

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 1/12/2025

# Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty:** School of Health and Wellbeing
- **Department:** Department of Health and Wellbeing
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## Programme 1

### **In Greek:**

Ψυχολογία (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BSc))

### **In English:**

Psychology (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))

## Programme 2

### **In Greek:**

Programme Name

### **In English:**

Programme Name

## Programme 3

### **In Greek:**

Programme Name

### **In English:**

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** New



**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. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

## 1. Department's academic profile and orientation

### Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

## EEC REPORT

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

The Department of Health and Wellbeing has formally adopted its mission statement and developed strategic planning that integrates short, medium, and long-term goals, with implementation and adaptation processes rated highly. Programmes of study reflect the academic profile and align well with European/international practices, evidenced by commitments like BPS accreditation for Psychology. The academic community is effectively involved in shaping and monitoring development strategies via the Department Board and ASQAC. The Department's adopted mission statement will be made publicly available when the formal accreditation process is complete.

### Strengths

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

A primary strength lies in the programmes of study reflecting international practice and offering rigorous quality assurance, evidenced by the double-awarded degrees (UCLan UK and UCLan Cyprus) accredited in both countries. Secondly, the Departmental documents suggest a rich engagement with stakeholders, although the committee did not meet any stakeholders during their visit.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

While partnerships are extensive, participation from stakeholders such as Alumni and professional associations lacks formal structure, as there is currently no dedicated Advisory Council for systematic representation.

## UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

The Department academic team considers it vital to build and sustain a strong network of partners and long-term collaborations with depth and breadth. Since the introduction of the programmes of study - that will be now part of the new Department of Health and Wellbeing – in the portfolio of UCLan Cyprus, the respective course teams managed to develop a large network of national and international collaborators, including professional bodies, academic and research partners, industry stakeholders, Alumni, etc, who have been informally engaging with the programmes in terms of providing advice on curriculum development, placement/ internships opportunities, guidance on industry knowledge/skill needs and student employability aspects. Moreover, our industry partners have been engaging in

other educational activities, such as guest lectures, field trips, real case studies, real life student projects, student internships, student competitions, student awards and many more.

We welcome the EEC's constructive recommendation to develop a more formal and systematic approach towards this and we acknowledge the substantial benefit and value this can offer to the programmes of study offered under the new Department of Health and Wellbeing. To this end, the Head of the Department in close collaboration with the course leaders will proceed to form its first Advisory Board, which will provide formal advice and feedback to the programmes' teams, not only in terms of its existing curriculum, but also in terms of future directions and developments.

### 1.3 Development processes

The department has a small number of permanent academic staff and it would be sensible to develop a strategic policy for expansion (perhaps to include an immediate hire). The committee were informed that a new promotions policy was in place but noted that a number of existing staff were at lower academic grades than one would typically expect after 10 years' service. This may reflect the previous promotions policy, or may have to do with the time typically available to pursue research on a busy teaching schedule.

## UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We would like to reassure the EEC that the teaching delivery needs of the Department of Health and Wellbeing are successfully and efficiently covered by the current academic staff, as it is reflected in the Table 14 of the additional documentation submitted with the Departmental application. As with all our recruitment efforts, we will ensure that new academic appointments for this new Department will be directly aligned to the curriculum needs of the academic provision of the Department as well as the research strategy and future academic directions of the Department of Health and Wellbeing.

The University's new academic promotion scheme aims to recognise the contribution of academic members of staff to the successful realisation of the University's strategic goals and objectives, and most importantly, to recognise and reward their wider scientific contribution and achievements within their field of expertise. This also provides an opportunity for the academic members of staff to progress in their professional careers and for the University to secure the retention of high qualified faculty. The Academic Promotion Evaluation Model is based on six (6) required broad areas of activity (categories):

- Teaching
- Research Publications (or Artistic Work for Arts related disciplines)
- Research and Innovation & Enterprise (I&E) Activities
- Income Generation
- Administration and Leadership
- Academic Citizenship

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

### EEC REPORT

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

Overall, UCLan Cyprus Department of Health and Wellbeing is fully compliant with all the quality indicators noted above.

