which appear to be in keeping with the local context.

Findings for PhD. Psychology

The program consists of 180 ECTS, which correspond to six semesters (30 ECTS each) in which students take different steps in their doctoral work: (a) literature review, (b) final proposal, (c) data collection I, (d) data collection II, (e) write-up and (f) write-up and defense. They do so by engaging in individual study as well as one-to-one meetings with their supervisor. Apart from the thesis, there are no other compulsory or elective courses in the program.

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

Strengths for BSc Psychology

- The University of Nicosia has established quality assurance procedures and each program is reviewed periodically.
- The program is well-designed and has a clear structure as well as an overall good selection of relevant content. It covers the main domains of psychological science and has a solid basis of methodological training. The guided choice provided in sections B/C/D (cf

application p. 47) has the advantage of providing options but still making sure students get an introduction in each of the domains.
● Student feedback is asked every semester and the results are monitored and used for the optimization of teaching practice.

Strengths for MSc in Clinical Psychology

● Clear information about the programme available in the public domain.
● KESY is a clear strength of the programme and allows students to access a group of people who they can support while developing their clinical skills, under the supervision of trained clinical psychologists.
● Academic staff are appropriately trained, demonstrate continued engagement in clinical research, have a national and international profile, and there is good evidence that they offer considerable support for their students, which the students fully appreciate. Good mix of staff with different child/adult and clinical specialties.

Strengths for PhD in Psychology

● *Purposes, objectives and learning outcomes are clearly outlined and publicly accessible.*
● *Quality assurance procedures are in place; An internal evaluation was conducted in 2018 by teams of internal and external reviewers.*

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc Psychology

● Compared to the number of ECTS devoted to research methods, the number of ECTS devoted to statistical training appears to be quite low. It is unlikely that throughout no more than two compulsory courses, students can acquire in depth insight in the statistical foundation of psychological research. According to the course description, learning outcomes largely focus on being able to use SPSS and calculate all sorts of statistics. A related concern pertains to the training in Psychological Testing, of which the amount of ECTS most probably do not allow in depth insight in the psychometric foundations of test construction and evaluation (e.g., classical test theory, item response theory,...) nor in the broader decision-making process of psychological assessment (e.g., use of the empirical cycle).

- Section C/cluster II targets the domain of individual differences (differential/personality psychology). No doubt this is a crucial domain in which students should get at least one course. However, only one of the courses listed here really targets individual differences (PSY-250A); it might be advisable to replace the other course (PSY-380), e.g., by PSY-490 or PSY340).
- Section E/Additional Psychology Requirements is a very broad and heterogeneous section, comprising both courses in core domains of psychology that are not yet covered in sections A-D (e.g., health psychology, theories of intelligence, ...) and more specialized courses in either clinical psychology or forensic psychology. It might be advisable to reconsider this section and possibly split it up in subsections to make sure that students do not end up with only specialized courses and by doing so miss out some core psychology domains.
- Although the fact that the optional status of the bachelor thesis is appreciated by at least part of the students, the EEC feels that the program would be strengthened by making it obligatory.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc Clinical Psychology

- Consider revisiting the curriculum to make it a more competency based, in line with the most pressing needs of the Cypriot society, and how psychological services can meet those needs.

- Consider having a specific entry level for proficiency in conversational Greek (for non-speakers) to ensure that they do not face any difficulties in being able to fully engage in all aspects of the course (especially the practicum).

- Objectives and Learning outcomes of Advanced Statistical & Research Methods 1 programme has a focus on quantitative and qualitative methods (including ethnographic methods and focus groups), but the course content does not appear to have any qualitative methods topics. Advanced Statistical & Research Methods 2 course appears to be even more heavily weighted towards quantitative methods. In fact, through many parts of the curriculum, we noticed a preponderance of quantitative approaches to qualitative approaches (e.g., in Thesis 1: course purpose and objectives, and learning outcomes, makes reference to 'hypotheses'; recommended textbook is for SPSS – same for Thesis 2). Therefore, we would recommend that there is more qualitative methods teaching and supervision. Additional staff could be considered for this purpose.

