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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ  
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H Q A

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

# Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

## Psychology

Institution: University of Crete

Date: 14 December 2019

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Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση  
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση  
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Psychology** of the **University of Crete** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Psychology** of the **University of Crete** comprised the following (4) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

- 1. Prof. Ageliki Nicolopoulou (Chair)**  
Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, USA
  
- 2. Prof. Thanos Karatzias**  
Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK
  
- 3. Assoc. Prof. Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca**  
European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
  
- 4. Ms Vasiliki Boukouvala, Clinical Psychologist**  
President of Association of Greek Psychologists—AGP, Athens, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The accreditation review for the Undergraduate Program of the Psychology of the University of Crete took place in December 9-13, 2019. The site visit lasted for two days (December 10-11) and the remaining days (December 12-13) were devoted to team dialogue and discussion as well as the writing of the report, with departure on December 14.

Approximately three weeks prior to our visit, the Accreditation Panel received two dropbox folders pertaining to the study program review. The first folder contained various relevant materials provided by the Hellenic Quality Assurance (HQA) detailing the guidelines and standards for the evaluation and accreditation, a mapping grid with questions to help us evaluate the ten principles for accreditation of the study program, as well as a template for the final report along with several quality indicator reports that HQA has produced over the period of three years (2015-16, 2016-17, & 2017-18), including the external evaluation assessment by the HQA panel in 2013. The second folder contained a variety of materials about the Department including the Proposal for Accreditation, the Quality Assurance Policy, the Program of Studies (including guidelines about the required practical training as well as an optional degree project that it was reported the majority of the students complete), sample questions of faculty evaluations as well as brief course description, and a current internal report about the Department's undergraduate program submitted in 2019.

Each Panel member individually reviewed the materials prior to arrival. On December 9, the Panel met prior to the orientation meeting by the HQA. The meeting with HQA provided a rather informative 2-hour briefing session about the HQA mission and goals as well as standards and guidelines regarding the accreditation process.

During the site visit, the Panel met with the following individuals:

- Deputy Rector/President of MODIP
- Department Chair and OMEA members (faculty and staff)
- Department faculty and administrative staff
- 10 undergraduate students and 5 graduates of the program
- Employers and social partners/stakeholders

During the meeting, the Panel received additional data/reports/documents:

- a comprehensive digital presentation and overview of the University of Crete and the Department; its history and current status
- detailed report of the undergraduate studies program and other supporting materials

The Panel also visited the on-campus facilities, offices, classrooms, and laboratories.

Specifically, these were:

- faculty and administrative staff offices
- several classrooms, including one larger and one smaller amphitheater while classes were in session
- a number of laboratories, including the Computer Lab, the Lab of Applied Psychology and Substance Addictions, and the Lab of Behavioral Neuroscience

- the Student Psychological Counseling Center, which is supervised by a department faculty and employs one licensed psychologist, but it is open to the entire student population of the university
- the University Library which is a central resource for all departments at the University

Overall, the Panel observed uniformity in the feedback we received from the interviews with the faculty, graduates of the program (in their retrospective reflections), and current students.

### **III. Study Programme Profile**

The Psychology Department at the University of Crete was the first psychology department in Greece established in 1984, which began to operate fully in the academic year 1987-1988 with a total of 40 students. From 1998, the department has been housed in its current location at the University campus of Gallos; and from 2004, it has been functioning as an independent within the School of Social Sciences.

According to the Department, it receives on average about 200 new students per year and it seems to serve around 800 active undergraduate students (4 + 2 years). Currently the Department has 16 faculty members, 4 professional staff, 1 administrative staff, and 3 contract teaching staff. Thus, the faculty to student ratio is low with about 60 students per faculty member. The minimum duration of the program is 8 semesters, but for many students it takes somewhat longer to complete all degree requirements.

The degree granted by the Psychology Department (as it is true of all Psychology Departments in Greece) leads to license to practice as a “psychologist.” However, the Department recognizes the problems and limitations of producing professionals through undergraduate training only, which runs counter to international standards. Therefore, the Department strongly encourages its students to continue their undergraduate studies by enrolling in graduate training at appropriate institutions. This caveat was recognized, understood, and noted by the students and graduates with whom we spoke.

