

Formal Institutional Response to the Regulated Professions Representative Comments

The University highly appreciates the observations of the Council of Registered Professional Psychologists, Cyprus.

Please find the institutional response to the comments, below:

Section 2: Legislation

Following feedback, we acknowledge the following comment:

- 1. Further development is needed in terms of infrastructure, research laboratories, and equipment (e.g. portable psychophysiological measurement tools such as wearable devices like headbands for electroencephalography (EEG), chest straps or wristbands for electrocardiography (ECG), smart garments for cardiorespiratory function, and eye-tracking glasses for electrooculography (EOG) etc.).*
- 2. Implementing sustainable workload planning and enhancing internationalisation initiatives would further strengthen the Department's provision and long-term stability.*
- 3. The programme includes a 180 hour practicum, although Cypriot legislation does not require practicum hours for registration as a psychologist. It is therefore suggested that the practicum be offered as an optional component, allowing students to choose the duration of their training within a range of 20 to 180 hours. During this experience students will have the chance to have a volunteer work experience and observe applied psychology in practice.*
- 4. Since the practicum may not be feasible or necessary for all students, the possibility of offering a choice between practicum (with clearly defined minimum and maximum hours) and elective coursework could be considered. Where a practicum is implemented, careful attention should be given to matters of placement, supervision, legal safeguards, and student safety.*
- 5. It is recommended that Cypriot legislation and the local professional code of ethics be explicitly addressed within relevant modules, ensuring that students understand the national legal and ethical framework governing the profession.*
- 6. The inclusion of elements addressing digital literacy, ethical online communication, and data protection would further strengthen the relevance of the programme to contemporary psychological research and practice contexts.*

7. *The practicum experience should focus on observation and academic learning rather than independent service delivery, ensuring that all activities remain within the ethical and legal boundaries of undergraduate psychology education.*
8. *It is recommended that the programme continues to encourage interaction and collaboration among students through small group work, research projects, and peer learning activities, fostering a sense of academic community and teamwork essential to the discipline of psychology.*
9. *Recommendations to further enhance sustainability and distinctiveness include expanding staff capacity, reviewing module titles and structures, improving research facilities and opportunities, and considering the introduction of more advanced courses that would strengthen the Department's academic profile.*

Institutional Response

We would like to thank Ms Fotini Demetriou for reviewing our report, participating in this procedure and for her detailed feedback and recommendations.

Please see below our responses to the comments.

1. We acknowledge the fact that we are not equipped with multiple infrastructure, research laboratories, and equipment. We will address this in following Departmental Councils and we will discuss it with the University. However, it is important to mention that final decision falls under institutional governance rather than programme-level decision-making.
2. The Department welcomes the external evaluation committee's recommendation and agrees that sustainable workload planning and enhanced internationalisation are key strategic priorities. To address workload sustainability, the five-year plan to recruit new full-time faculty has been successfully completed, with five new hires made over the past four years. Additionally, the School has announced two more full-time academic positions to begin in Spring 2026. One of these positions, within our Department, will focus on Cognitive or Social Psychology, while the other will be in Clinical or Counseling Psychology. In addition, a proposal will be developed with the collaboration of the School and the Department of Human Resources to gradually increase the number of Full-time faculty positions the upcoming years. Priority will be given based on each program's needs. In terms of internationalisation, Over the past two years, research activity has grown substantially, reflected in a marked increase in faculty publications and participation in externally funded projects. To support and sustain this positive trajectory, the University and Department have implemented several initiatives:
 - a. **Research Training and Capacity Building:** The University Library regularly organizes training sessions in collaboration with major

publishers such as Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and others, offering workshops on academic writing, research dissemination, and strategies for increasing research impact.

b. **Open Access Support:** The Library actively informs faculty members about opportunities for open access fee waivers and discounted publication options, ensuring that research outputs reach a wider international audience. In addition, the Department has allocated a €10,000 annual budget specifically to support open access publications in Scopus-indexed journals, thereby encouraging high-quality, visible research dissemination.

