



Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 24/04/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Neapolis University Pafos
- **Town:** Paphos
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)
In Greek:
Πτυχίο Ψυχολογίας - Εξ Αποστάσεως
In English:
BSc in Psychology - Distance
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations



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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

- With reference to the study design of the conventional Bachelor program (which is to a large degree in line with the planned study design for the distant learning program) students gave very different feedback to the committee: While some very much welcomed the fact that difficult content (e.g., statistics) was taught late, others felt that it would have helped them (in terms of, e.g., reading research papers critically) to have been introduced to the basics of methods earlier.
- Students, with distant learning experience, indicated that it would be desirable if critical thinking, practical strategies (e.g., source evaluation and scholarly writing), and research methods were addressed earlier and repeatedly addressed throughout the program.
- As the program is not yet in operation, information regarding the program of study is not yet publicly available.

Institution Response

Concerning the section "Study programme and study programme's design and development", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our Department.

Based on our discussion, the Department has decided to restructure the course order, which can be found in the following updated table. The following changes were made:

- Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences to Semester 2
- Educational and School Psychology to Semester 3
- Clinical Psychology to Semester 6
- Neuropsychology Semester 7
- Psychopathology in Children, Adolescents, and Adults to Semester 8

Additionally, we have added three more elective courses in case a student does not choose practicum to have more options to choose from.

SEMESTER 1	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC100	Introduction to Psychology	10
DPSYC101	Lifespan Development	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 1 (select one course from the list)	10
SEMESTER 2	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC102	Social Psychology	10
DPSYC103	Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 2 (select one course from the list)	10
SEMESTER 3	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC201	Educational and School Psychology	10

DPSYC202	Biological Bases of Behaviour	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 3 (select one course from the list)	10
SEMESTER 4	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC203	Counseling Psychology	10
DPSYC204	Psychometry	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 4 (select one course from the list)	10
Electives (select one course from the list)		
<i>Free Electives</i>		
(Select one course for each of the 4 semesters)		
*The course list is periodically updated		
DPSYC210	Learning Difficulties	10
DPSYC211	Sports Psychology	10
DPSYC212	Psychology of Music	10
DPSYC213	Industrial/Organizational Psychology	10
DPSYC214	Psychology of Sexuality	10
DPSYC215	Forensic Psychology	10
DPSYC216	Psychology of Health	10
DPSYC217	Family Psychology	10
DPSYC218	Psychology of Reading and Language	10
DPSYC219	Cross-cultural Psychology	10
DPSYC220	Experimental Psychology	10
SEMESTER 5	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC301	Cognitive Psychology	10
DPSYC302	Research Methods in Psychology	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 5 (select one course from the list)	10
SEMESTER 6	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC303	Clinical Psychology	10
DPSYC304	Statistics for the Social Sciences	10
DPSYCXXX	Elective # 6 (select one course from the list)	10
SEMESTER 7	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC401	Neuropsychology	10
DPSYC402	Undergraduate Thesis	20
SEMESTER 8	30 ECTS	ECTS
DPSYC403	Psychopathology in Children, Adolescents, and Adults	10
DPSYC404	Ethics and Practicum OR TWO MORE ELECTIVES	20
TOTAL ECTS		240



Concerning the EECs recommendations, we believe that with the revised order of courses stated above, the issue addressed is covered. Simultaneously, we have explained to the EEC, and they have understood that the only courses we purposefully "pushed" to later semesters are Research Methods and Statistics in Semesters 5 and 6, respectively so that the courses can lead up to their Undergraduate Thesis in a more manageable flow so that one course can build on the other to lead to the Thesis. Finally, in the case where a student will not finish all the requirements of their Undergraduate Thesis without own responsibility in Semester 7, the supervisor will assign a grade of '1' (Incomplete) until the necessary steps are taken for the Undergraduate Thesis to be completed. The EEC found this line of thinking sufficient.

Concerning the point raised by the EEC about critical thinking and practical strategies to be addressed throughout the program, our Study Guides already address this, and we have very positive feedback from our already established Distance Learning program we offer. Therefore, we will keep working hard to keep this up.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

- We recommend implementing a problem-based approach to guarantee the interconnection between theory and practice, instead of numerous interactive activities.
- We recommend designing a general guide for the students that includes information about the platform, how to study and communicate with the instructor, between the students, etc. This general guide will allow reducing the length of the study guides of each course, and better provide the students with the information specific to the course.
- Students on the existing face-to-face degree informed us that they were left to make their own arrangements for transport etc., and to bear the costs. We note that the University has a Liaison Office, which administers (optional) placements for other degrees, for which students are reimbursed. There may be some advantage in making use of this expertise as the degrees grow; there is certainly a case for ensuring parity between degrees. Note however that there is an argument for removing the Practicum from the distance degree, which we cover in our concluding remarks below.
- We note also that there are resource implications for online practical training, covered in section 5 below.