Overall, the Psychology Department has evolved over the years. The Panel was impressed with the warm and congenial atmosphere among the faculty, the commitment and dedication of the faculty and staff towards the teaching and welfare of the students, as well as the deep appreciation of the social partners and community stakeholders towards the faculty. With some proper emphasis towards strategic goals to achieve a good balance between teaching and research, the department has the potential to achieve an even greater distinction for all its academic staff at the national and international arena.

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.*

*The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.*

*In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:*

- a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways for linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU);*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department has produced and adopted a Quality Assurance Policy (see website) that attempts to accomplish the following: (a) to provide a high quality program of studies for undergraduate students while simultaneously providing a productive work environment for faculty and staff; (b) to align with the larger educational goals and aspirations of the University of Crete in order to promote high quality education and research; and (c) to align with the broader quality measures highlighted by HQA to help improve the quality of higher education in Greece. This policy was developed by the OMEA group in the Department, which includes faculty and staff, in conjunction with MODIP and in consultation with ADIP.



Specifically, through the 23 required and about 10 elective courses as well as the practical training and optional degree thesis, the Department aims to provide the students with a comprehensive knowledge of the basic fields of psychology in terms of theoretical orientations, empirical research, and methodology. The program of studies seems comprehensive in preparing students for continuing their studies and obtaining relevant jobs. Current students who were interviewed expressed high satisfaction with the program of studies as well as the range and quality of courses offered to them.

The principal dimensions of the Quality Assurance Policy adopted by the Psychology Department in effect focus on some vexing issues that the previous evaluation of institutions and departments of higher education by HQA brought out. Specifically, the highly unfavorable ratio of faculty to students; the low percentage of students graduating within four years of study; the lack of job opportunities by graduates; the lack of autonomy in decision-making that strongly affects the departments and higher educational institutions in general; and the low percentage of funds provided by the Greek government to higher education. Even though the Department is gathering quality indicators on all these dimensions, and one can see improvements in some (higher ratio of students graduating within 4 or 6 years of study), unfortunately some of these factors remain outside the direct influence of the Department; instead they constitute strong constraints on the Department's ability to flourish in pursuing its goals.

The Department, however, has adopted some goals that are within its sphere of influence such as improving the quality and implementation of the undergraduate program of studies. Some examples include, the delivery of courses in terms of providing student-centered teaching approaches, revising some specific courses, and also improving the assessment methods in some of the courses.

The faculty members of the Department are well trained, with graduate degrees from recognized universities in Greece, Europe, and the United States. They generally offer courses that are current and reflect the state of the discipline, and several are involved in significant and productive research programs.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Institution policy for Quality Assurance</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. To consider concentrating academic and research activity of the faculty in a more strategic manner, which aligns with the potential strengths of the department including its human resources.

## Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE PROGRAMME. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, THE INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.**

*Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

*Furthermore, the programme design should take into consideration the following:*

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active participation of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department follows a series of actions for the approval of the Psychology programme. Specifically, the Undergraduate Studies Committee designs the programme and with input from Department faculty proceeds to formulate (or redraft) it. The programme is then submitted for inspection to MODIP for quality assurance in internal procedures and is approved by the Senate of the University of Crete.

The design of the curriculum is based on undergraduate programs at universities abroad as fitting the reality and constraints of the higher education in Greece. The character and philosophy of the program correspond with the character and the orientation of the University of Crete, an externally faced institution with emphasis on research. Special emphasis is given to research methodology and scientific ethics, which are critical to the students' future academic and professional career. There are also courses that promote interdisciplinary collaboration among the various departments of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Crete.

The Psychology Department has developed and implemented a rich and diverse programme, which involves 23 required courses (124 ECTS) and 10 elective courses (54 ECTS in courses + 12 ECTS for Senior Project at 4<sup>th</sup> year). There is an imbalance, however, with a much higher number of required courses over elective courses, which was also mentioned by some of the faculty.

There is some talk in the Department to remedy this imbalance; that is, to increase the number of elective courses, thus allowing students the flexibility and opportunity for specialized knowledge in topics of their interest for their future career.

