



Australian College of Applied Psychology - APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher education provider	Australian College of Applied Psychology
Name of the Psychology AOU	Discipline of Psychological Science
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Re-accreditation and initial accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science and Counselling (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology (Level 1) Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3) Master of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Master of Psychology Practice (Clinical) (Level 4)
Campus	Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Online, Perth, Sydney
Date of site visit	4 - 10 August 2020
Date of APAC Board Determination	30 November 2020
Accreditation end date	31 December 2025



Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) last reviewed the Australian College of Applied Psychology's (ACAP) suite of undergraduate Level 1, Fourth year Level 2 and postgraduate Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 psychology programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2015.

At the time of the 2015 review, the Level 1 and Level 2 bridging programs offered at the Sydney and Melbourne campuses were accredited without conditions for a period of 5 years. The Level 2 Honours program offered at the Sydney and Melbourne campuses, and the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs offered at the Sydney campus were accredited with conditions for a period of 12 months, as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the Accreditation Standards. Subsequent to the review, a follow up site visit was undertaken in 2016 and all outstanding conditions were satisfied and ACAP's range of programs were accredited without conditions.

In 2017, ACAP submitted an out of cycle on-paper accreditation application for the Level 1 Bachelor of Psychological Science and the Bachelor of Psychological Science and Counselling programs based at the Brisbane campus. At the time of the 2017 assessment, the Level 1 programs were accredited with conditions as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the Accreditation Standards. A follow up accreditation assessment site visit was undertaken in October 2018 and subsequently the Level 1 programs offered at the Brisbane campus were accredited subject to a small number of conditions.

Further, as a result of the transition from the 2010 Accreditation Standards to the 2019 Accreditation Standards, it was determined that the Level 1 and Level 2 programs offered at the Melbourne and Sydney campuses and the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs based at the Sydney campus were accredited with conditions. Subsequently, all outstanding conditions were satisfied and ACAP's range of programs were accredited without conditions.

In 2018, ACAP submitted an out of cycle on-paper accreditation application for its Level 1 programs based at the Adelaide and Perth campuses. At the time of the assessment, the Level 1 programs were accredited with conditions as some shortfalls were identified against the Accreditation Standards. Subsequent to the review, the Level 1 programs at the Perth campus satisfied all outstanding conditions imposed and has since been accredited without conditions. It was decided that until students are enrolled in the programs offered at the Adelaide campus and ACAP has provided adequate information to demonstrate the conditions are met, all outstanding conditions will remain imposed on these programs.

In 2018 ACAP underwent a major structural change to reflect the changes of the division of the parenting company, Navitas. The changes included revisions to management structures and the formation of a centralised administrative support at a campus and College level. In addition to this, a new administrative position was introduced specifically to provide support to the functions of the ACAP Psychology Clinic in Sydney.

The Assessment Team considered the Discipline of Psychological Sciences' 63-page self-review and appendices against the Accreditation Standards. The Assessment Team teleconference was held on 1 July 2020. The information subsequently requested was received from the Discipline prior to the virtual site visit.



Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with additional information including:

- Student:Staff ratio calculations for programs across all campuses
- Procedure manual for the Psychology Clinic
- Sample completed logbooks for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs
- Examples of research theses for the Level 2, Level 3, and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs
- Teaching outlines for the 2-day intensive block for the packaged Level 3 and 4 program
- A list of current placement supervisors and their credentials
- Details of the proposed external Benchmarking strategy
- Minutes from recent Consultative Liaison Committee meetings

The Assessment Team viewed a pre-recorded guided tour of the Psychology Clinic based at the Sydney Campus and the campus facilities located at the Adelaide, Brisbane Melbourne, Perth and Sydney campuses. The Assessment Team was also provided with a pre-recorded video tour of the resources available at the Psychology Test Library located at the Psychology Clinic at the Sydney Campus.

The Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 4 - 10 August 2020. During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals via Zoom teleconference, including:

- Chair of Discipline, Discipline of Psychological Sciences
- Discipline and College Executive
- Academic Board
- Director of Academic Services' (Dean) team
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Discipline and College Assessment Panels
- Student Services and Student Engagement teams
- Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth Campus Managers
- Discipline Leads located at the Melbourne and Sydney campuses
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Program Coordinators
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Course Coordinators



- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Unit Convenors
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Academic team
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 current students and recent graduates
- Placement Coordinators, Clinic Director and Field Placement Supervisors

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with additional information including:

- Documentation of procedures and protocols in place to manage the transition of direct client contact sessions to Telehealth/Zoom
- A video tour of the Time2Track system

The findings in this report are based on the Assessment Team's evaluation of the material outlined above and interview evidence at the time of the virtual site visit.



Key findings

ACAP has a strong emphasis on providing high quality and flexible evidence-based educational opportunities with a student-centred approach and a particular focus on non-traditional students, including first in family, career changers and mature-aged students. The Discipline of Psychological Sciences' applied nature of teaching is designed to provide graduates of the postgraduate programs with the ability to practice competently as a professionally registered psychologist. Students spoke highly of the Discipline's curriculum and external placement supervisors were impressed by the high quality of psychological practice skills demonstrated by students on placement.