- For the Clinical Psychometric Assessment I course, it might be useful to have a text on psychometrics as part of their essential reading.

- Consider how service users can be included in various aspects of the programme (e.g., being involved in student recruitment interviews, teaching sessions around specific topics, research supervision, etc.)

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- Consider whether payment for bioethics review can be subsumed within the tuition fees, because if students have to pay extra for this, it may create disparities in terms of the nature of research that students can undertake.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD Psychology

- See section 6

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

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

Standards

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

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

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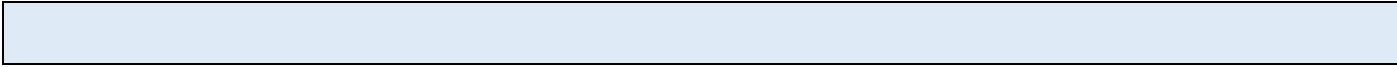**CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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

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)?*

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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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.

Findings for BSc Psychology

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

The University of Nicosia maintains a student-centered learning environment that promotes and encourages student interaction and feedback. A variety of teaching methods are used, including problem-based learning, workshops, experiential seminars, individual and group work and student presentations. Moodle, which is the Learning Management System currently used, offers a wide range of activities and resources to encourage constructive collaboration, formative and summative assessments, and peer assessment. Most courses include general and weekly forum discussions to enhance learning and promote interactivity, exchange of ideas, discussions and active class participation both on faculty-student and student-student levels.

2.2. Practical training

In PSY460 Practicum in Psychology, students get the opportunity to learn by working in an applied setting. During the field placement, students observe and support the provision of psychological services. Working under the supervision of a qualified professional of psychological services, students are given tasks that are within the scope of their abilities and training thus far. The course requires the completion of 120 hours: 80 at the practicum site, 20 in classroom interaction and 20 in relevant seminars/workshops.

2.3. Student assessment

Most courses are assessed via (mid-term and final) exams, sometimes in combination with written assignments. There is not much variation in assessment methods and a strong emphasis on summative evaluation at the end of the semester. The responsibility for the evaluation is taken by the instructor of the course; the program does not use peer feedback or double grading.

Findings for MSc in Clinical Psychology

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

We saw and heard good evidence that the teaching was student-centred, and there were good mechanisms in place to solicit student feedback through different fora, and some evidence that such feedback was incorporated within future iterations of the curriculum/course.

2.2. Practical training

Students have the opportunity to engage in practical training via KESY, under the supervision of trained clinical psychologists. Additional placements are found from outside the university. Where external placements are found, there is a contract/agreement with external providers, and regular check-in with course staff to ensure that learning objectives are met. We recognised that there were some limitations in terms of the nature of experiences that students could achieve, for instance in relation to forensic services, but we understand that these are systemic issues related to reluctance of external services from offering placements. Student feedback was positive, but some indicated a desire to see more structure applied to the provision of the practicum, and there were some instances where students had to wait a long time to find out about their placements.

2.3. Student assessment

This appears mainly via examinations and coursework/presentations, and is in line with the learning objectives for each course. It did not appear that there was any double/audit marking of assessments, which places considerable emphasis on individual staff judgements of grades/attainment.

Findings for PhD in Psychology

The program is structured into six stages (from literature review to final write-up). An individual development plan is drawn up in collaboration with the team of supervisors. Formal supervisory meetings are to be held at least twice per semester. The student's progress is reviewed annually by the team of supervisors. The students reported to meet with the supervisor at least once per month. Students appreciated the program's structure, but also mentioned a need for stricter deadlines for each stage. As there are too few PhD-students in this program to create a stable learning environment, the Department seeks to provide the students with opportunities to connect with PhD students outside of the program. The EEC especially welcomes the notion of conducting pan-cypriot national conferences for PhD-students.