Moreover, the program with its annual assessment appears to accomplish a somewhat smooth progression of the students through their studies. The ordering of the courses seems rational with basic and required courses being offered during the first two years and elective courses being offered in years 3 and 4 as students mature academically. However, students we interviewed expressed some concerns: one was related to the workload of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of their studies which they reported to be more demanding in comparison to others; the other concern was related to the regular offering of prerequisite courses, which if students do not pass them hinders their enrollment to subsequent courses that require them, and therefore impacts the timely completion of the degree. The Department claims that these courses are offered regularly (i.e., once in every academic year), but according to the students there seems to be some gaps there.

The Student Guide seems detailed and appropriate, and it is available online both In Greek and in English at the Department’s website. During the fourth year of studies, students are exposed to their first practical learning experience. Students are placed in settings, both private and public, where psychological services are offered to children, adolescents or adults, as well as other services related to the practice of psychology. Examples of settings include hospitals, mental health centers, psychological support centers, NGOs or associations that serve various groups such as individuals with special needs. This experience seems to be very positive for both the students and the supervisors we interviewed. But there was a general feeling that the hours of Internship should be increased to better prepare students for their profession and to appropriately contribute to the smooth functioning of the placement settings. However, there are practical reasons that seem to make this recommendation not feasible, such as the lack of an adequate number of institutions, especially in Rethymnon and nearby cities, that could absorb students for longer periods. This lack seems not to be alleviated even when several students chose (for financial reasons) to do their practical work in their hometowns all around Greece.

The Panel finds that the program fulfills the requirements of Principle 2.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **Panel Recommendations**

1. Consider better balancing the number of required and elective courses. Specifically, consider decreasing the number of prerequisites in the program, but pay close attention to the frequency by which they are offered so that students' progress through the program proceeds smoothly.
2. Consider creating an Advisory Board (e.g., stakeholders from the labor market, academics in other institutions, psychology professionals, current students and graduates) who can periodically provide the Department with advice and recommendations about the programme, including the curriculum.
3. Consider articulating "Learning Outcomes" in a more specific, concrete and measurable manner. For example, instead of "Understanding the Role of Empathy in the Counseling Process," this could be expressed as, "The students should be able to explain how empathy facilitates the Counseling Process."
4. Consider providing a more user-friendly and concise Study Guide. While the Study Guide seems complete, it does not guide students to the courses they should take given the variety of psychological careers one can follow (e.g., research vs applied psychology; or specialties such as cognition, social, developmental, clinical, health, cross-cultural and so on).

### Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.**

*Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.*

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys;*
- *reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff;*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student - teacher relationship;*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.*

*In addition :*

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *the 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;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Department faculty reported that they use a number of different teaching methods in their courses such as powerpoint presentations, videos, case studies, practical exercises, besides discussion of experiments and other academic materials. In some cases, field trips are also organized as part of the courses. The Panel observed that the faculty are keen to promote and develop students' critical thinking abilities.

The course requirements are described in detail in the course syllabi and they are also accessible through the course web page (e-learning platform). Learning outcomes include not only theoretical knowledge but also practical and professional skills.

Two examples of change made to the program by the faculty following student feedback include:

- a) increase of the number of seminars from 2 to 6; respectively, the Quality Indicator for the percentage of seminars increased from 2,65 in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 to 43,36 in 2017-2018.
- b) changes in content and delivery of one specific course by the same instructor to improve student engagement

Moreover, in several courses the faculty organize tutorials to consolidate students' practical skills and to promote the development of critical thinking skills while responding to individual needs of the students.

Faculty members take advantage of the opportunities offered by an e-learning system that is supported by the University of Crete's Computing Center. This system is being used as a means of communication among faculty and students, especially the posting of supporting material such as course outline, progress, exams, assignment, evaluation of student work as well as announcements.

Other examples of good practice with respect to student-centered learning include: (a) the adoption and use of student evaluations for all courses; and (b) the implementation of the "Training of the Trainers" (TotT) programme aimed at enhancing the teaching skills of the faculty. But this is limited to a few faculty yearly.

Within the Psychology Department there seems to be good collaboration between faculty and students, including mutual respect towards each other. The faculty are accessible to students both during class time and office hours, and thus provide guidance and support to the students.

Recently, the Department has begun to publish a scientific journal, "Eleftherna," that accepts articles in both Greek and English. The Panel was told that many of the students who completed the (optional) undergraduate thesis are encouraged to submit a paper to this journal. In addition, they are encouraged to present their work at student conferences as well as, when appropriate, at Panhellenic conferences.