c. **Research Networking and Collaboration:** Faculty members actively participate in various COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) projects, which enhance opportunities for international networking, collaboration, and innovation. These engagements strengthen research partnerships, promote interdisciplinary research, and increase the likelihood of securing future competitive funding such as Horizon. Some of these COST actions are: CA20104 – PhysAgeNet CA23153 - Digital Mental Health for Young People (YouthDMH), CA19106 - Multi-Sectoral Responses to Child Abuse and Neglect in Europe, CA19117 Researcher Mental Health Program (REMO), CA21137 - Ethics in Dementia (EDEM), CA23151 - Mediterranean Cancer Screening and Early Diagnosis Network” (Medi-CaSE), CA22114 - TREASURE: Maternal Perinatal Stress and Adverse Outcomes in the Offspring: Maximizing infants' development, CA18138 - Riseup-PPD: Research Innovation and Sustainable Pan-European Network in Peripartum Depression Disorder Regarding the duration of the practicum, the 180 hours are directly aligned with the course's allocation of 6 ECTS, in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, which associates one ECTS with approximately 25–30 hours of student workload. As such, the practicum hours reflect a standard, transparent, and academically justified workload rather than an arbitrary requirement.

d. **Enriching and restructuring the Department's website** to more effectively showcase its accomplishments.

3. Regarding the duration of the practicum, the 180 hours are directly aligned with the course's allocation of 6 ECTS, in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, which associates one ECTS with approximately 25–30 hours of student workload. As such, the practicum hours reflect a standard, transparent, and academically justified workload rather than an arbitrary requirement.

4. We would like to respectfully clarify that the practicum course, “Practical Applications in the Field of Psychology,” must remain a compulsory component of the programme. This requirement is not an internal institutional preference, but rather a regulatory necessity grounded in the

accreditation framework of DOATAP (Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center). Specifically, Greek regulations mandate the inclusion of a compulsory practicum as part of undergraduate psychology degrees in order for graduates to be eligible for professional recognition and accreditation in Greece. Given the significant proportion of our student body who are Greek nationals and who seek professional recognition in Greece following graduation, the compulsory nature of the practicum is essential to ensure their academic qualifications remain valid and transferable across jurisdictions. Additionally, we strongly believe that this course is also one of the programme's main competitive strengths, providing students with essential applied experience and professional skill development that cannot be replicated through purely theoretical coursework.

5. Regarding this comment, we would like to clarify that Cypriot legislation, ethical codes, and professional practice boundaries are already systematically embedded within the curriculum. Specifically, we have "Introduction to Ethics" and "Introduction to Psychology" courses where explicit emphasis is placed on the Cyprus Psychologists Law, ethical codes applicable in Cyprus and internationally, and the clearly defined boundaries of undergraduate competence, ensuring that students understand both their responsibilities and limitations within the local professional context. Additionally, several components of ethics are also included in other courses such as Introduction to Counseling Psychology and Introduction to Clinical Psychology.
6. Our program fully complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's policies on the security and protection of personal data. Staff are trained on privacy principles, with emphasis on informed consent, data minimization, and secure storage. Furthermore, the University offers regular training on data privacy and digital awareness through seminars, online quizzes, campaigns, and alerts, ensuring that staff remain informed about best practices for handling personal data and using digital tools securely in accordance with GDPR requirements
7. In practicum, all students are required to adhere fully to the degree's practicum regulations, which are explicitly based on Cypriot law governing undergraduate psychology training. Furthermore, all practicum placements must be supervised exclusively by registered psychologists, in accordance with legal, ethical, and professional requirements.
8. It is mandatory for all courses to have at least one group assignment to encourage communication and collaboration. Additionally, conventional students are participating in group discussions throughout the lectures, analysing case studies, etc. Moreover, students have the opportunity to run research through several modules (such as Experimental Psychology

and Research Methods) and most importantly they undertake Thesis by the supervision of an academic staff.

9. The Department welcomes these recommendations and recognizes their importance in enhancing sustainability and academic distinctiveness by expanding staff capacity. As indicated in our response in comment 2 to address workload sustainability, the five-year plan to recruit new full-time faculty has been successfully completed, with five new hires made over the past four years. Additionally, the School has announced two more full-time academic positions to begin in Spring 2026. One of these positions, within our Department, will focus on Cognitive or Social Psychology, while the other will be in Clinical or Counseling Psychology.. In addition, a proposal will be developed with the collaboration of the School and the Department of Human Resources to gradually increase the number of Full-time faculty positions the upcoming years. Priority will be given based on each program's needs. In regards to the committee's recommendation to improve research facilities the Department has already submitted a request for the development of a dedicated Clinical & Research Center that will significantly strengthen both research capacity and student training.