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

Strengths for BSc Psychology

- The inclusion of the Practicum, which offers internship opportunities in a field setting, is a clear strength of the program.

Strengths for MSc in Clinical Psychology

- Student welfare: We saw evidence of good support systems available to all students from within the university. It was not clear whether there is a point of contact/first point of contact within the programme, but speaking to the students, it was clear that the academic staff were very approachable and supportive, and therefore, this is not of specific concern, and it appears that whatever system is in place, it is working well.
- KESY is a clear strength of the programme and allows students to access a group of people who they can support while developing their clinical skills, under the supervision of trained clinical psychologists.

Strengths for PhD in Psychology

- *large amount of assistance and support provided by the supervisors*

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Bachelor of Psychology

- The thematic scope of the Bachelor program is considerably broader (including specialization opportunities in e.g., forensic psychology) than the narrow set of applied fields in which internship opportunities are provided. Also, in general, the students indicate that it is quite hard to obtain a field placement in a timely manner.
- There appears to be different assessment formats, but exams and written work appear dominant. We would encourage staff to consider other assessment formats also (e.g., creation of video resources, poster presentation, public engagement activities, etc.).

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc in Clinical Psychology

- Consider revising the thesis structure – to determine whether an 'journal article' style output is acceptable to the university (because this is a useful skill to have for clinical psychologists), and may help add to staff research CVs. We did, however, note that some students were successful in publishing their thesis as journal articles, which is

commendable. Therefore, this recommendation should be considered as a means to improve the scale of such successes and provide students with an additional skill (preparing a manuscript for publication) that is useful for the profession.

- There appears to be different assessment formats, but exams and written work appear dominant. We would encourage staff to consider other assessment formats also (e.g., creation of video resources, poster presentation, public engagement activities, etc.).

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD Psychology

- See section 6

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*		
		BSc in Psychology	MSc in Clinical Psychology	PhD Psychology
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

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

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

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.

Findings for BSc Psychology

3.1. Teaching Staff Recruitment and Development

The teaching staff is provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies based on a structured learning framework. The University of Nicosia offers pedagogical support through the Pedagogical Support Unit and the e-learning Pedagogical Support Unit. As one initiative of these units, a 12-week/36-hour workshop (Faculty Professional Development Seminars on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice) is organized, in collaboration with the School of Education and the Technology Enhanced Learning Center of the university. This seminar, which is offered every Fall and Spring, is part of the University of Nicosia "Teaching Certificate Program for Faculty".

3.2. Teaching Staff Number and Status

The research and teaching staff consists of 28 academics actively involved in research and recognized by the academic community as experts in the field. Various members have served or serve as members of editorial boards of academic journals and are regularly invited to review papers submitted for publication. Faculty members have received research funding from international as well as national organizations to support their research output and the provision of student supervision and many of them hold close collaborations with world-leading academics in Greek, European and US universities. The university staff-student ratio approximates 1:20, which

is considered good according to international standards. If needed, adjunct part-time staff can be hired to alleviate the teaching load of the permanent staff.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

All faculty members are expected to be involved in research. To facilitate ongoing involvement in major research activities and projects, full-time faculty may apply for Research Time Release from their teaching workload. Research Time Release is granted by the Research Committee on an individual basis and ranges from 3 to 6 hours' release (the norm is 6 hours). All faculty are committed to presenting and disseminating their research findings at international conferences, publishing their work in peer reviewed journals and getting engaged in research funded projects, both locally and internationally. The research interests and expertises of the faculty are linked to the courses in the program.

