



## APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

<b>Higher Education Provider</b>	<b>James Cook University Australia</b>	
<b>Date of determination</b>	<b>3 December 2015</b>	
<b>Standards version</b>	<b>June 2010 ver 10</b>	
<b>Programs of study submitted for accreditation</b>	<p><b>Programs</b></p> <p><b>Three year:</b> Bachelor of Psychological Science – AQF Level 7</p> <p>Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science</p> <p>Bachelor of Sport &amp; Exercise Science/Bachelor of Psychological Science</p> <p><b>4<sup>th</sup> year:</b> Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) – AQF Level 8</p> <p>Graduate Diploma of Psychology – AQF Level 8</p> <p><b>5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years:</b> Master of Psychology (Clinical) – AQF Level 9 (Extended)</p> <p>Master of Psychology (Clinical)PhD</p> <p><b>Professional doctorate:</b> Doctor of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) – AQF Level 10</p>	<p><b>Campus</b></p> <p>Townsville Cairns</p> <p>Townsville Cairns</p> <p>Townsville Cairns</p> <p>Townsville Cairns</p> <p>Townsville Cairns</p> <p>Townsville</p> <p>Townsville</p> <p>Townsville</p>

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the Psychology Academic Group in the College of Healthcare Sciences at James Cook University Australia (Townsville and Cairns campuses) and its programs of study. This summary highlights selected key features of the assessment. Comprehensive analysis of the assessment is contained in the full APAC Assessment Team Report.

Since the previous accreditation in 2010, the Psychology AOU has moved to the College of Healthcare Sciences as part of a University-wide restructure in 2014, has been renamed the Psychology Academic Group, a new Head has taken over leadership of the AOU, and the undergraduate program reviewed and refreshed. There has also been rationalisation of the postgraduate professional programs offered on the Townsville campus to meet new AQF requirements. Furthermore, there have been some staff changes on both campuses and a significant change in the administrative arrangements for the AOU.

The Psychology AOU straddles both the Townsville and Cairns campuses and meets all of the Standards for the Psychology AOU except it does not meet Standard 2.1.4 as on the Townsville campus there is not an appropriate level of staffing. Staffing levels have decreased over the past 10 years and since the last accreditation visit in 2010 and while student:staff ratios are met, staff in Townsville are under enormous stress to meet their teaching obligations.

While the Head of the AOU is suitably senior and experienced he is located on Cairns campus. The AOU in Australia is located in two places, approximately 400 km apart. In terms of Standard 2.2.1 (i), staffing levels are not adequate on either campus. Furthermore, in Townsville, there are not appropriate laboratory facilities for staff and students (unlike Cairns, where the laboratory facilities for staff are top-class). The building housing the staff has undergone some recent refurbishment, the space is still inadequate for laboratory and research work, even at the undergraduate level.

Although Cairns is a distance from Townsville, they do operate as one campus as staff travel between campuses to deliver various subjects, often in intensive, block mode. Students have access to the same materials and resources on both campuses although the electives at 3rd year are not all offered in Cairns and the 4th year options vary. Students sit the same exams and there is cross-campus marking of assignments. Some course materials are available as podcasts or via video linking.

The degrees for which accreditation is sought all have appropriate names and are compliant with the APAC Standards as well the AQF.

Standard 2.4.1 is not met as there are not 10 FTE academic staff members on either campus. It is imperative that in particular the staffing level in Townsville be increased to achieve a more realistic staffing complement. It is also possible that more cross campus teaching using appropriate technology is undertaken.

As noted above, the student:staff ratios on both campuses are within the limits set in Standard 2.4.3. But staff report being stretched in what are challenging and changing times, particularly in Townsville. Should the number of students in Cairns increase, then the number of staff appointments should also be increased to meet the student:staff ratio.

Standard 2.4.8 is met although the Course Director for the postgraduate professional programs, which are offered on the Townsville campus, is on the Cairns campus. Effectively it means that the Course Director is unable to provide day-to-day supervision in the Clinic or on the ground leadership for this program in Townsville. Consequently a lot of the responsibility for the programs appears to fall on a few suitably qualified clinical staff in Townsville and these staff are carrying extremely heavy teaching and supervision loads. Notably, these staff also appear to be carrying a high workload in the undergraduate programs.

After the restructure, the Psychology AOU lost dedicated administrative positions. The College has adopted an approach that works across all disciplines. There is an Academic Services team and Administrative Support team in Townsville and while there is currently insufficient staff to support psychology staff, particularly at peak times, it is intended that the standardised processes and procedures will eventually result in greater support to staff. On the Cairns campus, there has always been

centralised administrative services and indeed, more staff had been allocated to the College for administration.

