



James Cook University - APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher education provider	James Cook University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Psychology Academic Group, College of Healthcare Sciences
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	<p>Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science/Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Bridging) (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Level 2) Master of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Programs in teach out:</p> <p>Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Psychology (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychology (packaged Level 1 and 2)</p>
Campus	Cairns, Online, Townsville
Date of site visit	30 June - 2 July 2020



Date of APAC Board Determination

19 October 2020

Accreditation end date

31 December 2025



Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) last reviewed James Cook University's (JCU) suite of undergraduate Level 1, fourth year Level 2 and postgraduate packaged Level 3 and 4 psychology programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2015. This report concerns only the programs taught at James Cook University's Townsville and Cairns (JCUA) campuses, please refer to the separate report for the programs taught at the Singapore (JCUS) campus.

At the time of the 2015 review, the Level 1, Level 2, packaged Level 1 and 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs offered at the Cairns and Townsville campuses 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, all outstanding conditions were satisfied and JCUA's range of programs have since been accredited without conditions.

Since the last review, JCU undertook a major review of the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical program, specifically, to incorporate adequate provision for 1000 hours of placement and 40 hours of preparation for practice prior to commencement of placement. Coursework subjects and assessments have been streamlined to remove overlaps and the content was aligned to the 2019 Accreditation Standards. Credit point allocation was modified to represent the student workload associated with coursework learning and assessment; subject codes and titles were changed to reflect updated contemporary theory; and, the research-based component of the program, which culminates in the submission of a research dissertation, was assigned the remaining credit points of the course structure.

In 2018, JCU implemented a Change Plan which included the closure of the Psychology offerings at the Cairns campus and the previously accredited Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 1 and 2 programs at the Cairns campus have since been placed in teach out. Since the last review, the packaged Level 1 and 2 program at the Townsville campus has also been placed in teach out.

At the beginning of 2020, JCU was granted initial accreditation for the Level 1 Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Bridging) program. The bridging program is based on the undergraduate psychology sequence delivered online using the carousel model with flexible, continual repeat of subjects and short online study periods.

The Assessment Team considered the Psychology Academic Group, College of Healthcare Sciences' 84-page self-review and attached appendices against the Accreditation Standards. The Assessment Team teleconference was held on 1 June 2020. The information subsequently requested was received from the Psychology Academic Group prior to the virtual site visit.

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

- PY2104 unit outline
- Student Experience of Education and Learning (SELT) results for 2017, 2018 and 2019
- External Advisory Committee meeting minutes from December 2018 and June 2019



The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 30 June - 2 July 2020. During the virtual site visit the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals via Zoom teleconference, including:

- Head of Psychology
- Dean, College of Healthcare Sciences
- Academic Head, Psychology & Education, Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching
- Professional staff
- Learning and Teaching Committee, Assessment and Moderation Committee
- Level 1, Level 2, and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters Program Coordinators
- Level 1, Level 2, and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters Subject Coordinators and teaching staff
- Packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters Placement Coordinators and Program Director
- Packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters Placement Supervisors
- Level 1, Level 2, and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters current students and recent graduates

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

- Samples of assessments and subject evaluations for the Level 1 bridging program
- Mapping of Level 4 graduate competencies for the packaged Level 3 and 4 program
- Student:Staff ratio calculations for programs across all campuses
- Psychology Academic Group organisational chart including roles and responsibilities
- Written feedback from interviewees who were unable to attend scheduled interview sessions

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

JCU has a strong emphasis on world class learning with an emphasis on students' development of knowledge, skills, and experience to succeed and thrive in a global workforce. Psychology has been a foundation discipline throughout the history of JCU and its suite of psychology programs are designed to prepare graduates to work in applied settings using the highest standards of psychological practice and professional competence. The learning and teaching methods and environments have been purposefully selected to provide students with opportunities to engage with learning and develop and demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills across contemporary means of communication and practice and through research and analysis.

Students have access to support services and are provided with regular, timely feedback on assessments. The Psychology Academic Group has demonstrated an openness to gather and act on feedback from students, with examples of how the programs have been improved as a result of this feedback, most notably in the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs. The Psychology Academic Group recognises that its programs would benefit from a more systematic method of incorporating external input into the design and management of its programs, and have commenced undertaking an external peer review process – the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) Calibration process - in addition to the planned five yearly course review. Recent changes made to its units within the packaged Level 3 and 4 program and the processes put in place demonstrates the Psychology Academic Groups commitment to continuous improvement.

Throughout the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team identified a number of commendable aspects. Students spoke highly of JCU teaching staff, and field supervisors stated that they are impressed with the quality of JCU students. The Psychology Academic Group is commended for its strong commitment to integration of cultural awareness and responsiveness, and the authenticity of the learning and teaching experiences and reflective practice in relation to cultural sensitivity provided to students. The Assessment Team also commends the Psychology Academic Group for its academic quality and governance processes including its well-formed committee structure and the mechanisms to ensure student evaluations of its programs and internal and external academic and professional peer review procedures that are in place.

The Assessment team identified several opportunities for further quality improvement. While the Psychology Academic Group has a well-formed committee structure, the evidence gathered indicated that it may benefit by formalising a process to ensure external input in relation to contemporary developments in psychology education and related disciplines is incorporated into the design and management of programs. The Assessment Team recommends that the Psychology Academic Group consider further strengthening the interpersonal skills and practice training component of the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs by way of content and assessment. Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs provide students with a breadth of placement opportunities required to develop the professional competencies, however, the Assessment Team suggests the Psychology Academic Group consider ways in which to expand and strengthen offerings in inter-professional learning and practice opportunities.



APAC Board determination

That the following programs at James Cook University are re-accredited until **31 December 2025**:

- **Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Townsville)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Townsville)
- **Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science/Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Townsville)
- **Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Bridging)** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Townsville)
- **Graduate Diploma of Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Cairns, Townsville)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Townsville)

That the following programs in teach out at James Cook University are re-accredited until **31 December 2025**:

- **Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Cairns)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Cairns)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Cairns, Townsville)
- **Bachelor of Psychology** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Cairns, Townsville)
- **Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Psychology** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Cairns, Townsville)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Cairns)

Subject to the following conditions:

For the Level 1, Level 1 Bridging, Level 2, packaged Level 1 and 2 programs and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **31 December 2021**:

1. To ensure that Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.4 is met, the Psychology Academic Group is to provide evidence demonstrating that mechanisms exists for programs to respond to contemporary developments in psychology education.



2. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.8 and Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.1 are met, the Psychology Academic Group is to provide evidence that cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, is clearly articulated as a learning outcome and is assessed.

For the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **31 December 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.1 are met, the Psychology Academic Group is to provide evidence that the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice is appropriately integrated within the program, clearly articulated as a learning outcome and assessed.

As a monitoring requirement for the Level 2 programs, APAC requests an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise to be provided as part of the 2021 annual report.

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

	Level 1	Level 1 Bridging	Level 1 and 2	Level 2	Level 3 and 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 substantially 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 Psychology Academic Group, College of Healthcare Sciences at James Cook University:

1. investigate the use of an online system such as a digital online placement application to track placement information

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 Psychology Academic Group, College of Healthcare Sciences at James Cook University is commended for:

1. its strong commitment to the integration of culture and reflective practice in its program and for providing authentic learning and teaching experiences to students
2. its academic quality and governance processes including its well-formed committee structure and the mechanisms to ensure student evaluations of its programs and internal and external academic and professional peer review procedures are in place