Findings for MSc in Clinical Psychology

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Teaching staff have the required expertise and commitment to teach the various courses. Many have had academic and/or clinical qualifications from different countries and experience of working in other universities (internationally). This is an asset because it allows them to bring the best of different systems, methods, experiences to develop the current courses. There are development opportunities for teaching staff provided with the university, and some opportunities for continued professional development from outside the university also.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Teaching staff are well respected by the students, and they are perceived to be approachable and responsive to student needs. They are a clear strength of the programme. We were given a very clear and comprehensive overview of the programme by the programme coordinator. The staff-student ratio is good. We felt that staff were suitably qualified to provide expert input into various courses. We were not certain about who amongst the staff members would be providing the qualitative methods teaching and supervision, but based on the research papers in staff CVs, we believe there is expertise there, but additional input may be required (e.g., in the form of visiting lecturers, adjunct staff, etc.)

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Teaching staff are research active, which is a major credit for the course and recognised by students. The department offers some opportunities for staff to engage in research, through research time being bought out. However, there is considerable administrative work, particularly for course directors/coordinators, which could be completed by local administrators (if the department had any), which would in turn, free up more time for staff to focus on their research. There appeared to be some synergies between teaching and research. The programme would benefit from some more strategic development of research themes, which might help course staff and students to coalesce more closely on a few research topics.

Findings for PhD in Psychology

The program is supported by twelve full time faculty members who have good expertise in a variety of topics within psychology. All are qualified researchers with an ongoing publication track-record. The currently low number of PhD students on the programme is well manageable.

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

Strengths for BSc in Psychology, MSc in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Psychology

- Highly skilled teaching staff, who are responsive, engaged and are actively involved in research, with some national and international collaborations. Students are very positive about staff.
- Staff-student ratio is good.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc in Psychology, MSc in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Psychology

- Staff research could be strategically developed further by having clear streams of research, to which students could affiliate.
- Staff could be released further to conduct research by having some of their administrative tasks completed by local administrative support teams.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*		
		BSc in Psychology	MSc in Clinical Psychology	PhD Psychology
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	C	Compliant	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	C	Compliant	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	C	Compliant	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:*
    - o *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - o *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

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.

Findings for BSc Psychology

4.1. Student Admission

Student admission requirements are based on the University of Nicosia Academic Rules and Regulations and adhered to in a consistent manner. The minimum admission requirement to the undergraduate programme of study is a recognized High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) or equivalent internationally recognized qualification(s). Students with a lower HSLC grade than 7.5/10 or 15/20 or equivalent depending on the grading system of the country issuing the HSLC are provided with extra academic guidance and monitoring during the first year of their studies. Minimum English Language Requirements (ELR) for enrollment to the programme of study are set. Students who do not meet these criteria are required to take UNIC's NEPTON English Placement Test (with no charge) and will receive English Language support classes, if and as needed, from UNIC's International Gateway Centre (IGC). Compared to the documentation of the application, the currently used criteria for English language proficiency are more stringent (e.g., internet-based TOEFL >=80 instead of >=61). Student admission requirements are publicly available on the website of the program.

4.2. Student Progression

All courses provide continuous evaluations and students get feedback throughout the semester, guaranteeing the monitoring of student progression.

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4.3. Student Recognition

If students have already obtained the expected learning outcomes in other learning contexts (formal, non-formal or informal), the associated credits can be awarded after successful assessment, validation or recognition of these learning outcomes. Credits awarded in one programme may be transferred into another programme offered by the same or another institution. Credit transfer and accumulation are facilitated by the use of the ECTS Key Documents as well as the Diploma Supplement.

Findings for MSc in Clinical Psychology

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

The admission process and criteria are clearly documented. The only gap noticed was the lack of specific criteria for Greek language competence for non-Greek speaking students. This could be made clearer.

There appears to be a transparent process by which admission decisions are made.

4.2 Student progression

The student progression criteria are clear. The Practicum Readiness Evaluation ensures that students are safe and ready to proceed to this stage of their training. Examination of Professional Readiness assesses the trainee's competence and readiness to function as an independent professional clinical psychologist. There is a system of academic and clinical probation for students who do not make the required grades for progression. There appear to be relevant and required processes and tools to collect and monitor student progress.

