Accreditation Report
for the New Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Psychology

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace
Date: 2 March 2024

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme of **Psychology** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme of **PSYCHOLOGY** of the **DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Prof. Emeritus Stelios N. Georgiou**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

2. **Prof. Emerita Mary Konstantareas**
   University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

3. **Prof. Emerita Ageliki Nicolopoulou**
   Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, United States of America

4. **Ms Vasiliki Karagianni**
   Association of Greek Psychologists, Athens, Greece

5. **Mr Angelos Konstantinidis**
   Student of Psychology, University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) carried out remotely the review of the new Undergraduate Programme in Psychology offered by the Democretus University of Thrace (DUT), from February 26 to March 2, 2024.

Ahead of its review, EEAP members studied the material provided by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), and particularly the power point presentation by the Director General Dr. Christina Besta, where she outlined the HAHE's mission and standards, as well as the guidelines for the accreditation process. In order to coordinate its work and allocate tasks and priorities ahead of the scheduled online presentations by the Department, the EEAP met in private the first day (Monday, February 26th).

The EEAP's first online meeting was with the Rector of DUT, Professor Fotios Maris and the Vice Rector and President of MODIP, Professor Marilena Grigoriou on Tuesday, February 27, 2024. The presentation and the subsequent questions from the EEAP members focused on the feasibility and viability of the new Department and the plans of the University to support this effort by providing both human resources needed and funds for the development of necessary facilities.

Later, in the same day, the Panel had a meeting with the Chair of the new Department, Professor Nicos Makris and the OMEA members Professor Konstantinos Kokkinos, Associate Professor Efthymios Lambrides and Associate Professor Antonios Sapountzis, all of whom are also faculty members of the Department. MODIP members, including its President, Vice Rector Grigoriou, were also present in this meeting. Through a power point presentation narrated by Professor Makris, the basic aspects of the new Program were outlined. A discussion followed where the EEAP members asked a variety of questions that were answered by the Department's representatives.

The day ended by a private meeting of the EEAP members in order to air some first impressions of the information received and express their reactions to the discussion. Two more private meetings were planned, one for Wednesday 28 of February and one for Friday 1st of March. The purpose of these meetings was to shape the comments that each member undertook to prepare in order to be included in the final Report and to develop a collective position for each principle.

The remaining period of time was spent by the members working individually, drafting the various parts of the Report.

III.   New Undergraduate Study Programme Profile

THE UNIVERSITY OF THRACE

Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) was founded in 1973 and the first students were admitted in the academic year 1974-1975. It was named, after Democritus, the Greek philosopher who was born in the ancient city of Abdera in Thrace. The Administrative seat of DUTH is located in Komotini. DUTH is the 4th biggest university in Greece, serving about 30.000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in 8 schools and 21 departments, across 10 geographically dispersed campuses at five cities Xanthi, Komotini, Alexandroupolis, Orestiada & Didymoteicho.

Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) envisions the institution as the dynamic centre of society and producer of socially relevant and highly effective education programs. Its mission reflects this vision and can be summarized as follows: To promote and transmit knowledge through research and teaching, to provide practical professional experiences to students, and to cultivate and promote the arts and culture. To offer exemplary academic programs and contribute to life-long learning utilizing modern instructional methodology, including Distance Learning, scientific and research-based teaching, and research practices reflecting high standards of internationally accepted criteria. To respond to the needs of society and the trends of the job market, including professional and vocational careers, and to enhance the dissemination of knowledge and improve research outcomes and innovation consistent with scientific ethics, and lead to viable development and social cohesion. The programs of the DUTH departments are considered to be of a high quality in accordance with widely accepted international academic criteria. The high quality also applies to the teaching and research staff. The research strategy of DUTH targets promoting research excellence, national and international, including international collaborations, ensuring sustainable operation of research infrastructure, and transferring the developed technology to the local economy. Moreover, DUTH plays a significant role in reinforcing the national, economic, and cultural identity of the whole area of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Democritus University of Thrace is a state university with full administrative autonomy, supervised and funded by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The mission of the newly founded Department of Psychology is to provide students with excellent theoretical training in the most important branches of Psychology, familiarize them with the basic principles and methods of psychological research, develop their skills in understanding and interpreting human behaviour, as well as to develop and promote the Science of Psychology at national and international level. In this context the new Department will:

(1) contribute to its graduates' academic and professional standing,

(2) highlight the role of Psychology in daily life improvement and maintenance of the mental health of the general population,

(3) connect with the wider community, through a variety of scientific initiatives targeted at the general public, aiming to contribute to the improvement of mental health and University empowerment for adults and children.

In recent years there has been an international trend for a substantial number of young people to pursue studies in the field of psychology. The same seems to hold true in Greece, with the field of application of Psychology in the public and private sector increasingly expanding. This phenomenon seems to be related, on the one hand, to the recognition of human resources as one of the determinant factors for the country's development, while it also seems to be an indispensable asset for mental health professionals in various fields such as education, health, the prison system, public relations, advertising, etc. These needs are also reflected in the ever-increasing number of people employed in the private sector (counselling/psychotherapy for children, adolescents, adults, families). In this context, holders of relevant qualifications have several alternative job options to choose from.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING, FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT

Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.

By decision of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.

The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.

More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet their specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources and management systems.

During the evaluation of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be placed upon:

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit

The profile and the mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

b. The Institutional strategy for its academic development

The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within its internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the department and the study programme

The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:
- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*
- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field*

Relevant documentation

- *Explanatory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

    I.   Findings

The academic profile of the new Department of Psychology is conceptualized in terms of three foci based on the current and immediately projected specialization of its faculty: (a) Psychology of Mind, Learning, and Neuroscience; (b) Psychology of groups and intergroup relations; and (c) Applied Psychology. Despite these three foci, the department's mission

consists of educating undergraduate students about the various current important fields in psychology by offering a wide range of courses that encompass key theoretical frameworks and principles of psychological fields and subfields along with their corresponding applied research. The faculty envision that their graduates will be able to work in local organizations, whether public or private and be well prepared for further graduate studies. Furthermore, the faculty hope their graduates can be fruitfully engaged in producing and disseminating new psychological knowledge nationally and internationally.