Academic advisors provide every student with reliable information and enable their decision-making related to the program of study. They also signpost students to other institutions or services of the University, such as housing, financial aid, health care, physical activity and Student Counseling Services.

Although a limited number of students take advantage of the Erasmus+ program, those who do seem to be offered English language courses, including supervision of projects in their own language, when possible. Furthermore, the Department and the University make substantial provisions for students with Special Needs. For example, students with visual impairments are encouraged to take advantage of the Accessible Multi-modal Electronic Library program.

While there is a formal procedure in place for students to make formal appeals for specific grievances, when necessary, students we interviewed were unclear about the specific process

and only knew of informal ways to do so. This may indicate students' lack of the need to use the formal appeal process, given the positive relations they have with faculty and staff; and faculty mentioned that grievances were resolved in face-to-face interactions. However, the Panel observed that the students seem to have limited involvement in the decision-making process regarding their program of study.

The Panel finds that the program is fully compliant with the requirements of Principle 3.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider making the student-centered approach evident across all aspects the curriculum.
2. Consider making the "Training of the Trainers" (TotT) program for faculty accessible to all academic staff as much as possible. We understand that this program started this year, so it is still in its pilot phase.
3. Consider re-instating the active involvement of students in the decision-making process of the department.
4. Consider how students can become more aware of the appeal process.

## **Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification**

### **INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).**

*Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.*

*Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.*

*Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

For the transition from high school to college, the Psychology Department has a comprehensive orientation process in place. During the beginning of the academic year, the Department has an annual welcoming event for first-year students to orient them to the major as well as to the faculty and staff. The speakers of this event are mainly Department faculty, staff, and graduating seniors who provide information about the program of study along with sources and resources regarding orientation to life as a University student. In addition, after the completion of the first examination period, the Departmental Committee of Undergraduate Studies meets with first-year students to discuss difficulties they may have faced in their courses as well as their adjustment as university students.

A comprehensive system of recording and archiving student progress is provided by the *ClassWeb* monitored by the office of the Secretary of the Department. In addition, students' course progress is followed up by one's Academic Advisor (a faculty member assigned to the student by the Department) whose role is to guide and provide assistance and advice to the student regarding any aspect of their program of study and their progress in it. Students are encouraged to arrange a meeting with the academic advisor during the beginning of each semester and after the general exam periods.

With respect to student mobility, the criteria for eligibility are clearly delineated and available from the Department, and a list of participating institutions is available from the appropriate office of the University. However, based on the quality indicators generated by HQA, the number of Psychology students from the University of Crete studying abroad has remained low (1-3) and this number is even lower (0-2) for the number of psychology students from other countries coming to Crete across the last three academic years. The Department claims that these numbers are higher: 18 outgoing and 10 incoming students have participated through the



ERASMUS program. We are pleased to hear that the numbers are higher and we encourage them to continue these efforts.

Noteworthy is that the Diploma Supplement, an important record of students' progress and activities during their course of study, is provided to all Psychology students automatically both in Greek and English upon graduation. The Panel finds that the program is fully compliant with the requirements of Principle 4.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider continuing to increase engagement with the Erasmus program not only for domestic students but also for international students. One way to attract international students from around the world is by offering highly desirable and creative courses in English that can attract more international students, which in turn can also have the beneficial effect of further enhancing the English proficiency of domestic students.
2. Consider continuing to monitor and to utilize the input faculty advisors obtain from interacting with first-year incoming students, as well as those in other years, to inform future planning of the curriculum as well as other curricular aspects that come up.
3. Consider monitoring contact time of the academic advisors to see whether this program is a good use of valuable faculty time and/or how to best deliver necessary and valuable student support.

## Principle 5: Teaching Staff

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.**

*The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:*

- *set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching and research;*
- *offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;*
- *encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;*
- *encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;*
- *promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit*
- *follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.);*
- *develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff;*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department consists of 16 faculty members, 4 ΕΔΙΠ members, 1 ΕΤΕΠ member (who, by decision of the central administration of the University, is employed by the Department's Secretariat for administrative work) and 3 contract teachers who are recruited to the Department each academic year. The academic profile of all faculty members is displayed on the Department's webpage.

