



University of Newcastle - APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher education provider	University of Newcastle
Name of the Psychology AOU	School of Psychology
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 Criminology/Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Advanced) (Level 1) Graduate Diploma in Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3) Master of Professional Psychology (Clinical Foundations) (Level 3) Master of Clinical Psychology (packaged Level 3 and 4) Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) (Level 4) Programs in teach out: Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2)
Campus	Callaghan, Ourimbah
Date of site visit	2 - 4 September 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 University of Newcastle's (UoN) suite of undergraduate Level 1, four year packaged Level 1 and 2 and fourth year Level 2, and postgraduate packaged Level 3 and 4 psychology programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2015.

At the time of the review, the Level 2 Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Bachelor of Science (Honours) and Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) programs were accredited without conditions for a period of 5 years. The Level 1, Level 2 Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs were accredited with conditions as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the Accreditation Standards. Subsequent to a follow up review undertaken in 2016, all outstanding conditions were satisfied and the UoN's range of programs have been accredited since 2016 without conditions.

In 2018, the UoN submitted an application for an initial accreditation for the Level 3 Master of Professional Psychology (MPP) program at the Callaghan campus. Following a desktop review, the Level 3 program was accredited with conditions and the School implemented the Level 3 MPP program for the first time in 2019. A follow up site visit was undertaken in 2019, which subsequently determined that the program remains accredited with conditions. At the time of the visit, there were two remaining conditions imposed on the Level 3 MPP program and the evidence and progress made to address the outstanding conditions would be assessed as part of the re-accreditation review.

The Assessment Team considered the School of Psychology's 118-page self-review and attached appendices against the Accreditation Standards. The Assessment Team Zoom conference was held on 28 July 2020. The information subsequently requested was received from the School prior to the virtual site visit.

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

- UoN's response to how the School assures the safety of the public within the Level 1 and Level 2 units
- Psychology External Advisory Group meeting minutes for undergraduate programs held in August 2020
- a list of all staff teaching into the Level 3 and Level 4 programs, including their name, position, their employment status (FT, PT or casual), PsyBA registration details and AoPE details
- the Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) program manual
- a screenshot of the PsychConnect online platform that evidences where the Complaint and Grievance policy and information on how students can appeal a grade and/or result is located and accessible to students
- the assessment marking rubric for the *PSYC6501 Professional and Ethical Practice* unit to advise where suicide risk assessment is taught and how it is assessed
- the benchmarking activities undertaken for the Level 3 MPP program at the time of the request



The Assessment Team viewed a pre-recorded guided tour of the Psychology Clinics and campus facilities located at the Callaghan and Ourimbah campuses. The Assessment Team was also provided with a pre-recorded video tour of the resources and test kits available at the Psychometric Test Library located at the Psychology Clinic at the Ourimbah Campus.

The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 2 – 4 September 2020. During the visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals, including:

- Head of School of Psychology
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2, Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Program Coordinators
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2, Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Course Coordinators
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2, Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Academic Teaching staff
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2, Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Current students
- Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2, Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Recent graduates
- Clinic Directors and Placement Coordinator
- Placement Supervisors
- Professional staff
- Members of the Assessment and Moderation Committee

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

- Level 1 and Level 2 unit assessment marking rubrics
- *PSYC4200, PSYC4300 and PSYC6405* unit information
- *PYSC6401* benchmarking report
- feedback received from students who were unable to attend scheduled interview sessions
- feedback and evidence received from staff members

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

The School of Psychology has a strong focus on providing high quality and innovative, scientific and evidence-based education in psychology. The School's suite of psychology programs prepares students well to graduate and transition into the next stage of their education and assists them to prepare for practice as a registered psychologist, particularly in the area of Clinical Psychology, and in a career in academia and research. The high morale, collegiality and cohesive staff environment is well led by the Head of School and senior staff members and provides students with a supportive and methodological learning environment to practice competently in the workforce.

At the time of the site visit, the School is anticipating an upcoming restructure and the School of Psychology, which is currently nested within the Faculty of Science, may remain within the Faculty of Science or possibly shift to the Faculty of Health and Medicine. This potential change, whilst yet to be announced, may present some potential challenges to the availability of resourcing and the staffing profile.

The evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that overall, the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs are well designed, established and coordinated. The curriculum and content within the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs is of an excellent standard and the introduction of the Bachelor of Psychological Science (Advanced) program is an initiative for high achieving students. It was evident the School transitioned seamlessly to an online learning environment and was well placed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assessment Team heard views that staff and students were well supported in the transition.

The School has plans to introduce the Level 1 Bachelor of Criminal Justice/Bachelor of Psychological Science, Level 1 Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science bridging program and Level 3 Master of Professional Psychology (Clinical Foundations) (MPP-CF) and Level 4 Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) programs in 2021. The Level 3 MPP-CF program offers students the flexibility to exit early from the packaged Level 3 and 4 Master of Clinical Psychology program with an accredited award and apply for entry into the Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) Level 4 stand-alone program.

It was evident that the Level 3 MPP and MPP-CF programs, and the packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 Clinical programs utilises a problem based learning approach extensively throughout the programs to provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge in tackling real-world issues within the psychology profession. Students are exposed to authentic examples of case studies and assessments and are provided a rich and enduring learning experience during their placements.