The Discipline is innovative in the design and delivery of its programs and the level of support offered to students is excellent. The Discipline recently undertook an exercise to re-design all programs to align with the APAC 2019 Accreditation Standards and Graduate Competencies. At the time of the site visit, the Level 2 program is running in its new format whereas the Level 1, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 programs are still under development, due to be rolled out from 2021. The strong focus of cultural awareness and responsiveness integrated throughout all programs is a significant strength and students are well prepared to work with individuals of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates the Discipline would benefit from further development and integration of inter-professional learning and practice in all of the relevant programs.

The Assessment Team heard a range of views that indicated the implementation of the campus-based matrix organisational structure is welcomed by the academic staff and has contributed to improvement of the programs. The strong leadership, consistent support and guidance provided by the Chair of the Discipline is recognised and highly appreciated by the academic staff and staff feel well supported and valued by the Chair of Discipline and other key senior staff members. The Discipline is commended on its availability of staff and supervisors and their outstanding ongoing commitment to support students. The Assessment Team noted that the Discipline is currently in the process of recruiting additional academic staff in the postgraduate programs, and at the Perth campus.

The Assessment Team identified a strong level of collaboration and collegiality between the academic staff whereby all are enthusiastic, dedicated to education and are keen to progress their research. Although the workload allowance for research has been temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, some academic staff continue to progress their external research projects in addition to their recognised workload.

The Discipline has strong governance processes with well-formed committee structures. The evidence gathered indicated there are substantial industry and student connections to provide constructive input to the design and management of programs, particularly for the recent re-development of programs. The Assessment Team noted the Discipline's plan to engage in external benchmarking and that the progress and outcomes of this exercise will be provided in due course.

The Discipline has policies and procedures in place for handling appeals, complaints and grievances and these processes are well communicated to students. There are several channels provided to students to provide their feedback or raise concerns. The Student Support service is excellent, and this was identified as a strength of ACAP. The Student Support service teams were found to be proactive, approachable, supportive and provide a personalised approach that is highly valued by students and graduates. The Discipline's facilities were identified as fit for purpose and students reported satisfaction with the physical resources.



APAC Board determination

That the following programs at the Australian College of Applied Psychology are accredited with conditions from **1 January 2021** until **31 December 2025**:

- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science and Counselling** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Adelaide, Brisbane, Online, Perth)
- **Master of Psychology Practice (Clinical)** (Level 4) (Campus: Online)

That the following programs at the Australian College of Applied Psychology are re-accredited until **31 December 2025**:

- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science and Counselling** (Level 1) (Campus: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology** (Level 1) (Campus: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney)
- **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Melbourne, Sydney)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Sydney)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Sydney)

Subject to the following conditions:

For the **Level 1 and Level 2 programs at the Adelaide Campus**

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.1 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence to demonstrate that robust academic governance arrangements including systematic monitoring, review and improvement are in place.



2. To ensure Standard 3 Program of Study, criterion 3.5 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence that all programs have the learning and assessment resources to sustain the quality of education that is required to ensure the achievement of the program learning outcomes across all delivery sites and modalities.

For the **Level 1 programs**

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence to demonstrate that *Foundational Competency 1.5* is embedded and assessed in the Level 1 programs.

For the **Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 programs**

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence to demonstrate that the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice is embedded and assessed as a learning outcome.

For **all programs**

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence of progress and outcomes of external benchmarking activities.
2. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.5 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence such as samples of workload allocation documents and communication of any changes in workload allocation to demonstrate when research activities are reinstated for academic staff members in their recognised workloads.
3. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.4 is met, the Discipline is to provide an update of when the following appointments have been made:
 - i. one academic staff member in the Level 1 and Level 2 programs based at the Perth campus,
 - ii. two academic staff members in the Level 3 and Level 4 programs, and
 - iii. staff to support the delivery of programs at the Adelaide campus.

As a monitoring requirement, the Discipline is to provide



1. evidence to demonstrate how it will ensure that the quality and quantity of professional education within the packaged Level 3 and 4 program will remain sufficient to produce graduates competent to practice across a range of settings with the anticipated increase of student cohort in 2021.
2. samples of assessment tasks within the new Level 1, Level 3, Level 4 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs when these become available.

Table 1: Summary of findings regarding each criterion for each Standard

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 and 4 Clinical	Level 4 Clinical
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 3: Program of study	Standard Statement 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 4: The student experience	Standard Statement 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met



Quality improvement suggestions

A quality improvement suggestion refers to an action or a course of actions that should be considered by the education provider to improve the delivery and/or outcomes of the program.

The quality improvement suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the Discipline of Psychological Sciences at the Australian College of Applied Psychology:

1. explore options to provide further information on career guidance and counselling to students

Commendations

A commendation refers to a particularly significant achievement by the education provider with regard to the program.

The Assessment Team have made the subsequent commendations following the evaluation of the program.

The Discipline of Psychological Science at the Australian College of Applied Psychology is commended for its:

1. strong leadership and the consistent support and guidance provided by the Chair of Discipline
2. collegiality, cohesion and satisfaction displayed amongst the academic teaching staff and professional staff
3. availability of staff and supervisors and the level of support and flexibility provided to students