#### Strengths

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

The new department of Health and Wellbeing is fully committed to the same high levels of QA that can be seen across UCLan and that have been in place to assure the quality of the programme when it was a part of the Department of Science.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

The committee only has minor recommendations. These include strengthening the visibility and accessibility of all QA-related policies, including those on plagiarism and GenAI use. Currently, there is nothing included in the QA documents on the use of GenAI. While the Department is certainly adopting policies on the use of GenAI by students, it is recommended that UCLan Cyprus publicizes a clear policy on GenAI use. This would help safeguard academic integrity, protect the value of the degree awarded, and provide clarity for students and stakeholders. As is the case across the global HE sector, updating QA procedures to address the ethical and responsible use of AI should be treated as a priority.

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

With the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence and the use of various GenAI tools with potential positive or negative impact, the University adopts a strategic approach to the prevention and management of academic misconduct. The University advocates a holistic approach and fosters a culture of academic integrity amongst staff and students by providing a coherent set of Academic Regulations, policies and guidelines for implementation by academics, students and services.

The '**Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure for Academic Misconduct**' include a dedicated section on Unauthorised use of Technology. Moreover, the particular Academic Integrity Policy is monitored throughout the academic year, including when the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee convenes or when there are specific requests to be addressed. The monitoring takes place in collaboration with TLEC (Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee, UCLan Cyprus) and CCL (Centre for Collaborative Learning, UCLan UK).



TLEC provides guidelines to academic staff on how students must document, acknowledge, and reference the use of AI tools. The use of authorised use of AI in assessments may also be permitted when this is explicitly stated in assessments and clearly aligned with the learning outcomes. Furthermore, guidance is also provided to students to ensure that they have been properly informed on the ethical use of AI, especially for assessments, but not exclusively.

It is worth mentioning that an **'Academic Integrity Essentials'** compulsory training has been incorporated in all programmes of study and in each year of study, as part of one core module offered during Semester 1 of the academic year, to ensure that all students will undertake this training and get familiarised with all concepts of academic integrity, including when AI is authorised or not, and how to properly acknowledge its use, and the implications for assessed pieces of work.

The above-mentioned documentation is available to all staff in the [UCLAN Cyprus Intranet](#) and to all students on their Student Portal.

### 3. Administration

#### EEC REPORT

##### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

The administrative structures observed at UCLan Cyprus are robust, clearly aligned with relevant legislation, and strongly support the mission of the Department. Both academic and administrative staff, as well as students, are engaged in decision-making processes through established and transparent procedures. Administrative support was judged to be highly effective, with clear allocation of responsibilities ensuring that academic matters are appropriately led by academics, while oversight functions remain with the Department's council.

Although the relationship with the parent course in Preston inevitably adds a layer of complexity, this appears to be well managed, with systems in place that allow the Department in Cyprus to operate with autonomy while benefiting from the established structures and resources of the wider institution. The institutional structure was found to be systematic in its operations and there was clear evidence of transparency and accountability across processes.

Overall, the committee considered that the Department demonstrates strong administrative practice that not only meets but, in many respects, exceeds expectations, providing a solid foundation for the effective delivery and ongoing development of the undergraduate programme.

##### Strengths

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

The administrative structures at UCLan Cyprus are robust and clearly aligned with legislation and the Department's mission. The institution functions systematically, holding statutory meetings and decision-making processes are transparent and accountable. Responsibilities are appropriately allocated, with a clear work allocation model being in place for academic staff. These structures provide a solid foundation for governance and reflect a mature system of administration.

Staff and students are engaged in the management of the Department through established procedures, ensuring their perspectives are represented in decision-making. Administrative staff provide effective support for the smooth running of the Department, contributing to a well-organised environment in which teaching, learning, and research can flourish. Clear procedures are also in place for addressing issues such as academic integrity, including plagiarism, and student complaints, which further enhances confidence in the Department's operations.

The relationship with the parent Preston course adds an additional layer of complexity but is managed positively, with the collaboration appearing to enrich the programme rather than constrain it. The

Department has also demonstrated a commitment to internationalisation and external collaborations, broadening opportunities for staff and students. Taken together, these features highlight a strong and well-functioning administrative landscape that provides stability, transparency, and opportunities for future growth.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

The committee was very impressed by the departmental presentation in this area. Two areas that may be considered going forward are:

Internationalisation – Although the strong link with the UK parent institution and some staff collaborations provide a good foundation, the Department could extend international partnerships and opportunities for staff and students, to enhance its global profile.