The Assessment Team heard a range of views that the learning environments, teaching facilities and Psychology Clinics were found to be fit for purpose. The learning resources available to students are sufficient and up to date allowing students the opportunity to learn collaboratively, think critically and practice self-reflection. The Assessment Team also heard a range of views that the indigenisation of the content and the integration of cultural awareness and responsiveness embedded throughout the suite of programs is highly appreciated and well regarded. The UoN has established strong connections with local communities and the Wollotuka Welcome nested in the Level 1 programs brings a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and prepares students well to work with indigenous communities in the local area.

The Assessment Team identified a small number of opportunities for further quality improvement and the School is recognised and commended on its development and transition from delivering education in a traditional platform to one that responds well to contemporary development in education.



APAC Board determination

That the following programs at the University of Newcastle are accredited with conditions from **1 January 2021** until **31 December 2025**:

- **Graduate Diploma in Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Callaghan, Ourimbah)
- **Master of Professional Psychology (Clinical Foundations)** (Level 3) (Campus: Callaghan)
- **Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)** (Level 4) (Campus: Callaghan)

That the following programs at the University of Newcastle are re-accredited with conditions until **31 December 2025**:

- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Callaghan, Ourimbah)
- **Bachelor of Criminology/Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Callaghan)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Advanced)** (Level 1) (Campus: Callaghan, Ourimbah)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Callaghan, Ourimbah)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Callaghan)
- **Master of Clinical Psychology** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Callaghan)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Callaghan, Ourimbah) **in teach out*

Subject to the following conditions:

For **Level 1 and packaged Level 1 and 2 programs**:

By **31 December 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.5 is met, the School is to provide evidence that new sessional teaching staff are provided with appropriate guidance and support to equip them with the knowledge and expertise to assess student performance against the relevant APAC graduate competencies.

For the **packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs**:

By **31 December 2020**:

1. To ensure that Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.1 and 1.2 and Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.7 are met, the School is to provide details of the teaching and assessment that demonstrates coverage of ethics and professional conduct.



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2. To ensure that Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.2 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the School is to provide further evidence that demonstrates how students are assessed to acquire *Pre-Professional Competencies 2.2 and 2.4*.
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For the **Level 3 MPP program**:

By the **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure that Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.5 is met, the School is to provide further evidence that demonstrates that students are assessed by suitably qualified assessors to acquire *Professional Competency 3.17*.
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For the **Level 3 MPP-CF program**:

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure that Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the School is to provide further evidence that demonstrates how students are assessed to acquire *Professional Competency 3.17*.
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For the **Level 3 MPP and MPP-CF, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 programs**:

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure that Standard 1 Public safety, criterion 1.4 is met, the School is to provide evidence that the placement review processes are adequate to effectively monitor student progress on placement.
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For **all programs**:

By **30 April 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the School is to provide evidence of an ongoing systematic plan to conduct external benchmarking activities across all programs.
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As a monitoring requirement, APAC requests

1. for the **Level 1 Graduate Diploma in Psychological Science** (AQF Level 8) bridging program, the School provides evidence of the higher-level learning outcomes and a range of de-identified samples of a variety of assessment items that are at a higher level than those required in the Level 1 (AQF Level 7) program by **31 July 2021**.
 2. for the **Level 3 MPP and MPP-CF programs**, the School provides samples of research projects when the information becomes available.
 3. for the **Level 4 Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)**, the School provides
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- i. information relating to the selection process, including selection criteria for entry into the program and how the interview process will assess applicants' skills and achievement of the Level 3 graduate competencies by **30 April 2021**,
 - ii. a range of samples of a variety of assessment items by **31 July 2021**, and
 - iii. samples of student logbooks to demonstrate evidence of placement activities and hours, and supervision by **31 July 2022**.
4. for **all programs**, an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise is to be provided as part of the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 annual reports.
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Table 1: Summary of findings regarding each criterion for each Standard

	Level 1	Level 1 and 2	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 substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially 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	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 met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is 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	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 met	Standard is 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 School of Psychology at the University of Newcastle:

1. explore opportunities to provide further information around the career pathways for students who complete an undergraduate program, work integrated learning and applying knowledge from their degree in a non-psychology position
2. consider opportunities whereby MPP students can transition into the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical program and receive recognition for the completed work and placement requirements
3. expand the pool of casual academic staff to incorporate additional PhD qualified tutors with knowledge in the area of psychology who will assist with marking of the Level 1 and Level 2 assignments
4. explore opportunities to introduce a formal, systematic induction and training program for new sessional academic teaching staff, including explicit guidance and instructions on how to mark assignments
5. introduce a formal collaborative process to moderate marking by sessional tutors

Commendations

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

The Assessment Team have made the subsequent commendations following the evaluation of the program. The School of Psychology at the University of Newcastle is commended for:

1. its outstanding leadership, consistent support and guidance provided by the Head of School
2. its collegiality, unity and high level of morale displayed amongst the academic teaching staff and professional staff
3. its availability of academic and professional staff and the level of support and flexibility provided to students
4. its well-thought out strategy around the indigenisation of coursework content and student wellbeing embedded across the programs
5. the development of the programs moving from a traditional pedagogy and model to a high-quality program that responds well to contemporary development
6. the mentorship program established exclusively for the Alumni of the UoN