The institutional strategy for establishing this new Psychology department is based on a careful analysis of the increasing demands for studying psychology among Greek students, the lack of psychology programs in this region of Greece, and a careful expansion of Democritus University in this part of Thrace. This new department will be located in the city of Didymoteicho and is projected to start operating with about 100 students in the 2024-25 academic year. This department constitutes an expansion of the University of Thrace to a fifth city of Thrace. Thus, through the establishment of this department, the hope is that it can lessen the increasing demand of Greek students to study psychology, energize the economy, and infuse new energy in this border city, and for the graduates of this department to contribute as professionals to the psychological needs of this developing region of Greece.

The feasibility of this new department and its program of study was documented in an extensive analysis provided to us. It is repeatedly emphasized that this will be the 7th Psychology Department in Greece, with only one other department serving this northern region of Greece. The faculty attempt to differentiate this new department by spelling out two ways it will differ from others in the country: (a) by concentrating the offerings of elective courses in three broad areas of psychology (Psychology of Mind, Learning, and Neuroscience; Psychology of groups and intergroup relations; Applied Psychology); and (b) by allowing the students from their 3rd semester to start selecting courses and thus hopefully contributing to designing their course of studies according to their needs. While this effort to differentiate the profile of the department from others in the country is welcome, the Committee believes there is room for improvement, and we will add these points to our analysis.

The arguments for the sustainability of this new department over the long run are based on several points. It taps into the increasingly high demand of incoming students for studying psychology, which is documented, among other things, by the high scores required for students to be accepted in Psychology programs nationwide. This new department can start operating with seven faculty members trained in psychology who are already members of Democritus University. The administration of the university is committed to sustaining this program of studies, and depending on governmental approval, it supports hiring two more faculty members to join the department. There are also efforts to refurbish existing

buildings, currently under the operation of the university, to house the department and thus prepare it according to its educational and research needs. Finally, the administration is fully committed to responding to the various necessities in making this new department start operating, including students' needs for educational purposes (e.g., classroom and library access) and room and board.

The program of studies for this new department is clearly laid out in several places in the materials provided to us for review. Students are expected to fulfil all degree requirements in four years by completing the minimum of 46 courses corresponding to 240 ECTS. Specifically, students are required to take 18 mandatory courses (94 ECTS), 20 elective psychology courses (100 ECTS) spanning the three foci of the departmental course offerings, 2 elective courses (10 ECTS) from other departments, 2 courses (6 ECTS) taught in English, 2 courses (15 ECTS) for the mandatory Practicum, and 2 courses (15 ECTS) for the mandatory Senior Thesis. The department faculty provided a detailed sequence of course offerings they expect the students to go through, starting mainly with a series of mandatory courses, to a series of elective ones, and culminating with the Practicum and the Senior Thesis.

The faculty expect to continue their research activities by transferring three research laboratories to this new department (Cognitive, Developmental, and Social Psychology Labs), which are soon projected to increase to five (including Clinical Psychology and Information Technology). The faculty also hope to enrich the research activities of the department by organizing three conferences for the Panhellenic Psychological Research in the next few years.

To ensure a high quality for the department, the faculty propose working together with the members of the appropriate Quality Assurance Unit of the University. The goal is to ensure a high-quality program of studies for undergraduate students while also providing a productive work environment for its faculty and staff. The department promises to constantly monitor its activities so that it can help improve the quality of the department regarding all its activities. It provided, though, no concrete plans as to when and how this monitoring will be achieved.

II.   Analysis

The committee agrees that there is clearly a need to establish this new psychology department to help ameliorate the high demand for psychology studies in the country. The Committee is also pleased with the university's strong and continuous commitment to launching this new department. In addition, the faculty have put a lot of work and effort into

thinking about the nature and structure of this program, and there is careful consideration of how the existing faculty can serve the needs of the students in this new department.

We applaud the effort by the faculty to differentiate the profile of this program from others in the country. But we think they can go further. It would be most helpful that instead of mainly replicating the research and course offerings of other psychology programs around the country, they further distinguish the department profile in terms of course offerings and research. For example, since neuroscience can be covered by existing faculty in the university, they should think about hiring faculty that do research and can offer courses in the fields of immigration and migration, including the special linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional needs encountered by the local population. Other areas to expand may be the Psychology of Crises, Disasters, and their Management resulting, among other things, from the displacement of populations based on climate change, poverty, war, or the effects of epidemics on individuals and communities. Overall, we encourage the department to encompass the newer trends in psychology today (including community psychology) so that the department's research and course offerings can be quite distinctive from all other psychology departments in the country. We further encourage the faculty to think seriously about the specific psychological issues encountered by the local population and respond to them. These efforts will allow the department to gain visibility and name recognition, which will help attract talented students and high-quality faculty.

It is difficult for us to envision how this limited number of faculty can offer the plethora of proposed courses while also supervising the mandatory Practicum and Senior Theses for incoming classes of 100 students per year and maintaining their research productivity. While the goal is to provide a rigorous and diverse program of study, given the small number of faculty, it is hard to see how they can offer the variety of courses required for the students to complete their studies in four years. Even if they were joined by two more faculty, each faculty member would have to direct at least 12 senior theses for two semesters while teaching other courses and maintaining their research activities. In addition, the faculty need to think seriously about how they can accomplish high-quality supervision for the Practicum, which is critical in giving the students some of the professional tools they need to practice. The encouraging thing is that the faculty have a few more years before encountering these vexing issues. Thus, we encourage the faculty to curtail the course offerings to what they can realistically do to maintain high-quality teaching and research. Spreading the department offering too thin will not benefit the students or the faculty.

We also encourage the faculty to think further about the specific course offerings and the sequence of some of the courses. Reviewing high-quality programs abroad to see their current structure may be helpful. For example, a *History and Systems of Psychology* course is no longer considered the best way to introduce students to psychology. Such a course has

been replaced widely by an *Introduction to Psychology* course, which helps introduce students to the major subfields of psychology (Cognitive, Social, Personality, Developmental, Clinical, etc.), thus presenting to students a broad overview of the discipline through its key research questions, methods of study, and its applications to society. After this course, the students benefit by taking specialized courses in different subfields, and thus, they can choose which ones to take given their interests and inclinations. In addition, we urge the department to think about curtailing the three research methods courses to two. A separate course on *experimental psychology* does not seem necessary when the faculty propose offering two other courses on *research methods in psychology.* After all, the experimental method is used widely and thus can be certainly covered in one of the two research method courses.