Institution Response

Concerning the section "Student–centered learning, teaching and assessment", we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our Department.

Regarding the recommendation of the EEC about implementing a problem-based approach to guarantee the interconnection between theory and practice, we have adopted the recommendation instead of numerous interactive activities. We are decreasing our interactive activities and inserting case studies for problem-solving approaches when applicable. We also decided to adopt the recommendation of the EEC to develop a general guide for the students which will include information about the platform, how to study and communicate with the instructor, between the students, etc. This general guide will allow for reducing the length of the study guides of each course and better provide the students with the information specific to the course. Finally, the EEC raises concerns about the practicum course being offered to all students, regardless of their country of origin. Upon discussion, the Department has decided to make the practicum course optional. Therefore, students from countries where the course is mandated at the undergraduate level can register. The students that practicum is not obligatory from their country's regulations will take two additional elective courses. Additionally, if a placement site or a site supervisor at a specific country does not meet our minimum requirements, the student will be required to take the two additional courses. Therefore, this proposed solution satisfies the concern of the EEC.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

There is little detail in the hiring plan beyond assurances the committee received that “needs would be met”. This raises the concern that staff time has not been specifically planned for. While we understand that, in a relatively small institution, flexibility is needed—and possible—as a new programme gets underway, we were not fully reassured that the staffing needs for the new programme had been properly considered. Without information about staff time and hiring plans, the committee were concerned that the teaching workload for existing staff could become very high (for example, if preparing and leading 10-ECTS modules in Greek and English) in an already-busy department. This could have consequences for programme quality and, importantly, for promotion (and therefore ultimately staff retention); for example, it may well prove difficult for the staff to produce one Scopus-registered journal article per year, in line with the University’s research policy. While we saw some good evidence of staff research being linked to their teaching, we felt that the full potential of their research capabilities is not currently being exploited.

Institutional Response

Concerning the concern of the EEC about current teaching staff, the University proceeded to hire two new faculty members to address the issue of faculty teaching load and empower the research activity suggested by the EEC.

The postings for the two new positions can be found at https://www.nup.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/POSTING-FOR-LECTURER_ASSISTANT-PSYCHOLOGY-DISTANCE-ENGLISH-2023.pdf.

The filling of the positions will be sent to the Agency as soon as it occurs.



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

Institutional Response

Concerning the “Student admission, progression, recognition and certification” section, we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our Department; no areas for improvement have been identified.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by the EEC

- The committee recommends reorganising the study guides, as it is proposed in section 2. This reorganisation would also demand to include more problem-based activities that connect students' work through the weeks, instead of promoting separated activities.
- The online Bachelor has a strong practical component, and students are expected to complete a (research) dissertation. The committee felt that the resource implications had not been fully considered; for example, there was no mention of online testing suites such as Gorilla or Testable. Some additional thought will be needed about how to properly resource the new degree.

Institution Response

Concerning the section “Learning resources and student support”, we thank the EEC for the numerous significant strengths they have identified in our Department.

Concerning the issue raised by the EEC about the reorganization of the Study Guides (and as stated above), the Department has decided to adopt the suggestion. Specifically, a General Study Guide for the BSc in Psychology Distance will be developed, addressing all the shared information amongst the study guides. The individual course study guides will include the information specific to the course, including problem-solving activities.

Additionally, considering the point addressed by the EEC about the possibility of significant differences in time zones, where a student will not be able to attend one of the six live sessions, the Department will ask the instructor to have a particular time set with the student through Microsoft Teams or Zoom at a convenient time for both to address concerns of the student.

Lastly, concerning the comment raised by the EEC about online testing suites in the examination period, it is worth noting that our University has successfully implemented online examinations for all its programs during the pandemic, as well as continuing to this day for our Master in Educational Psychology Online Course. Therefore, the same process utilized successfully in our Masters Distance Programme will also be used for our BSc Distance Programme.



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

N/A



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

N/A



B. Conclusions and final remarks

All Points addressed previously.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Pantelis Sklias	Rector	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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