The procedures for appointing new faculty members are transparent and in compliance with applicable law. All procedures for the announcement, selection and promotion of academic staff are supported by the APELLA online platform. The Department seeks to attract highly qualified academic staff, and despite the extremely adverse financial conditions in recent years, the department successfully secured the appointment of 4 new permanent staff. Similarly, the procedures for faculty advancement are clear and transparent.

The research output of the Psychology Department faculty is published in international, peer-reviewed journals and books. Faculty members participate in and organize international and national conferences. Despite the limited time for research, due to high workload and administrative overload, the academic staff demonstrates remarkable research activity. In the Evaluation Database of Departments of Greek Universities, this Psychology Department had highest percentages (compared to other Psychology Departments) in terms of publications, reports and index h per academic. According to the Scopus bibliographic database, the Department has up to now a total of 7573 references for 406 papers with an average h-index of 9.43, despite the fact that the number of junior faculty is relatively high.

Faculty members have been pursuing successfully programs that enable them to advance their research, participate in scientific conferences, and engage in scientific collaborations. They also participate in collaborations with Universities abroad, taking advantage of the opportunities to

partner with universities in the European Union through the Erasmus program. Recently they took advantage of the Marie Curie European Program.

The Department also supports and mentors its junior faculty members. The Panel observed a very collegial atmosphere among the faculty members, that transpired to their relations with students. With respect to professional development opportunities for the teaching staff, the Psychology Department encourages the continuous training of the academic staff by attending training events, workshops on a variety of topics such as health and safety, personal data protection, the use of new technologies. One important addition in faculty training is the implementation of the "Training of the Trainers" (TotT) programme, but this is only limited to a few faculty members annually since this is still a pilot program.

Each faculty member in the Department on average serves approximately 60 students. This is higher than the 44.5 ratio of faculty/students in Greece as reported by ADIP, and this is considerably higher than the 15.63 ratio of faculty/students in the European Union. These numbers reflect the higher amount of work that corresponds to each faculty member in this Department. Still the number of incoming students seems to be constantly increasing on a year by year basis.

Faculty workload is higher when one takes into account the willingness and expectation of faculty members participate in a large number of committees at the Department and University level. However, the contribution that faculty members make to committee work is recognized by the University Administration.

The Department complies with all quality indicators related to teaching such as attendance, performance, and self-assessment. All department courses are evaluated by the students. Graduating seniors also complete an extensive questionnaire in relation to their experiences in the Department. Faculty also seek informal feedback from the students during classes which complements the formal feedback.

Furthermore, faculty are committed to linking teaching with research by presenting their own research in their classes, by encouraging students to participate in their research and/or intervention programs including presenting at scientific conferences.

### Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching Staff	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider ways of reducing the administrative workload of faculty in favor of increasing time for research activities. Some ways may be to reduce the number of committees currently available by combining several of them together, to allocate some responsibilities to post-doctoral students, and/or by transferring some of the advising duties to administrative staff.

2. Consider creating opportunities to share research interests with other faculty in order to develop common research clusters.
3. Consider expanding existing professional development programs to all interested faculty with topics such as the use of new technologies, e-learning teaching skills, IT skills, advanced statistical skills, or writing proposal for research grants.
4. Consider attracting academic staff who are graduates from other Universities to enrich the academic culture of the department.

## Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND–ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.*

*When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.*

*In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The accreditation panel was impressed by the dedication of the academic and administrative staff in supporting students during their studies and in creating a nurturing and caring environment for students. Each student is allocated an academic advisor who is providing support on academic and personal matters as requested by students. Academic staff are going beyond their way to provide advice and support to students.

The University campus is a very pleasant physical environment and the Department of Psychology is in the Faculty of Social Sciences. There is adequate office space for faculty and staff and each faculty member has their own office. Secretarial offices are based on the ground floor of the departmental building. There is a smaller teaching amphitheater in the Department but most of the teaching is taking place in the central University amphitheaters. There are 15 facilities that are being regularly used for teaching and training purposes. All teaching facilities are adequately equipped with audiovisual equipment. However, teaching rooms are not adequate for the numbers of students and sometimes students need to sit on the floor to attend lectures. There is also a gym on the campus. All areas of the campus are easily accessible for those with mobility problems. But overall the physical learning environment requires updating and there is need for larger teaching rooms for the number of students in the program.