The department, in collaboration with the University's Quality Assurance group, promises to monitor and dovetail its educational and research activities concerning students, faculty, staff, and administration following the Quality Principles and practices of Democritus University. We encourage the department to adopt concrete steps and regularly monitor these activities, especially during the first years of its operation so that it can have a reasonably satisfied group of students, faculty, and staff while maintaining a high level of education and research activities productivity. The goals and aspirations of the faculty, as stated in the documents we received, strike us as too ambitious at times, given the grave difficulties in launching a new department.

III.   Conclusions

The department, with the support of the institution, is prepared to operate this coming fall, and we believe the various remaining issues we highlighted can be ironed out as the first cohort of students begins to go through. We strongly urge the faculty to provide a highly distinctive profile to their program compared to others in the country so that it can be highly desirable by students and faculty.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1.1: Strategic Planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Provide a unique and distinctive research profile of the department so that it can be attractive to students and faculty. This profile should utilize the distinctiveness and diversity of the local community and the larger Thracian region. We recommend that this profile go beyond offering some courses and is rooted in actual research performed by department faculty (hopefully more than one). Doing so, the department would gain visibility, which in turn could help attract talented students and faculty from Greece and abroad.

- We recommend curtailing the number of offered courses, especially electives, to be more manageable by the current (and projected) size of the department faculty, including occasionally visiting staff. The faculty should be realistic about the diversity of course offerings it can reasonably handle so that the students find the suitable courses they need to graduate, and the faculty and staff are not overburdened. We recommend aiming for strategic focus (given limited resources) and not trying to cover everything.

- We encourage the department to adopt concrete plans on how it is going to monitor its activities in adopting, sustaining, and maintaining a high-quality program for its students, faculty, and staff. The faculty and staff should be vigilant and reflective, especially during the first years, and they should seek the input of the students.

Principle 2.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

> *The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

Relevant documentation
- *Quality Assurance Policy*
- *Quality Targeting (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The new Psychology Department has adopted the key vision as stated by the University's Quality Assurance Policy presented on the University's webpage. Broadly stated, these include support and improvements of the university's educational goals, support for research and innovation of all scholarly activities, globalization efforts, and the functioning of an open-minded, smart, and nibble university. The Department has also adopted the general quality strategies for achieving these goals. These include the process for continuous improvement, self-evaluation, making decisions based on evidence, and using models and best practices. The targeting of the quality goals and strategies are based on a detailed analysis utilizing the SMART methodology, which was included in the materials the committee received.

II.   Analysis

This section is mainly aspirational, and the department faculty do not provide concrete strategies or plans on how they hope to achieve the stated goals and aspirations of the university and the department goals. It is true that the department is currently handicapped by the fact that the program has not yet been implemented, so it is hard to think how one can concretely ensure achieving these goals. However, as demonstrated by the materials produced for the committee, the faculty are well aware of these goals. We believe they will

be able to attend to them as they implement the program, and at the same time, they will think about concrete ways and plans to monitor and evaluate its quality.

III.   Conclusions

There is clearly a willingness to abide by the quality policy goals of the university, and we have every reason to believe that the faculty will attempt to do so.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.1: Quality assurance policy	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Create concrete guidelines as to when and how to monitor these aspirations and goals, including how revisions and their implementation can be achieved.
- It may also be useful to concertize these goals in line with the reality of the departmental situation and the available human and monetary resources.

Principle 2.2 DESIGN, APPROVAL AND MONITORING OF THE QUALITY OF THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Institutions should design the new 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.

The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity 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 European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills by the students. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.

The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Relevant documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum of the new UGP (courses for the acquisition of digital skills are included)*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course syllabi*
- *Teaching staff (name list including subject area, employment relationship, assignment of teaching in the UGP and other study programmes)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards.*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

Institutions and their academic units should plan to have sufficient resources for the smooth progression of their aims. Planning a new department requires extensive and well-documented preparation of all aspects related to its functioning. Sources of information on which to base the planning should be considered, as well as efforts to obtain approval of the

proposed plan. The goals and the educational outcomes, as well as the students' future professional orientation, should be taken into consideration. Based on the information provided, we believe that considerable planning and foresight have taken place already since there is a need to ensure that everything is starting to be functional upon the first students' arrival in September of the new academic year.

Because of the considerable planning, and social policy services, etc., institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means to support learning and academic activity in general to offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support and 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 students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in many ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Relevant documentation

Description of the infrastructure and services made available bestows the trust that things are planned well. This may not be surprising since all factors of relevance have been thought about and addressed.

Thus, the goals of the studies, the necessary infrastructure and expected outcomes are meticulously outlined, with the main hope on the part of a reviewer is that all will proceed according to plan. On the basis of what we were able to review, we found extensive preparation of all aspects of relevance, such as the infrastructure related to the program in terms of the buildings to be used for the student activities, including amphitheatres, classrooms, laboratories, study rooms educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, etc. They also clarified their aim will be to employ a student-centric approach to learning, by being sensitive to such factors as whether the students are full or part-time, whether they are employed, if they may present disabilities, and so on. As well, students are supposed to be informed on all aspects of their studies, including the provision of a yearly calendar of studies, supports by educational advisors, counselling support, depending on the students' special needs and requirements, etc. In sum, the aim of the department to ensure high quality of instruction and adherence to principles of learning and the transmission of information appear to be fully considered.

In the planning of the ΠΠΠ (UPS), the goals, the anticipated results of the studies, the expected professional skills, and the manner of their attainment of the anticipated outcomes and components thereof, should be provided in the Departmental Calendar. This information was

provided to us by the Dean in his presentation and by a number of informational units that were forwarded to us.