4.3 Student recognition

Credits (ECTS) are clearly marked for each course. According to the University's Internal Regulations, credits earned at other accredited colleges and universities or in accredited programs are transferable to the University of Nicosia. A transcript is required. Courses are evaluated individually.

4.4 Student certification

There is a description of the certification process in terms of number of practicum (face-to-face) therapy hours for the re/gistration to both the national register of clinical psychologists, but also for the optional top-up for EuroPsy accreditation.

Findings for PhD in Psychology

There is a two stage admission process (written application; interview). Admission and assessment criteria for entering into the program are clearly documented. Research proposals are assessed by the Departmental Postgraduates Programmes Committee. Progression criteria are clear. Procedures appear appropriate and ensure high quality. Regulations regarding student recognition and certification are in place.

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

Strengths for BSc Psychology

- The admission process and criteria are clearly documented.
- Student progression criteria are clear.

Strengths for MSc in Clinical Psychology

- The admission process and criteria are clearly documented.
- Student progression criteria are clear.
- The optional 500 hours of supervised practicum is seen by students as valuable.

Strengths for PhD in Psychology

- The admission process and criteria are clearly documented.
- Student progression criteria are clear.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc Psychology

- In spite of the fact that since the time of application, the criteria with respect to English language proficiency have become more stringent, the new criteria (e.g., internet-based TOEFL >=80) are still at the lower side compared to international standards.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for MSc in Clinical Psychology

- Provide clarity for non-Greek-speaking students, the level of Greek language competence they require before they can embark on the practicum, and what resources are available for them.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD Psychology

- See section 6

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		BSc in Psychology	MSc in Clinical Psychology	PhD Psychology
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	C	Compliant	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	C	Compliant	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	C	Compliant	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	C	Compliant	Compliant

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

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>
- 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.

Findings for BSc Psychology

5.1. Teaching and Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources appear to be sufficiently available and of good quality.

5.2. Physical Resources

The virtual tour and the documentation provided show that the University of Nicosia has good building infrastructure (comprising 20 buildings) and offers a range of state-of-the art teaching/learning and research facilities.

5.3. Human Support Resources

Human support resources appear to be appropriate to support the study programme. Administrative support is organized at the central level of the university.

5.4. Student Support

Each student receives planning and academic counselling from the academic counsellors, the Head of the Department and the Programme Coordinator. The Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY) provides individualized psychological support to students who face personal challenges (e.g., learning disabilities, adjustment problems, family issues,...). The Student Success Centre (SSC) assists (primarily first-year) students in achieving their academic goals through tutorial services and workshops. The Student Affairs Department is committed to enrich the university experience and promote a full and active student life through accommodation services, roommate services, support of new arrivals, the organization of events and activities and career counselling. All available student services are described in detail in the Student Handbook, which is accessible electronically.

Findings for MSc in Clinical Psychology

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

We saw evidence of student-centred teaching and learning. The resources appeared appropriate and adequate. Staff did recognise that there were limited resources for Greek-medium curricula, due to the relative lack of literature published in Greek. Computer facilities appeared good. All resources appeared fit for purpose.

5.2 Physical resources

The physical resources are excellent and appear to be modern and functional. Although some facilities are not based within the Department or School, we were reassured during the visit, that all students would have access to the facilities, and we encouraged more cross-disciplinary working.

5.3 Human support resources

Support services appear to be adequately staffed and the students we met did not raise any concerns. The fact that the department runs a distance learning programme meant that they had the resources to deal with COVID-19 and the challenges this posed in terms of online/remote teaching.

5.4 Student support

This is one of the real strengths of the programme. It was clear from the documentation that there is considerable support for students from the wider university, and this was also attested by the students with whom we spoke, who were clear in their appreciation for the teaching staff who offered a lot of support. Based on the evidence we had, we were left with no concerns that students were well supported. There appears to be adequate support for international students. We did not see evidence of support for student mobility to other research centres.