Resources are generally adequate although Standard 2.5.4 is not currently met in Townsville as there is an urgent requirement that staff laboratory space be made available for the conduct of staff and student research. While the Test library in Townsville is notionally overseen by the Director of Professional Programs, the day-to-day responsibilities reside with the HEW7 Clinic Director. This arrangement does not satisfy Standard 2.5.10.

All relevant Standards relating to the Teaching Materials and Methods are met.

The three year sequence is available in the Bachelor of Psychological Science (AQF Level 7) on both campuses. The structure of the course is very confusing as there is not a specified accredited sequence of subjects. The only core subjects are two in 1st year (comprising 25% of the year), two subjects at 2nd year (also comprising 25% of the year) and one subject at 3rd year. In addition, students complete a minimum of a further two electives at 2nd year (psychology total thus comprising 50% of the year) and a further four electives at 3rd year (psychology total thus comprising 62.5% of the year). The 1st year core units are introductory while those at 2nd and 3rd year are research methods, design and analysis.

Because the University abolished pre-requisites some years ago, students can complete the various electives in any order. This means that some core topics in Standard 3.1.7 are not adequately covered by some students, some topics can be avoided and students often complete 3rd year subjects in 2nd year. Staff and students all agreed the sequence was complex and the choice of subjects difficult and confusing. Taking subjects in a recommended sequence would ensure students complete a range and variety of assessments of increasing complexity and obtain a solid foundation through appropriate scaffolding of learning in the core psychology Graduate Attributes contained in the Standards.

It is difficult to see how Standards 3.1.3 and 3.1.5 can be met currently without there being a clear sequence of subjects, of increasing difficulty. A clearer pathway for the three year sequence must be established.

Standard 3.1.6 is not met by the current arrangement. Evidence was provided in relation to achievement of the core Graduate Attributes and unit outlines and assignments inspected. However, some of the Graduate Attributes specified are only available in elective units and hence not necessarily achieved by all students. A specific sequence must be recognised as the accredited sequence. Many of the subjects had out-of-date reference and reading lists (excluding classic psychology papers which are important historically). Standard 3.1.9 is not met. Various forms of assessment are used through the course and examples of student work were inspected during the site visit in both Townsville and Cairns.

There are two fourth year courses – the Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) and the Graduate Diploma of Psychology – the only difference is that the latter involves a group project. The year-long course involves two compulsory units – Ethics and Professional Practice and attendance at and critique of the presentations in the Jo Wale Seminar series. Half of the year comprises the research project and the rest of the year comprises a further three modules in two units – Advanced Topics in Psychology 1 and Advanced Topics in Psychology 2 (in which the two compulsory modules are also to be found). The additional modules vary from year to year and also across campuses and most modules are run in intensive, block mode, with at least 16 hours face-to-face in each.

From the material provided and the discussion with staff and students, Standard 4.1 (preamble) is not met by the current arrangement of modules. There is no education in the theoretical and empirical bases underpinning the construction, implementation and interpretation of some of the more widely

used cognitive and personality assessments and evidence-based approaches to psychological intervention.

The non-compulsory modules cover a range of topics in psychology that vary annually and across campuses. It is difficult to see from the current arrangements how Standard 4.1.4 can be fully met. Assessment is only covered briefly in the current modules and intervention likewise seems to be covered to a very limited extent.

All other Standards for 4<sup>th</sup> year are met.

**The Conditions recommended for the three year and 4th year programs have a 12 month time-line attached to them. However, given the fundamental aim of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act (2009), is “to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered”, it is essential that these courses be restructured to provide a good pedagogical basis for student learning so that they would not pose a risk to the public should they become practitioners. Under Section 50 of the National Law, APAC is required to monitor the programs to ensure the relevant courses and the AOU meet APAC’s accreditation Standards.**

The postgraduate professional courses are not typical on-campus programs. Instead they are offered in what the University terms ‘limited attendance’ mode, which combines distance education with short on-campus workshops for each subject. There is a Professional Programmes Advisory Committee that had met and is appropriately constituted.

The Psychology Clinic is located in a new building (‘Discovery Rise’) on the periphery of the campus. The rooms are well-equipped and spacious, with recording facilities and one-way mirrors. They are appropriately furnished. There is a well-stocked test library in the Clinic (but see Standard 2.5.10 regarding responsibility for this resource). Students have access to library resources and suitable computing facilities.

As far as could be ascertained, the core capabilities listed in Standard 5.1.12 are met. It was not clear if there was a formal documented assessment of student competence, proficiency and professionalism as no documentation nor exemplars of student portfolios were provided in Townsville to support claims for the assessment of core capabilities. Standard 5.1.13-14 are not met.

Log books were made available for inspection and all were compliant and a variety of assessments are used to assess student knowledge.