Materials in Support of Certification:

➢ The Resolution of the Senate for the Establishment of the Department of Psychology which has likely been granted.

➢ Plan for the new program of studies, (including units on Computer literacy).

➢ Summary of Curriculum by Semester of Study.

A detailed and well-documented outline of all courses to be offered by semester of study. The list includes considerable detail, and includes the teaching of a Foreign Language, specifically English of which two sessions are offered. There are regular and optional courses, which is a wonderful way of ensuring that student specific areas of interest are addressed. Courses are divided into mandatory, and optional. They are summarised into units by subject matter, e.g., Applied Psychology, Group Psychology, and so on are collected into modules. Students must attend and be successful in 20 courses on the condition that they must select at least 5 courses from each module. The remaining 5 optional Psychology courses may be freely elected from any or just one topic module alone.

➢ Teaching Staff and the materials and courses they teach. There are 7 faculty members whose CVs are quite substantial and who will be most likely to be able to address the requirements of all relevant courses. Members of the review panel met our colleagues in person and perceived their enthusiasm and support of the new program. If we assume that 100 students will enter the program, the student-faculty ratio will correspond to 14:1 for the first year of studies. We understand that two additional faculty members are expected to be recruited, which will render the ratio to 11:1 for the first year of studies.

➢ A Thesis is compulsory for a degree in Psychology. It will be preferably empirical in nature but may also be theoretical involving bibliographical review of a current topic of interest. It is conducted during the fourth year and credited with 7.5 ECTS per semester, i.e., a total of 15 ECTS. Most reassuring, there are Courses on Digital skills that are included in the course modules. Statistical data processing tools and related software are offered to enrich the students' research knowledge.

It may be too early to assign instructors to courses, although it is anticipated that this should not be a problem since there appears full coverage of the courses outlined and the knowledge base of the various faculty members. It is anticipated that, once students arrive, there will be a judicious connection between the instructor's expertise

and the courses to be offered, something followed by North American and other universities.

➢ A practical Unit of Ensuring the Quality of Instruction will be utilized (ΜΟΔΙΠ). It is an advisory body which attempts to review and co-ordinate the various academic units and the clarification of the strong and weak points of the unit of studies. It also attempts to provide support to the department and facilitate its efforts.

Planning, approval and Certification of the quality of the Program

Specific elements of lectures for consideration. We assume that this has taken place.

<u>Profile of the New Program</u>:

➢ Examination and consideration of factors that were taken into consideration in developing the academic format include the historical, political, scientific, educational, and professional considerations have influenced the planning and organization of this program. The relevance of Psychological theory and applications are becoming increasing relevant in the current political and indeed global scene. The fact that the University required a department of Psychology to address the current global challenges was evident. As well, there is the issue of the location of the University, which is located in a relevant isolated area of the country, an area that has begun to have major geopolitical relevance to Greece with the expansion of our northern cities, particularly Alexadroupolis, with its considerable new importance and its vicinity to the University. The need for the provision of psychological services to the broader area and to hospitals, schools the justice system, units of the army, etc. become relevant.

➢ There is also the issue of how the department is allied with the University as a whole. On the basis of the materials brought to our attention, there is considerable correspondence between the two: indeed, they are fully complementary and interconnected. From the presentations by the staff and the presentation by the Dean and other relevant material, it appears that there is an excellent fit between the proposed department and the University as a whole. Furthermore, the strategy of the department dovetails well with that of the University and likely other departments, e.g., the faculty of Health Sciences, the faculty of Education, etc.

➢ As to whether there was an attempt to seek input of students who have graduated from comparable university departments, from relevant scientific organizations or employers involved in the activities related to Psychology, it is not clear. There have not yet been graduates in Psychology from Democritus University, although information about departments of Psychology from within Greece, European and American universities is plentiful. Such efforts are still relevant and can be pursued prior to finalizing course content, etc.

- The curriculum, as presented by units, modules, etc. The same can be said for sources that can be used such that added information and how is to be incorporated in the curriculum.

- Comparisons of the proposed department with departments of other universities within the country and Universities and departments of international institutions could be pursued. Again, this has not been provided in the available resources, but it has likely occurred as far as the faculty will have ample awareness of what practices are followed elsewhere. Yet, supplementary consideration of this can still be pursued since it may enrich the proposed program.

- The materials offered as to the program of studies and the many options offered, appear to support a smooth transition of the students across the various segments of curriculum.

- As indicated above, students have the option of engaging in laboratory work prior to their thesis as well as choose to do their thesis in the context of a laboratory. Thus, considerable flexibility is afforded to students in this regard.

- How research dovetails with the lecture material has not been clarified, but this need not be a problem since the considerable course choice and flexibility of the offerings appear to allow for their interconnectivity.

II. Analysis

The considerable thoughtfulness, amount of preparatory work and the thoroughness of the proposed program is quite impressive. The selected topics of study and their interconnection into modules is anticipated to serve the students well. There are many positive elements worth consideration. They include the choice of thesis format, which allows for flexibility in view of the usual reluctance of some students to engage in laboratory work, preferring instead to conduct a descriptive study. Yet, some well conceptualized and executed qualitative studies can further the course of knowledge considerably as well. This is in contrast to the practice of compelling students to follow one format, usually a research study. Another issue is the number of courses offered, which is considerable. It is unclear that all courses can be offered in the same year. A staggered schedule can be offered in alternate years. Since the faculty is assumed to engage in research and one or two of them may be on sabbatical, it may be very taxing to be expected to offer all the outlined courses in the Calendar. Another issue is the infrastructure and how it will accommodate the students, although we do not know yet the contemplated number of the students and the willingness of potential students to attend in this relatively remote location. There are a number of additional issues which will likely be easier to address once the students arrive, hopefully in the Fall.

III. Conclusions

The proposed department of Psychology is well conceptualized, planned, well connected with the University and it is expected to provide a useful and in fact much needed addition to the University of Thrace, for the reasons outlined above. We urge the faculty to proceed with the outlined plans and to be reflective and proceed with care and caution in their efforts to turn the various proposed plans into reality. We wish them well!

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.2: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 2.3 STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

Institutions should ensure that the new 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.