The proposed Center will provide an infrastructure where students and staff can:

- a. Conduct experimental and applied research using specialized hardware and software tools such as REDCap, E-Prime, and other data-collection platforms. This will allow students to design, implement, and analyse small-scale experiments that align with contemporary research standards.
- b. Enhance clinical training through the use of video-recorded sessions, structured therapeutic protocols (e.g., Coping Cat), and widely used psychological assessment tools (e.g., Child Apperception Test, House–Tree–Person). This environment will create opportunities for supervised practice, observation, and skill development that are essential for professional preparation.

With regard to the review of module titles and structures and the consideration of more advanced courses, the Department notes that this process has already been undertaken. A new program of study has been submitted to the External Evaluation Committee following the PER procedure, which systematically identified the strengths and areas for enhancement of the existing programme.

The revised program structure and newly developed modules are informed by multiple sources, including student feedback, stakeholder input, alumni satisfaction surveys, labour market analysis, the EUC Strategic Plan, the Department's strategic planning, and national and international curriculum guidelines. This comprehensive review has resulted in a clearer programme structure, updated module titles, and the introduction of new and more advanced

modules designed to strengthen academic depth, progression, and the Department's overall academic profile.

Section 3: Additional Comments

Following feedback, we acknowledge the following comments:

- 1. The programme includes a 180-hour practicum, which is not required by Cypriot legislation for psychologist registration. It is suggested that the practicum be offered as an optional component, allowing flexibility in duration (20–180 hours) and providing opportunities for voluntary work and observation of applied psychology. Alternatively, students could choose elective coursework instead of the practicum. Where implemented, attention should be given to placement quality, supervision, legal safeguards, and student safety.*
- 2. More emphasis should be given to opportunities for growth through participation in funded projects, travel grants, workshops, and seminars delivered by visiting international scholars.*
- 3. One area for further improvement is the inclusion of training in conducting psychological interviews for the exclusive purpose of referring cases to a registered psychologist. Such training could be incorporated into relevant*

- course content to strengthen students' applied skills and understanding of professional practice boundaries.*
- 4. The programme relies on a small staff cohort. Sustainable workload planning and expanded internationalisation would further strengthen the Department's provision.*

Institutional Response

We would like to thank Ms Demetriou for her valuable feedback and recommendation. Please see our responses below.

1. Please refer to answer above, Section 2: Legislation, of point 3.
2. The Department acknowledges the Committee's recommendation and notes that significant steps have already been taken to support staff development and growth through funded research participation, mobility, and international academic engagement. Departmental staff are actively involved in funded research projects, including initiatives, which provide opportunities for research collaboration, capacity building, and international networking. In addition, the University has established internal funding schemes to support professional memberships and conference participation, further facilitating staff engagement with international research communities. Through Erasmus+ mobility programmes, faculty members are supported in travelling to partner institutions and in hosting visiting international scholars. In this context, the Department has welcomed visiting scholars for research and teaching from the University of Ioannina, the University of Crete, Universidad de Huelva, the University of Debrecen, and Universidad Europea de Valencia, thereby enriching both research activity and teaching provision. Lastly, to ensure continuous awareness of funding opportunities, faculty members will be encouraged to subscribe to the national Research and Innovation Foundation's (RIF) newsletter, enabling timely access to information on funding calls, networking initiatives, and related developments. Furthermore, the Department is planning to introduce additional targeted professional development initiatives aligned with the Committee's recommendations. These will include workshops on novice proposal writing, research networking and collaboration development, Erasmus+ funding opportunities, and the effective use of AI tools in research proposal preparation.
3. We would like to clarify that training in psychological interviewing for the purpose of appropriate referral to registered psychologists is already an embedded and intentional component of the BSc Psychology curriculum. This training is delivered through a combination of both taught modules and supervised practical experience, ensuring a progressive and developmentally appropriate acquisition of skills. Specifically, interviewing and referral-focused competencies are addressed within the following modules: (1) "Practical Applications in the Field of Psychology". where students may conduct structured and semi-structured interviews strictly

within the limits of undergraduate competence and exclusively for referral purposes, under supervision by registered psychologists. (2) “Introduction to Clinical Psychology”, which introduces foundational interviewing principles, ethical boundaries, and the recognition of psychological symptoms requiring referral to licensed professionals. (3) “Introduction to Counseling Psychology”, which emphasizes rapport-building, active listening, and ethically appropriate information-gathering. (4) “Techniques of Counseling”, which provides interviewing techniques, and communication skills

4. Please refer to answer above, Section 2: Legislation, of point 2.