The coursework meets the core capabilities but there is no evidence of coverage of the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce (it was not included as required reading in the unit outline provided to the APAC assessors), of practice management, storing and accessing psychology files or managing people (Standard 5.3.9 b, c, d). Record keeping is however covered. Students complete their first placement in the Psychology Clinic. Subsequent placements can be undertaken anywhere where there is suitable supervision available and students can be quite scattered as a result.

Field supervisors are not formally recognised by the University. Standard 5.3.21 is not met.

There was no documentation regarding students on placement in rural and remote locations for placement commencements, mid-placement reviews and final placement assessments. Standards 5.3.27-39 are not met.

All the issues raised in relation to the Masters programs are also issues for the Professional Doctorate, which has recently been reconfigured to be a four year degree, compliant with the AQF. In addition to those issues, training in supervision does not appear to be covered except through a self-study module and this needs to be undertaken. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the additional 500 hours involve supervision that emphasises a higher level of autonomy and responsibility, and a higher level integration of theory and practice (Standard 5.4.4).

The accreditation outcomes are summarised in the attached Accreditation Summary Checklist.



## APAC Accreditation Summary Checklist

for use with APAC Standards June 2010 Version 10

Name of Higher Education Provider: James Cook University (Townsville and Cairns)

Date of Site Visit: 4 – 6 August 2015

### Accreditation of the AOU

Rules	Rule Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Section 5 – Accreditation Status	5.1-5.6		✓	

General Accreditation Standards	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
The Psychology AOU	2.1.1-10		✓	
Multi-Campus Institutions	2.2.1-2		✓	
Degree Nomenclature	2.3.1-13	✓		
Academic Staffing	2.4.1-11		✓	
Resources	2.5.1-12		✓	
Teaching and Materials: Managing the Learning Process	2.6.1-14	✓		
Special Arrangements for Offshore Teaching	2.6.15	✓		

Undergraduate 3-Year Sequence Program of Study	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Length	3.1.1			
Program of Study Structure	3.1.2-5		✓	
Program of Study Content	3.1.6-10		✓	
Assessment	3.1.11-16	✓		
Awarding of Credit or Advance Standing	3.1.17-19	✓		

Undergraduate Fourth Year Program of Study	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Entry Requirements	4.1.1	✓		
Length	4.1.2	✓		
Program of Study Structure	4.1.3	✓		
Program of Study Content	4.1.4-7		✓	
Research Methods and Professional and Research Ethics	4.1.8	✓		
Research Project	4.1.9-15	✓		
Assessment	4.1.16-22	✓		
Awarding of Credit or Advance Standing	4.1.23-25	✓		



<b>Fifth and Sixth Year Masters Program of Study</b>	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Staffing	5.1.1-3	✓		
Advisory/Liaison and Quality Review Committee	5.1.4	✓		
Resources	5.1.5-8	✓		
Credit for Previous Study	5.1.9-11	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Knowledge of the Discipline	5.1.12(a)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Ethical, Legal and Professional Matters	5.1.12(b)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Psychological Assessment & Measurement	5.1.12(c)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Intervention Strategies	5.1.12(d)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Research and Evaluation	5.1.12(e)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Communication and Interpersonal Relationships	5.1.12(f)	✓		
Core Capabilities Assessment	5.1.13-16		✓	
Log Book	5.1.17	✓		
Assessment	5.1.18-19	✓		
Entry Requirements	5.3.1-2	✓		
Length	5.3.3-4	✓		
Program of Study Structure	5.3.5-8	✓		
Coursework	5.3.9-10		✓	
Research	5.3.11-16	✓		
Practical Placements	5.3.17-30		✓	

<b>Professional Doctorate Programs of Study</b>	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Staffing	5.1.1-3	✓		
Advisory/Liaison and Quality Review Committee	5.1.4	✓		
Resources	5.1.5-8	✓		
Credit for Previous Study	5.1.9-11	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Knowledge of the Discipline	5.1.12(a)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Ethical, Legal and Professional Matters	5.1.12(b)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Psychological Assessment & Measurement	5.1.12(c)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Intervention Strategies	5.1.12(d)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Research and Evaluation	5.1.12(e)	✓		
Core Capabilities and Attributes – Communication and Interpersonal Relationships	5.1.12(f)	✓		



Core Capabilities Assessment	5.1.13-16		✓	
Log Book	5.1.17	✓		
Assessment	5.1.18-19	✓		
Entry Requirements	5.3.1-2	✓		
Length	5.4.1	✓		
Program of Study Structure	5.4.2-5		✓	
Coursework	5.3.9-10		✓	
Research & Credit for Previous Experience	5.4.6-12		✓	
Practical Placements	5.3.17-30		✓	

**Comments:**

A follow-up visit to the Townsville campus will occur in mid to late 2016.

**Authorised:**

Professor John Dunn  
**Chair**, Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

**Date:** 3 December 2015