In the implementation of student-centred learning and teaching, the academic unit
- ✓ *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 application of 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*

Relevant documentation

- ▪ *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- ▪ *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- ▪ *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- ▪ *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Psychology at the Democritus University of Thrace is a new department that is expected to start operating in September. The committee based their information on meetings with the rector, faculty, and materials provided. The faculty consists of only 7 people, but they have laid a strong foundation for the department.

Their curriculum is designed to be student-centred, allowing students to develop competencies that meet their personal goals and societal needs through effective learning activities. The curriculum includes a combination of lectures, small laboratory groups, seminars, tasks during lessons, and work in a laboratory context. Knowledge and understanding are assessed through a combination of written exams and course assessments, laboratory assignments, written assignments, portfolios, project reports, oral presentations, and participation in research. Additionally, students have the opportunity to select elective courses from a variety of options.

Teaching quality is assessed on a six-monthly basis, with MODIP responsible for informing students. Students assess their teachers using tokens and completing a relevant questionnaire

for each course they attend. The results of the assessment are available to every professor, providing a complete picture of their evaluation from students. Faculty are encouraged to improve areas where they might be lagging. The overall annual results of the assessment are communicated by the Department's OMEA to the Assembly to allow for corrective interventions.

The Department of Psychology has a regulation for managing complaints, which has been approved by the Senate and will be posted on the department's website. Students can address their complaints and objections related to academic matters initially to the course instructor, then to their academic advisor, and finally to the Chair of the Department. If the issue is not resolved, there are competent bodies at DUTH for further action. For complaints and objections related to supporting procedures and services, such as the time schedule, infrastructure, library, IT systems, etc., students can address the relevant administrative services or the student advocate.

The Department of Psychology also has an Academic Advisor of Studies to provide advisory support to students. The academic advisor chooses how to approach and help the students assigned to them, providing advice on supporting first-year students, understanding and completing courses, choosing appropriate courses, discussing exam results, choosing a thesis topic, postgraduate studies, professional prospects, and discussing any personal or family issues that may affect studies. The Department of Psychology provides all these services to its students.

II.   Analysis

During our brief meeting with the faculty, we noticed their eagerness to achieve the department's goals, which is to provide comprehensive and quality studies to the students. They have taken important steps to ensure the quality of education by introducing questionnaires for student feedback, regulations for dealing with student complaints, and guidelines for the academic advisor. However, willingness alone is not enough to bridge the gaps that exist in the department, and they will need to seek more help from the state.

It is clear that the department will require more faculty members and administrators to cope with the increasing number of students. Each year, the student intake will increase by 100 or more, which will put a significant strain on the existing faculty and administrative staff. For instance, academic advisors will need to handle hundreds of students over the years, which will make it difficult to provide adequate support.

The building facilities are currently under construction, but there is a concern whether they will be able to accommodate student-centred learning. In order to provide quality education, specialized equipment, rooms, and laboratories, as well as computer labs, will be required. The success of the department will depend on how well these needs are met in the future.

III.   Conclusions

The Democritus University of Thrace is establishing a new department of Psychology which is expected to become operational in September. In Greece, the traditional form of education is

teacher-centred and student-centred learning is still in its early stages. However, there is a growing interest in student-centred learning and this new department is hopeful that it can contribute to this movement. But achieving this goal will require a great deal of work and external funding.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.3: Student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Questionnaires for assessment by the students and procedures for handling student complaints are crucial factors that have been well-organized from the beginning. Students should receive proper and timely information so that they are aware of the procedures. The process should be conducted in such a way that students can participate without feeling embarrassed or fearful. Anonymity should be provided where necessary.
- Academic advisors provide reassurance to students during their transition from school to university, as well as providing support for any other difficulties they may face during their studies. This role is important and requires an increase in faculty staff to ensure quality service provision. Having one teacher for 15-20 students, which doubles every year, will reduce the quality of this service.

Principle 2.4 STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND AWARD OF DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCE OF THE NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES

Institutions should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies as well as*
- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. 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).

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Relevant documentation

- ▪ *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme (Senate decision)*
- ▪ *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- ▪ *Diploma Supplement*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

For the transition from secondary to higher education, the Psychology Department has an integrated orientation process in place. During the beginning of the academic year, the Department will be organising a welcoming event for first-year students to provide information about the program of study along with sources and resources regarding orientation to life as a university student, as well as issues related to the progress of studies and the services offered by DUTH to its students. The speakers of this event are mainly Department faculty members.

A comprehensive system of recording and archiving student progress is provided to the Department Assembly monitored by the Internal Evaluation Team of the Department. In addition, students' course progress is followed up by one's Academic Advisor whose role is to guide, assist and advice the students regarding any aspect of their program of study and their progress in it.

In addition, DUTH offers scholarships to students to support them during their studies. The Senate has established scholarships funded by the Special Account for Research Funds. Achievement and study scholarships are also provided by various agencies and institutions at national or local level, on a regular or ad hoc basis. The notices and eligibility requirements are set out in the relevant annual circular of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

As regards 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 DUTH. The Department of Psychology is expected to participate in the University's Mobility Programme, to support and encourage mobility through Erasmus+.

Internship enables students to move within the prefecture of Evros, in public institutions and structures where psychological services are provided. It requires the completion of 200 hours of employment under supervision the psychologist of the institution.

The Department is expected to apply the system of transfer and accumulation of credits (ECTS), in accordance with the legislation (YA Φ5/89656/B3, ΦΕΚ Β΄ 1466/13.8.2007). The procedure concerns the correspondence between the courses taken at peer universities and the curriculum of the Department.

Noteworthy is that the Diploma Supplement, is provided to all Psychology students automatically both in Greek and English upon graduation. It provides sufficient and independent evidence to improve international "transparency" and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). It describes the nature, level, background, content, and status of the studies, which successfully completed by the person named in the original of the qualification to which the Diploma Supplement will be attached. It does not contain a judgment of merit, statements of equivalence, or proposals for recognition.

II.   Analysis

While these procedures are in place, it is important to consider the potential challenges in finding internships linked to the geographical location of the new Department. During the committee's brief discussion with the faculty, it appeared that there would be flexibility with respect to the inclusion of new internship and supervision providers.