## **UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE**

We appreciate the Committee's recognition of our strong foundation through the UK parent institution and acknowledge the opportunity to further strengthen our international profile. We would like to highlight our existing international engagements and our commitment to their continued expansion.

UCLan Cyprus holds an Erasmus + Charter from 2015 and has established a multiple of inter-institutional agreements for the mobility of staff and students. Please find [here](#) the list of our University's active agreements. A series of collaborative agreements are already signed with partners in the fields related to the areas of specialisation of the new Department of Health and Wellbeing, but upon approval of the Department operation, this will definitely be further expanded.

Beyond the international collaborations established under the framework of Erasmus + scheme, the Department works on building further international partnerships based on fruitful research projects. For example, through the BEYOND (Horizon Europe) Project, we collaborate with a consortium of 11 European institutions led by the University of Oslo, including the European Network of Research Ethics Committees (EUREC), French Office for Research Integrity (OFIS), INRAE (France), Heriot-Wart University, Oslo Metropolitan University, Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, Trilateral Research, University of Helsinki, University of Humanistic Studies (Netherlands), University of Latvia, and University of Tartu. Our involvement in the SMIDGE Project connects us with the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), De Montfort University (UK), FAS-Research (Austria), Fondazione Hallgarten-Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montesca (Italy), and University of Milan. Similarly, in the context of the ePhyLi project the Department has established international collaborations with significant partners such as the University of Bolzano in Italy, the Infinity Design Labs in France, and notably the European Physical Education Association (EUPEA) which has also extended its collaboration with the university via a memorandum, with joint bids and with knowledge transfer activities.

Our faculty maintain significant international positions and collaborations across multiple domains. For example, Prof. Iordanou serves as Associate Editor of the Journal of Educational Psychology, has held sponsored visiting positions at Columbia University (2017) and the University of Geneva (2025), and has served as external examiner for PhD students



at the University of Padova (Italy) and The University of Newcastle (Australia). Dr. Efstathios Christodoulides leads the UNESCO Chair at UCLan Cyprus on governance and social responsibility in sport, attending international UNESCO meetings, and held a sponsored visiting position at Ithaca College, New York, USA. Dr. Marcos Michaelides collaborates with elite international teams including the Russian Olympic Team and Barcelona FA Women. Dr. Koula Parpa serves on editorial boards of international journals including the Journal of Sport Science & Innovation, Sport Mont, and IJERPH, and serves as External Examiner for University of Bolton and New York College in Athens. Dr. Lilia Psalta and Prof. Kalypso Iordanou served as Expert Evaluators of psychology programmes in Lithuania for the Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (SKVC).

We also had PhD and postdoctoral researchers visiting our labs, for example a PhD student from the University of Padova (Italy) and a postdoctoral researcher from the Liverpool John Moores University (UK) visited the Thinking lab to pursue research.

The new Department of Health and Wellbeing recognises the opportunity to build upon this foundation and is committed to expanding its network of international research and teaching collaborations beyond current partnerships. We will continue to actively pursue additional strategic partnerships that align with our research strengths and programme offerings (e.g. through EURAXESS that we are part of), enhancing our global profile through continued engagement in international research consortia and professional networks. We view internationalisation as a strategic priority and remain committed to pursuing opportunities that enhance the global experience and perspectives of both our staff and students.

**Evidence of Engagement in Governance –** While the committee was confident that staff and student participation in governance processes is in place, more explicit examples of how this involvement influences decision-making would strengthen the case further.

## UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We would like to inform EEC that according to the University Charter, the University Senate has designed and created the Academic Governance manual, which is annually revised by it and provides Committee members and staff of the University with a clear reference guide to the powers and responsibilities of the University bodies and of management at the University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus. The main University bodies are the Council and the Senate. The Council is the highest management body of the University and the Senate is the highest academic body of the University. The Senate concentrates its attention on the key academic strategies and delegates wherever possible (to a committee or to individuals) other non-strategic matters. Structured and focused assurance reports provide the Council with the assurance that its objectives are being pursued and give an update on progress towards the critical success factors associated with each objective.