The library building is impressive. There are hard copies of basic textbooks and students have access to electronic resources for their study. Study facilities are adequate. Despite the limited budget, faculty are making an effort to provide to students the latest bibliography.

To promote and enable undergraduate, postgraduate and faculty research, there are five laboratories including Experimental Psychology, Behavioral Neuroscience, Neuropsychology, Applied Psychology, and Psychology of Addiction. Counseling services are also provided to students and there are opportunities for personal development and growth.

Information is disseminated to students in a number of channels in person and electronically. Examples include orientation sessions, advisor support, as well as colloquia, conference, and meetings. The website plays an important role in providing information to students and the public and is updated regularly. The Students' Guidebook provides detailed information for the further growth of the learner-centered approach and autonomous self-directing learners to the extent possible.

The Department of Psychology has an excellent reputation and attracts a high caliber of students and ambitious academic faculty. However, buildings require updating and there is an urgent need for larger teaching rooms.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider creating facilities that can accommodate the high numbers of students already in the program.
2. Consider continuous updating of the library collection with recent books and journal subscriptions to the extent feasible.

## Principle 7: Information Management

**INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.**

*Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.*

*Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.*

*The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:*

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s)*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*
- *career paths of graduates*

*A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department is committed to formal data collection and analysis for the purposes of decision-making and future planning. Data regarding the profile of students, staff, modules, attendance and performance are regularly collected. Student satisfaction data are being collected for every course, but completion is very small (about 30%) which is inadequate to provide accurate information with respect to student satisfaction. Those who participate in the Erasmus program also complete satisfaction questionnaires at the end of their visiting experience, but this number is very small. Practicum placements are also being evaluated by students using both quantitative indicators and qualitative data. A sample of graduating seniors has also been surveyed with regard to employability and other relevant performance indicators. It was also quite impressive that academic staff are regularly seeking informal feedback from students during their classes and they show a commitment to improving student experience. All data collected are analyzed to a considerable degree; however, most of the performance indicators are not standardized and provide little information about quality.

Overall, the faculty of the Psychology Department seem to be very open and responsive to feedback from all sources. As an example, and following student feedback, they adjusted content of courses and assessments.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Information Management</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

1. Consider developing more systematic and concise tools for collecting information for faculty and students.
2. Consider ways of improving survey completion rates (e.g., completion of survey during classes as opposed to outside of classes).
3. Consider standardizing key performance indicators against other national and international providers for the meaningful interpretation of findings as well as setting up targets against basic performance indicators to monitor growth and improvement.
4. Consider giving feedback to students on how the Department responds to the information collected about the quality of the program, formal and informal.



## Principle 8: Public Information

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.**

*Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.*

*Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department maintains a well-designed and informative website. Information regarding program of study, course offerings, labs, scholarships, information on teaching and research staff, internal regulations, and the unit's Policy for Quality Assurance is available online. The information available on the departmental website is current, transparent, and accessible. In addition, the website offers numerous links to various other sites that directs students to additional information about the discipline of psychology (e.g. Hellenic Psychological Society, Universities etc.). Students can also access an on-line learning platform although there was limited evidence of use of the on-line learning activities. Finally, the site offers information about the Department in both Greek and English although not all documents were available in both Greek and English. Additional information and communication is provided through email, leaflets and posters.

### Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider increasing the number of on-line learning activities to improve student experience.
2. Consider presenting distinct features of the Department and of the Programme at the landing departmental page.

## Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.**

*Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.*

*The above comprise the evaluation of:*

- *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
- *the changing needs of society*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
- *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
- *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme*

*Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department is committed to constant review of its activities and continual improvement of the quality of the undergraduate program. It conducts an annual review of teaching and research activities of all faculty members. Student satisfaction surveys with specific courses and the broader educational context (e.g., facilities, equipment, and support services) are also taken into consideration in the review. The Psychology Department is very responsive to feedback from students in terms of satisfaction and performance. For example, a number of changes have been made in some courses regarding content and assessment methods as a result of these evaluative processes. Feedback received by current students, graduates and external partners was highly positive in relation to the quality of the program. Current students commented very positively on how faculty were open to their suggestions for improvement. The Panel though felt that a more strategic approach to further development with regard to teaching and research following the review process is essential to streamline current activity especially considering the limited resources available. Strategic goals should be clearly laid out and aligned with the vision of the department; and these goals should be concrete and doable.