Since the issue of Internships is crucial to the training of psychologists, the Committee was concerned about the availability and diversity of the organizational structures that would accept students and provide them with a good level of supervision. Also, a more explicit and focused evaluation of the Internship would provide better feedback to the Department, to identify possible deficiencies in the educational program.

III.   Conclusions

The Senate of the Democritus University of Thrace has approved the Internal Regulations of the Undergraduate Studies Program of the Department of Psychology of the DUTH, as well as its Annexes, the Internal Regulations for Internship, and the Regulations for the preparation of bachelor's Thesis. It appears that the procedures are comprehensive and inclusive.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.4: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider the possibility of receiving more detailed information about the Internship. Supervisors can complete specific questionnaires based on axes and modules.
- Given the geographical location of the Department, it will be important for students to have opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ programmes in both ways. Students can get Erasmus+ fellowships to go to other universities, and also international students could be able to come to DUTH for Erasmus+. By attracting international students, the department will improve the profile of the DUTH.

Principle 2.5 ENSURING THE COMPETENCE AND HIGH QUALITY OF THE TEACHING STAFF OF THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, and an effective staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).

More specifically, 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 recognise 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.

Relevant documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The teaching staff of the new Psychology Department consists of 7 faculty members. Assuming about 100 incoming students per year, the student-faculty ratio will correspond to about 14:1 for the first operating year. The University is committed to allowing the department to recruit two additional faculty members based on the approval of governmental funds. This will improve the student-faculty ratio to 11:1 for the first year. However, with each incoming class projected to be about 100 students, this favourable ratio will decrease exponentially. Ultimately, it will probably be similar to those of other psychology departments around the country where the student-to-faculty ratio ranges between 40 and 60 students per faculty member.

The procedures for appointing new faculty members are articulated in the received documents and are based on relevant governmental laws and institutional guidelines. While research abilities and research productivity are critical, the Department has adopted the

university guidelines for candidates to demonstrate their teaching abilities. However, procedures for the appointment of other staff members were not articulated.

The University supports faculty teaching and research activities. The university has created a Centre for the Support of Teaching and Learning to support high-quality teaching. To support research, the university offers generous funding opportunities for conducting research and participating in national and international conferences.

The research output of 5 out of the 7 faculty members whose curriculum vitae we received is published in international and national peer-reviewed journals. These faculty members have participated in and organized national and international conferences. However, there was no indication of these faculty's teaching abilities and how their courses are received by the students in their previous positions at the University.

II.   Analysis

The committee was impressed with the research productivity of several current faculty members who have published in international journals (and not merely Greek journals) and seem to have good national and international collaborations. However, the committee is apprehensive that some of these faculty members might be burdened with heavy teaching obligations and high student supervision (besides committee work) that may impinge on their research productivity. There is mention in the documents of obtaining some contract faculty to help with teaching (and we also assume practicum supervision), but this was not spelled out and for which areas the Department was anticipating doing so. However, the Department needs to achieve a good balance in providing high quality teaching, ample research activities and opportunities for the students, and high-quality Practicum supervision to gain and maintain a good reputation in comparison with other Psychology departments in the country.

III.   Conclusions

The Committee believes that the Department faculty are committed to creating a viable department that can provide and maintain high-quality teaching and research productivity. Still, it will also be important for the administration to monitor and support the progress of the new Department.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.5: Ensuring the competence and high quality of the teaching staff of the new undergraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider ways of reducing the many elective courses under consideration (as we also mentioned in Principle 1.1). One way to do that is by hiring faculty in a smaller but critical range of psychological areas so that the faculty can maintain high-quality teaching and research productivity. This way, the department's course offerings will not be spread too thin, and thus, it can achieve high-quality and rigorous studies, allowing it to gain a good reputation.
- Consider flexible ways of reducing the administrative workload of faculty in favour of increasing time for research activities.

Principle 2.6 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT OF THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Academic units should have adequate funding to cover all their 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 resources and means to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer to the students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support and 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 students, students with disabilities), in addition to 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. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Relevant documentation

- *Description of the infrastructure and services made available to the academic unit by the Institution for the support of learning and academic activities (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.)*
- *Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

All the information the committee received came from meetings with the faculty and the rector, as well as source material. Unfortunately, it was not possible to see the building units of the department, as they are under construction. However, the City Hall of Didymoteicho, with a total area of 2,000 square meters, has been granted to meet the operational needs of the Department of Psychology. A large part of the building will be used as classrooms, including an auditorium with a capacity of 260 people and an additional 90 people in the upper section, two classrooms with a capacity of 100 and 59 people, respectively, and a laboratory room with a capacity of 26 people. The rooms and equipment for the five planned laboratories of the Psychology department will be housed in the same space (that is, Clinical Psychology, Cognitive & Experimental Psychology, Child Development Psychology, Social Psychology, and Informatics). The Secretariat of the department, the offices of the Chair of the Department, and faculty members will also be housed in the same space. In addition,

there is a room with a capacity of 40 people for meetings/presentations. The administrative staff will consist of at least two employees. All the infrastructure is expected to be completed by September 2024, when the first students of the Department will enter.

It was also noted that the Department of Psychology in Didymoteicho does not have a library. However, students will have access to the Central Library of the Democritus University of Thrace in Komotini through their website. They can search for books, magazines, and other materials and find out where and how to borrow them. Other IT and communication services available to students include an online electronic classroom system, where course supervision material, announcements, and bibliography will be posted, and a general notice board for educational and operational issues.

The Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) offers a variety of electronic services to its students, including an electronic account for each registered student. All DUTH departments have access to eduroam and free Wi-Fi. Additionally, asynchronous distance learning services are provided through the DUTHNET e-class platform, while modern education is provided through the MSTeams platform, allowing for modern distance learning.