Furthermore, the University's Governance structures reflect the alignment and communication between the Sub Committees of Senate and the committees taking place at a departmental level or the Department Board respectively. All University committees have at least one representative from the academic body of each Department as well as at least one student representative from each Department. Academic staff and student representatives are active members of respective committees with all decision-making vote rights. Moreover, the department academic leads of each University Committee have the vital role of informing the Departments on any matter discussed and decided during the respective committee meetings, of undertaking any relevant action arising during the meeting as well as of providing assurance reports on the implementation, status and compliance of the Department they represent, on matters related to the committee roles and responsibilities.



As previously mentioned, all University committees have student representatives who are either elected by the Student body as in in case of the Senate and the Council, or appointed by the heads of the departments following a nomination process. The student representatives have an important role in all the University Committee since they provide valuable feedback from the student perspective in a series of strategic matters. Student representatives are expected to collect various opinions and suggestions for improvement from their peers and present them to the committee during the presentation of various items included in the respective meeting agenda. Following the Committee meeting, it is also expected from the Student reps to inform their peers on the University decisions or of any matters discussed.

## 4. Learning and Teaching

### Sub-areas

#### 4.1 Planning the programmes of study

#### 4.2 Organisation of teaching

## EEC REPORT

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

The Department demonstrates a clear and effective system for the design, approval, monitoring, and periodic review of its programmes of study. Intended learning outcomes, programme content, assignments, and examinations are appropriately aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and comply with relevant legislation. In addition, the programme meets the requirements of the British Psychological Society, ensuring that graduates are well prepared for professional progression. A particular strength is the integration of theory and practice, which provides students with a balanced and professionally relevant education.

The organisation of teaching further enhances the quality of the student experience. Admission criteria are transparent and consistently applied, while recognition of prior studies and credit transfer procedures are in line with European and international practices. Class sizes are suitable for effective theoretical and practical and staff maintain regular and constructive communication with students. Teaching is student-centred and assessment processes are transparent, fair, and designed to evidence achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

### Strengths

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

A number of examples of good practice were evident in relation to the design, organisation, and delivery of the programmes of study. The Department's approach to programme design and review is systematic, well-documented, and clearly aligned with both European Qualifications Framework (EQF) expectations and the requirements of the British Psychological Society. Importantly, the programme confers students with Graduate Basis for Chartered Status (GBC), thereby extending the currency and professional recognition of the award both nationally and internationally. The careful integration of theory and practice is a particular strength, ensuring that students not only gain a strong academic grounding but also develop the practical skills necessary for future professional roles.

The quality of teaching and learning was also notable. Transparent admissions procedures, consistent application of credit recognition processes, and the maintenance of suitable class sizes contribute to a strong and supportive learning environment. Staff-student communication was observed to be regular, respectful, and effective, underpinned by a strong commitment to student-centred pedagogy. This was particularly evident in discussions with existing students and graduates of the programme.

Assessment practices were also an area of good practice. The clear publication of marking criteria and assessment methods in advance provides students with confidence and transparency, while the careful design of assessments ensures that intended learning outcomes are robustly measured. Collectively, these practices highlight a well-organised, high-quality educational provision that places students at the centre of their learning experience and equips them with skills, knowledge, and professional readiness.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

Some areas to consider going forward may include:

Staff workload management - While staff demonstrate strong commitment and engagement, there is a risk that heavy involvement in teaching and student support may impact their capacity to undertake other responsibilities, including research, programme development, or administrative duties. Consideration could be given to workload planning and future staffing recruitment to ensure/allow for sustainable engagement across all areas of responsibility.

## UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

Concerning staff workload management, we would like to reassure the EEC that indeed this is something that we are continuously reviewing with the objective of ensuring that our staff have an appropriate balance of teaching/research/admin, and at the same time an appropriate work-life balance. The University workload model considers several aspects of the responsibilities of the academics on the aforementioned three areas, including:

Teaching:

- Direct Regular Teaching Hours
- Direct Evening/Weekend Teaching Hours
- Direct Distance Learning Hours
- Preparation for Modules (conventional and distance learning delivery)
- Coursework assessment marking – in relation with the cohort size- , verification and moderation
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate thesis supervision
- Annual curriculum update

Research:

- Research Activities
  - Quantity and Quality of Scientific Publications (includes factors such as journal quality, length of work, number of authors and first authorship, monographs, etc.).
  - Preparation of research bidding (includes factors such as type/size of proposal, first submission/re-submission, contribution to proposal writing, academic's role (principal investigator, local coordinator, work package leader, scientific contributor, etc.)).
  - PhD external supervision
- Scholarly Activities
  - External research activities (e.g. organisation/delivery/chairing of research seminars, research conferences, workshops and round tables)

- Peer Esteem activities (e.g. editors of journals, reviewers for journals, participation in external research committees/boards)
- Research Income generated activities
  - External Research Funding (e.g. EU, RIF)
  - Contract Research
  - Research Exploitation
  - Research Consultancy

#### Administration:

- Course Leadership
- Module Leadership
- Personal Tutoring/Academic Advising
- Office Hours
- Preparation/Validation of new courses
- Preparation of paperwork for minor changes or re-validation of existing courses
- Panel membership
- Lead/Participation in University Committees
- Other administrative activities (team meetings, assessment board attendance, training sessions, e-mail enquiries by students, data input, report preparation, attendance and student at risk monitoring and input, writing references for students, etc.).

The Department objective is for each full-time academic to have a workload close to 1720 hours per year, allocated to a ratio of 40/40/20 for research, teaching and admin respectively. Specifically, the teaching and admin workload of each academic is computed in detail at the beginning of each academic year, taking into account teaching contact hours, preparation hours, number of students in each module, numbers of courseworks and exams, etc. If needed, academics are released of duties and given extra support (e.g. providing help with tutorials, labs, marking, etc.) so the workload can remain close to the intended targets. We monitor the workload of all academics year-to-year and use this data to inform our planning for the staffing needs.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) - There was limited clarity regarding the processes by which students might have prior learning or professional experience accredited towards the programme. Further information could have been provided in this area to help demonstrate further that there is a transparent and accessible RPL framework that enhances student pathways and flexibility, and ensures consistency in application.

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that most credit units are granted by the University as part of the awarded degree. The Recognition of Prior Learning step by step procedure is available for your further reference in the programmatic application for BSc (Hons) Psychology, section 5. Student Admission Requirements, pages 9-15.

Internationalisation - Although there are some international links and the connection with the UK parent institution is strong, there is potential to further enhance opportunities for international collaboration, mobility, or exposure to global best practice.

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

As already addressed in our response in section 3, see above pages 9-10, the Department of Health and Wellbeing will continue to further strengthen its international profile.

## 5. Teaching Staff

### EEC REPORT

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

All full-time academics are PhD holders teaching in their specialisation, and almost all are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Special Teaching Staff and Special Scientists also hold requisite qualifications, including PhDs or extensive industry experience, primarily supporting optional modules requiring specific expertise. Visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the curriculum. The ratio of permanent to special teaching staff is 68:32 for 2024-25. Student feedback processes are systematic and effective, utilising mandatory Module Feedback Questionnaires (MFQs) and Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings held each semester, which directly inform enhancement reports and ensure staff accountability for timely and effective feedback delivery.

#### Strengths

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

The student-to-total-staff ratio (203:19 overall for 2023-24) ensures quality supervision. The fact that many staff are HEA accredited provides assurances that teaching will be to a high standard; and teaching quality is further supported by the fact that UCLan Cyprus teaching staff have strong relationships (to the extent of co-planning teaching) with their counterparts in the University of Lancashire.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

The degree is supported by a small cohort of staff who risk being overworked (we note that the UCLan Cyprus workload model appears to include many more courses to deliver than 40-40-20 workload models in other institutions).

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We would like to reassure the EEC that the academic staff workload (detailed in section 4, pages 13-14) is carefully established and discussed yearly with the Head of Department and it is always tailored in line and compliance with CYQAA requirements in terms of direct teaching hours (usually around 6-9 hours and exceptionally, in a couple of cases, around 10-11hours).