A significant number of students takes longer than 4 years to complete the program of studies. The factors associated with non-timely completion are perhaps not well understood. It is essential that future review processes use data to understand the reasons behind non-timely completion.

Staff are using the latest research for their courses. They are also using their own research in their teaching promoting the link between theory and research and student-centered learning. Faculty's own research is relevant and current, and several faculty members have international

research connections. The Panel believes that the number of students is very high for the facilities and the human resources currently available in the Department. It is, however, commendable that faculty and staff are going beyond their way to enable students and support their learning.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

1. Consider a strategic approach in setting concrete goals and objectives to enable planning for future development of academic and research activities.
2. Consider reflecting on the number of required course offerings in light of existing human and physical resources.
3. Consider exploring factors of non-timely completion of program in future evaluations and decide on specific actions to significantly improve this number.
4. Consider ways to enforce serious consultation with governmental agencies on the appropriate numbers of entering students every year in light of human and physical resources. The number of students per faculty is very high for international standards.

## Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

**PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.**

*HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.*

*Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.*

*The quality assurance, in this case the accreditation, is an on-going process that does not end with the external feedback, or report or its follow-up process within the Institution. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Psychology Department is open and welcoming to external scrutiny. The last external evaluation of the undergraduate program by HQA was conducted in 2013. In that review a number of aspects that were identified as problematic have been improved but some still require attention:

#### Aspects Improved:

- Training in research methods
- Additional modules in social, clinical and organizational psychology
- Size of classrooms (although still inadequate for the numbers enrolled)
- Efficiency of administrative staff
- Engagement with academic advisors

#### Aspects still requiring attention:

- Non-timely completion of studies
- Faculty /student ratio

Faculty members of the Psychology Department were keenly aware of the importance of the external assessment and worked diligently to provide a complete and realistic view of departmental functioning. The Panel was impressed with the faculty members' level of preparation as well as their participation in the assessment process. During the assessment process, the Panel met also with Department administrators, current students and graduates of the program, as well as external stakeholders. Comments by all sources were uniformly positive.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

1. Consider developing an action plan on how to improve aspects that still require attention.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

1. Climate of warm, caring, and congenial cooperation among faculty as well as between faculty and students; some students continue to have strong relations with the faculty after graduation.
2. Climate of great cooperation between faculty and social partners; social partners expressed deep appreciation of the work the psychology faculty offer to the community regarding dissemination of research and social services.
4. Faculty displayed eagerness in providing a warm and congenial environment for students' learning and development, and it was apparent that they go beyond the call of duty to maintain and sustain this atmosphere.
5. The administration is appreciative and supportive of the department's teaching, service, and research activities and has provided the necessary resources when possible.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

1. High numbers of incoming students that are disproportionate to physical and human resources of the Department and the University.
2. The ratio of students per faculty member is too high and needs to be reduced to achieve higher quality education, timely monitoring and guidance of students, as well as greater student engagement in research and practical activities as well as student satisfaction.
3. High administrative load by the faculty that seems to impede research productivity.
4. Substantial limitations of classroom space.

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

1. Continue to analyze the data obtained from current students and graduates by setting strategic goals that are concrete and achievable, and which in turn can inform an action plan for further growth and improvement. Areas of monitoring may include how best to achieve a timely completion of degree, a better balance between required and elective courses, and more effective admission criteria that indicate good and timely progress through the program.
2. Continue to combine and streamline the high administrative load that interferes with the research activities of the faculty.
3. Continue to set strategic goals for research productivity and consider research clusters to strengthen the research profile of the Department so that its national and international reputation can be enhanced.

4. Continue to strengthen the professional development of faculty through formal means (e.g., workshops and seminars) as well as informal ways (e.g., research collaborations, self-directing activities to augment and enrich knowledge and skills).

5. Continue to advocate that the hours devoted for the practicum activity are very limited for the professional activities that a psychology degree in principle allows graduates to undertake in Greece. We understand that this requires structural changes of the legislation that regulates the University Policy and the profession of Psychology. We strongly recommend that Psychology graduates be given the opportunity of one to two years additional intensive practical training after graduation in order to enrich and consolidate their academic training.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, & 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: Principles 6, 9

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **The members of the Accreditation Panel for the Undergraduate Programme of Psychology of the University of Crete**

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

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