At DUTH, various institutions operate to serve students, such as the Employment and Career Structure, which includes the Liaison Office and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Unit. The Study and Career Liaison Office provides information to students and graduates on the connection between the university and the productive community. Additionally, the Institution of the Student Advocate acts as a mediator between students and professors or administrative services of the Institution, observes legality within the context of academic freedom, deals with mishandling of administration issues, and safeguards the smooth functioning of the Institution. The Counselling and Accessibility Structure promotes constructive learning, academic success, and socialization of students with particularities and disabilities. The Department of International Relations/Erasmus+ promotes international mobility within the framework of the Erasmus+ program. The Academic Adviser assists students with academic life, their path towards the completion of their studies, their professional prospects, postgraduate studies, and other related issues. Throughout their studies, students are in communication and interaction with the teaching staff.

Philologus or Philological Editing of Works is an electronic platform supported by the Laboratory of Linguistics and Formation of the Department of Greek Philology of the University of Athens. It aims to provide linguistic correction and philological editing to texts written in the Greek language by members of the University Community of Athens. It is available to all members of the university community of the Democritus University of Thrace, including students, faculty members, EEP, EDIP, and administrative staff. DUTH also has a complaints and objections management mechanism in place. Further, scholarships and awards are available for students of all levels. Information on scholarships announced

throughout the year is posted on the website of the DUTH Liaison Office (https://career.duth.gr/portal/?q=scholarships/search). Lastly, DUTH provides eligible students with free coverage in food and accommodation, as well as free transportation to and from the Campuses.

Once the Department of Psychology is established, it will receive funding from the institution's Regular Grant through the prescribed procedures outlined in the institution's Internal Quality Assurance System manual. The AM-TH PEP has also provided funding for the Department's laboratory equipment.

The Secretariat will be staffed with administrative personnel who possess the necessary qualifications for their respective positions. The Department will support and encourage the professional growth of its administrative staff by providing opportunities for them to participate in training seminars, administrative staff mobility actions through Erasmus+, and other relevant programs. The administrative staff of the Secretariat will be responsible for providing a wide range of administrative and secretarial services, including student registration, issuing certificates and attestations, administration of oaths, processing of diplomas and accompanying documents, management of procedures for faculty member selection and development, posting of announcements on the Department website, postings in DIAUGIA, APELLA, KIMDIS, electronic protocol monitoring, telephone and in-person student services, and more. The Department aims to have a secretary, a deputy secretary, and two associates by 2026-27.

The Department's website provides students with a wide range of information about the study program and University. This includes the study guide, the Regulations for the operation of the study program, the Internship Regulations, and the Thesis Regulations. Additionally, relevant announcements are regularly posted on the website and e-class to keep students up to date. To further inform students about available services, the Department offers the Academic Advisor service and members of the educational staff hold office hours that are made public to students. The Employment and Career Structure program is also available to students, in addition to personal cooperation with the faculty.

II.   Analysis

It appears that there is a lot of effort being put into preparing for the launch of a new university department. However, there is a large amount of work to be done and not much time left to do it. Unfortunately, the committee was not provided with any information about the progress of the infrastructure development. It would be important to know how much progress has been made. The department is expected to be up and running soon, with five fully operational laboratories.

It is unclear how the university department will function in a town hall space, especially since it will be the only department in the area. Students may feel isolated without the ability to interact with students from other departments. Additionally, there will be no library in

Didymoteicho. It is unclear how easy or time-consuming it will be for students to borrow books remotely. The lack of a physical library space may be sorely missed.

The secretariat will be staffed with two people initially, with plans to reach four people in three years. This seems like a small number considering they will be taking on all of the department's duties for a large number of students.

III. Conclusions

The committee acknowledges the dedication and determination of those responsible for running the department. Nevertheless, accomplishing the vast and teamwork-oriented task poses a significant challenge. The Psychology department in Didymoteicho is currently under construction and it is expected to be operational in 6 months, equipped with all the necessary services. While the Institution offers learning and academic support services to the academic unit, the absence of a physical library can negatively impact the student experience. In addition, the department may face operational difficulties due to understaffing in the secretariat.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.6: Learning resources and student support of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Subject to our limited understanding of what is going to happen, those in charge of the department seem to have good intentions. However, since the infrastructure has not yet been completed, it is unclear whether it will be ready on time. It is crucial to hire more employees for the department's secretariat, as their responsibilities will cover all aspects of the Department of Psychology.
- Additionally, not having a physical library on the department site could negatively impact the student experience. Therefore, the network with the central library of the University of Thrace should be well-organized to serve Psychology students effectively.

Principle 2.7 COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION FOR THE ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Institutions and their academic units 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.

> *Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type of accreditation (initial or re-accreditation). The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme(s), availability of learning resources and student support, career paths of graduates. During the initial accreditation, the data concerning the profile of the academic unit and the structure of the study programme must be entered.*

Relevant documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The DUTH foresees the procedures for the collection, analysis, and use of information, with a view to the effective management of the undergraduate programme, and the activities in a uniform, functional and easily accessible format.

Among other things, procedures are provided for the collection of information on the evaluation of the educational work of students, the entry of data in the Information System of the Electronic Secretariat (universis), the extraction of data and the statistical indicators from the Information System for Project Management (resCom), student care with data and statistical indicators exported through the Directorate of Academic Affairs of DUTH.

Seven key information systems are already used to collect information, while the Departmental Internal Evaluation Team is expected to collect, analyse and evaluate the information in the preparation of the periodic Internal Evaluation Reports. The reports are to be considered by Committees, the Assembly and the Department as a whole, leading to decisions aimed at improving its functioning.

II.   Analysis

Given that the Department of Psychology is currently being established, the data submitted in the file under certification relate to previous years of operation of the Democritus University of Thrace. On the basis of the information provided, we believe that considerable planning and foresight has taken place already.

III.   Conclusions

The Psychology Department seem to be very open and responsive to feedback from many sources. The Panel finds that the program is fully compliant with the requirements of Principle.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.7: Collection, analysis and use of information for the organisation and operation of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider collecting data soon after the start of the Department to assess how the requirements are being met. Subsequently analyse and publish the report.
- Continue the practice as it has been established.

Principle 2.8 PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.

> *Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.*

Relevant documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Psychology is expected to implement an organized system of procedures and actions for the promotion and publicity of its educational, research and other activities. Through the website of the Department, which will be available in Greek and English, detailed information about the Department and the teaching and learning processes will be available.