Findings for PhD in Psychology

Learning resources and student support appear adequate. The physical and infrastructural resources needed to implement a PhD project might vary a lot depending on the respective project. The EEC gained the impression that everything is being done on the Departmental level to provide appropriate resources and hence to minimise the additional financial burden on students.

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

Strengths for BSc in Psychology, MSc in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Psychology

- Good student support given the good staff-student ratio and dedicated staff.
- Excellent state-of-the-art physical resources/infrastructure

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for BSc in Psychology,MSc in Clinical Psychology and PhD in Psychology

- The programmes can further exploit interdisciplinary working within other programmes within and out-with the Department.
- EEC recommends considering non-academic administrative support at school/departmental level, which would allow academic staff to use more working hours for scholarly activities

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		BSc in Psychology	MSc Clinical Psychology	PhD in Psychology
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	C	Compliant	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	C	Compliant	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	C	Compliant	Compliant
5.4	Student support	C	Compliant	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> 6.1. **Selection criteria and requirements**
> 6.2. **Proposal and dissertation**
> 6.3. **Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - o *regular meetings*
  - o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o *support for writing research papers*
  - o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

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.

6.1. Selection criteria
There is a clear set of selection criteria and a detailed admission process, the information is publicly available. Application rates to the programme are below 10, with a drop to below 5 as the pandemic started. Since fall 2018 four students were admitted, and four graduated.

6.2 Proposal and dissertation
Candidates are provided with written guidelines to prepare their initial research proposal.
Three scientific manuscripts ready for submission form the core of the thesis. Specific and clear guidelines on how to prepare the thesis document are set.
A plagiarism check system is in place.

6.3 Standards
The student's progress is monitored by a supervisory team, which is composed of three members. The main supervisor has to be a full-time member of faculty.

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There is not yet a core PhD curriculum, but a research skills development programme is underway, which also contains PhD specific seminars.
The examining committee consists of an internal and an external examiner and an internal administrator.
The PhD-programme is - in line with the other study programs at the Department - subject to the internal programme evaluation process.

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

- Great academic counselling service for students
- Thesis format of academic papers portfolio is excellent and cutting-edge
- Great to see the research skills training being offered to PhD students and 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.

- Consider thematically arranging clear lines of research strength or focus of the department
- Consider having video abstracts for studies for your website for public dissemination of research (and to attract prospective students)
- Consider having obligatory training for all students around general skills (e.g., presentation skills, poster development)

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

Sub-areas		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

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D.   Conclusions and final remarks

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

Overall, all three programmes we reviewed appeared to be well run and were largely compliant with national accreditation standards. We were particularly impressed with the course coordinators' efforts in compiling the paperwork and the presentations for our visit, which enabled us to get a clear picture of the university, department, and relevant programmes. They engaged with us in a very open and transparent manner. We would like to highlight that the staff appear well-suited to contribute to the programmes and have clearly demonstrated excellent support for their students, who fully appreciate their support.
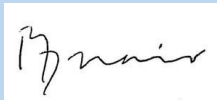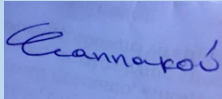
The university's physical resources are excellent, and we would like to encourage the university to promote more interdisciplinary working, enabling staff and students to make full use of all facilities across departmental and school boundaries. This, we feel, will benefit students and help staff improve their research potential.

While we saw some good evidence of staff research being linked to their teaching, we felt that the full potential of their research capabilities are not currently being exploited. To this extent, we would urge the Department to clearly outline their research strategy, consider a few well-developed research themes, and attract students to work within these themes. This will enable the development of a critical mass of researchers (and research outputs) from research groups.

We saw excellent examples of how staff were involved in several leading national and international initiatives. We would however like to encourage the Department to consider more widely how the public and service users can be involved in various parts of the programmes (particularly, the clinical psychology programme).

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Date: 09/07/2021