## 6. Research

### EEC REPORT

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

The Department emphasizes research-led teaching, interdisciplinarity, and impact on society. Research strategy is clearly aligned with UCLan Cyprus' mission and linked to UCLan UK's REF benchmarking.

#### Strengths

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

The Department is doing well in attracting research grants from prestigious funding mechanisms (e.g. EU Horizon), often as part of large consortia, and each of the Department's members is performing at a good level, internationally. It is clear that they are all committed to research and to research-led teaching

There are purpose built labs that have cutting-edge technology (eye-tracking, EEG , Biopack), providing excellent research opportunities for both faculty and students. The presence of PhD students in the department is a clear strength even if they are not funded locally, adding to the culture of research and allowing UCLan psychology faculty to build their research careers.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

Although performance is already strong, the committee recommends more emphasis on supporting greater independent grant funding, not linked to consortia. Publication outputs are already good, but there should be a strategy for growing these further.

Clearly, a PhD programme independent of UCLan UK is necessary to further develop the research output and research culture of the department and sustain a long-term research-oriented department.

In order to support the research quality and career development of faculty, it would be beneficial to develop a clearer internal seed funding stream and greater funding allowance for travel to conferences. Documents mention professional development funding available for, or allocated to, each member of staff, but do not state an amount. Following discussion with staff members, this amount appeared to be rather small and not really sufficient to support travel to major international conferences. Thus, the department should consider raising the amount available both for travel and for research.

The Thinking Lab, the Cognition and Development Lab and the Sports Science Lab are all very well-equipped and have excellent potential to support further development of the research quality and output of the Department. Nevertheless, the committee noted that there was scope and space to expand current

methods. For example, a cutting-edge cognitive neuroscience laboratory (including EEG and fNIRS) within the existing space would benefit staff and students, complemented by further hirings within this popular and expanding area.

Internal funding: while a Professional Development Fund is mentioned, it was unclear how much was allocated to each staff member and whether that would actually be able to sustain any research or travel.

## UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We thank the committee for their positive assessment of our current performance and welcome their recommendations for further strengthening our research capacity and output.

We acknowledge the importance of increasing emphasis on independent grant funding beyond consortium-based projects. The department and the university are committed to support staff in pursuing individual and lead investigator grants. The EEC recommendation has been shared with the Rector and the Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee for further consideration and development of a scheme supporting academics who would like to pursue such opportunity. Further enhancement of the already existing strong publication outputs is already part of the University research strategy. The quality and quantity of the publications for all fields of expertise available at UCLan Cyprus are monitored formally at least three times per year during the Research sub-Committee meetings. These outcomes are then reported to RIC as well as the University Senate for further consideration and proposed actions for improvement.

Regarding establishing a PhD programme independent of UCLan UK, we fully agree that this is essential for developing our research culture, output, and long-term sustainability as a research-oriented department. The university is actively working toward this goal.

The University, in line with its strategic commitment to support research, innovation and enterprise activities of academic staff and students, allocates a small percentage of its central budget to finance investment in research infrastructure and extends support to Schools in terms of research and staff development needs. This budget is handled by the University Internal Research Fund (UIRF).

Academic members of staff can submit proposals for internal research funding to the UIRF. Upon submission, UIRF proposals will be reviewed by the UIRF panel and results will be announced to the academic staff. Proposals should include a clear rationale for the requested funding and describe the anticipated impact the research funded activity will have on the University strategic map: high impact research results, teaching and learning, knowledge exchange, high profile publications, collaboration with the research community, industry and the professions. Priority will be given to funding activities with long-term impact and sustainability, e.g. funding for equipment, which can be utilised beyond the specific research project and/or by other researchers, funding of interdisciplinary activities with continuation prospects, funding of research activities with external partners, etc.

The EEC recommendation for an increase of this budget to cater for a more substantial contribution to research activities has been brought forward to the Rector and the CFO and it will be carefully considered for the next year budget.

Regarding research infrastructure and equipment, the department benefits from excellent research facilities, including the Thinking Lab, the Cognition and Development Lab, the Sports Science Lab, and the INSPIRE labs, which are all very well-equipped. For example, the INSPIRE lab has EEG capabilities. The Sports Science Lab is equipped with advanced research instrumentation for comprehensive physiological and biomechanical assessment. It features a Tanita



Bioelectrical Impedance Analyzer for precise body composition analysis, alongside a Humac Norm computerized isokinetic dynamometer system for detailed strength evaluation and rehabilitation studies. Biomechanical research is supported by dual AMTI force plates for high-precision force measurement. The lab also houses an ABTEST Gen 3 system to assess neuromuscular output and a Delsys wireless EMG system for analyzing muscle activation patterns during functional and sport-specific tasks.

For research equipment there is a special call yearly, when the next academic year's budget is discussed. The Department's needs in terms of teaching and research equipment is requested via that budget request. If the requested amount is beyond the budget availability this can be split over a few years. For instance, expensive equipment such as a force plate was requested and then provisioned in the budget for a few years and eventually purchased and installed the previous year.

We note the committee's suggestion to expand current methodological capabilities by establishing a cutting-edge cognitive neuroscience laboratory equipped with EEG and fNIRS within the existing space. This recommendation, along with the committee's suggestion for further hirings, will be included in our strategic planning discussions for future infrastructure development and staffing.

## 7. Resources

### EEC REPORT

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.*

The Department of Health and Wellbeing (DoHW) possesses sufficient external and internal financial resources to support its functions and follows sound and efficient management principles. Risk assessment and sustainability reviews are undertaken at the inception of new courses and through annual monitoring, while financial transparency is assured through university processes and external audit. Support facilities and services are regularly reviewed for fitness-for-purpose via strategic resource audits and the Continuous Course Enhancement process. Specifically, funds are lacking to offer essential research infrastructure such as post-doc or research studentships, fund sabbaticals, or provide adequate support for staff conference attendance, which are necessary to boost research productivity and international visibility. There is also a recognised need for more decentralised budget management as the University expands.

#### Strengths

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

The Department is part of an expanding institution with a 12-year history. Expansion plans (at the level the committee were able to evaluate) are measured and achievable.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

There is a recognised need for more decentralised budget management, to allow local strategic decisions to be made as the University expands.

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

At this stage, due to its rather small size, the University manages the budget centrally and allocates the respective budget to each department according to their own needs. As the University will expand, we will transition to a more decentralised approach for handling the budget.

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

### EEC REPORT

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.*

The Department of Psychology comprises an established group of academics, who are moving from a School of Science to a new School of Health and Wellbeing. The Department operates on well-established principles, with excellent administrative processes, QA, and financial and infrastructure support. The Pyla campus hosts some of the best teaching and research facilities the team have encountered in Cyprus. The Department's operation (in teaching particularly) is supported by a close relationship with the University of Lancashire.

Every indication is that the Department is on the right track. There is room for development, and the committee were pleased to see that there was already consideration of further MSc degrees (and perhaps there is scope for an MSc that benefits from the relationship with Sport Science, or one that allows for a clinical track). We were surprised that there were so few permanent staff in the Department, and that the majority were unpromoted. We can't see how the Department can be running so well without the current staff routinely exceeding the 60% of their time nominally allocated to research and admin. We would recommend an additional permanent hire as soon as it is financially sustainable.

All in all, it was a pleasure to visit the UCLan Cyprus campus and to see what a small, well-run, University can look like. We note with approval that many of the teaching and admin staff we met have spent over a decade working at UCLan, which speaks volumes for staff experience. We were impressed to see a Department with strong roots and plenty of scope for development, and wish the Department's staff and their colleagues at UCLan every success in the next stages of their journey.

### UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

We honestly appreciate the time and effort you put into reviewing our documentation, visiting our premises and meeting our staff, as well as preparing the reports with your suggestions for improvement. We also appreciate the positive feedback and wanted to ensure you will use it to benefit our programmes, our students and our staff.

### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Prof Kalypso Iordanou</b>	Acting Head of the Department of Health and Wellbeing	
<b>Prof Nearchos Paspallis</b>	Head of Department of Sciences and Chair of Department of Sciences ASQAC	
<b>Dr Cosmina Theodoulou</b>	Chair of UCLan Cyprus ASQAC	

Date: 1/12/2025