The information to be included on the website will address the following:

- History, mission, purpose, administrative structure and facilities

- Structure, organization and staff (teaching, research and administrative)

- Description and regulation of the Undergraduate and Thesis Programme

- Description and regulations for Doctoral Studies and Postdoctoral Research

- Departmental awards, prizes/fellowships, etc.

- Information on other services of the DUTH concerning students

- Announcements on issues concerning undergraduate students, the organization of conferences and events, job announcements, etc.

Furthermore, the Study Guide is expected to be published in electronic form on the Department's website and will contain all the information necessary for the information of new entrant students on issues related to the studies. Course Teaching Material will be

available and for the convenience of the students, all necessary documents will also be provided in electronic format.

Responsible for updating public information will be the Chair of the Department, with a faculty member and an administrative employee of the secretariat to be appointed by decision of the General Assembly of the Department.

II. Analysis

Public information about the new undergraduate programme is essential, not only in terms of informing the public and prospective students, but also in terms of advertising and creating an attractive profile, especially for the newly established programmes.

The relevant information should be accurate, up-to-date and presented in an objective, clear and concise manner. It is important that the various main means and channels of communication to be used for this purpose, are available as early as possible. In this way, the incentive to complete the infrastructure work (e.g. building infrastructure, mobilizing the local social structure, creating a friendly environment for the group of potential students, etc.) can be strengthened. Also, the future department will be able to establish its place among the existing equivalent psychology departments more promptly.

III. Conclusions

We believe that the Department's website should already be available to the public.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.8: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Strengthen the public image of the Department of Psychology in Didymoteicho by offering to conduct courses in English, as access to English literature is a milestone for the study of Psychology.
- Enhance information about the creation of the new Department at a local level, in the wider region of Thrace.

Principle 2.9 PERIODIC INTERNAL REVIEW OF THE NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new 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 the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating 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.*

Relevant documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

University structures and Units need to employ internal systems of maintenance of quality on the basis of which internal yearly evaluation of recent programs of studies can be conducted. This is so that, by means of the follow up and adjustments the goals that have been achieved and reviewed, the final outcome of knowledge acquisition will continue to improve. We trust that this will be the aim of the proposed program and fully agree with this stipulation.

In the context of those activities, it is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and apprised of the above activities.

Supporting Documentation

We are told that there will be a Procedure for the re-evaluation and readjustment of the teaching materials. This we believe is clearly required to ensure that their material is updated, particularly for the study of Psychology which is mostly based on research and constant re-evaluation of its principles, along with experimentation.

We also agree on the stress should be placed on the importance of removal of any negative elements from the curriculum and the ongoing improvement of the instructional process.

Mechanisms of renewal of the strategies and re-establishing of the quality of the new Program is highly recommended, ideally with input from the students and outside stakeholders.

<u>Indicative Points of Reference</u>

This section relates in summary form to the procedure for the internal evaluation of the program of studies and particularly the process of the re-evaluation and adjustment required for the updating and modernizing of the educational material. We are in full agreement as to the necessity of this, primarily fort the subject matter which is changing with high frequency based on ongoing research and new practices.

Another point of reference is the stressing of the mechanisms related to the re-supply of the initial strategy and of the goalsetting regarding the ongoing quality of the instructional.

II.   Analysis

Internal evaluation of the program, after a small panel of key members of staff, and with students' input would be quite useful and in fact required. This would include the elimination of irrelevant components and removal of ineffective or interfering elements which is clearly indicated, particularly after the first year of its operation, with the feed-back received available in writing to all concerned. Once again, we agree with the removal of negative or ineffective components. This will assist in the optimal format of the program and the improvements of the students' learning outcomes.

III.   Conclusion

Consideration of the ongoing internal evaluation of the program is an approach undertaken by most departments of high calibre in most universities and it is reassuring that it is stressed and included in the planning of the new undergraduate department.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.9: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 2.10 REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

New undergraduate programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, 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 Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

▪ *Utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution for the establishment and successive improvement of the operation of the new UGP (incl. reference to the action plan)*

New Undergraduate Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

New Psychology undergraduate programs must be subjected to periodic evaluation from Committees of Specialists who are chosen by the Greek Agency of University Evaluations with the aim of establishing their reliability and ratification.

The duration and components of this process is determined by the Greek Agency of University Evaluations. This will assist with the re-evaluation and adjustment required for the updating and modernizing of the educational material. This process should be repeated at regular intervals and the results should be publicized and shared with all shareholders, including the students.

II.   Analysis

We are in full agreement as to the necessity of this, primarily fort the subject matter which is changing with high frequency based on ongoing research and new practices. Psychological data are particularly likely to require ongoing revision and re-evaluation.

We fully agree with the external evaluation of the components of the department and for the establishing and sequential improvement of the functioning of the New Program. On the basis of what we were able to determine, the department will have all the necessary components to allow for such a process.

The anticipated process for the appropriate utilization of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the department that aims in the ongoing improvement of its functions is certainly an approach with which we fully agree.

III.   Conclusion

Consideration of the ongoing external evaluation of the program is an approach undertaken by most departments of high calibre in most universities and it is reassuring that it is stressed and included in the planning of the new undergraduate department.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2.10: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Very good structure of the Program (courses, ECTS).
- Compulsory Practical training and Undergraduate dissertation.

II.   AREAS OF WEAKNESS

All the aspects presented (i.e. new Faculty members, new buildings etc) were based on the promise that they will be materialized in the future. This remains to be seen.

III.   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Make sure that all necessary resources (teaching staff, premises) are in place before the students are admitted.

IV. SUMMARY & OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.9, and 2.10.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

2.6 and 2.8.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None.

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None.

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Prof. Emeritus Stelios N. Georgiou**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

2. **Prof. Emerita Mary Konstantareas**
   University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

3. **Prof. Emerita Ageliki Nicolopoulou**
   Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, United States of America

4. **Ms Vasiliki Karagianni**
   Association of Greek Psychologists, Athens, Greece

5. **Mr Angelos Konstantinidis**
   Student of Psychology, University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece