



University of Wollongong - APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher education provider	University of Wollongong
Name of the Psychology AOU	School of Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Monitoring visit (out of cycle follow up)
Programs and level of study assessed	Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology) (Level 3)
Campus	Online
Date of site visit	26 June 2020
Date of APAC Board Determination	19 October 2020
Accreditation end date	31 December 2022



Background and overview

In May 2019, the University of Wollongong (UoW) submitted an application for an initial accreditation and advised the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) of its intent to offer a newly developed Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology) (MPP-SP) program. This Level 3 program is a specialisation of the existing accredited Master of Professional Psychology program with the following modifications:

- the MPP-SP program is delivered via a flexible delivery mode
- some of the content is designed to prepare students for working as a psychologist in a school setting
- learning is undertaken within a school psychology context, and
- the program is only available to students who have received a graduate scholarship offered by the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education (DoE).

Following a desktop review, the MPP-SP program was accredited from 28 October 2019 to 31 December 2022 subject to two conditions as well as the satisfactory completion of a monitoring visit to be undertaken early 2020. Subsequently, the UoW has provided logbook evidence for the first cohort of students to demonstrate that the required hours of placement and supervision have been appropriately undertaken and as such the condition of accreditation against Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10 was determined as met.

This monitoring visit focused on the criteria under Standard 3 Program of study and Standard 5 Assessment that were relevant to the rollout of the program, support available to students and whether the School and program is adequately preparing students for their sixth-year internship upon graduation.

The Assessment Team received the School's February progress report submission and a copy of the Professional and Clinical Psychology Training Handbook 2020, subject outlines and overview of assessments including sample assignments, weekly modules and workbooks. The Assessment Team teleconference was held on 12 March 2020 and access to view the online materials available on the School's Learning Management System (LMS) was requested and received.

Prior to the virtual site visit the Assessment Team was provided access to the UoW's LMS to view a range of online components of the program and the following additional information:

- April update on program delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- June update on program delivery for the remainder of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Mapping of professional development trajectory

The Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 26 June 2020 and met with the following individuals via Zoom teleconference:

- Head of School



- Director Professional and Clinical Psychology Training
- Deputy Director Professional and Clinical Psychology Training
- Deputy Head of School (Research)
- School Psychology Program Coordinator
- Acting Clinic Director/Placement Coordinator
- Placement Officer
- Psychology Service Development Coordinator, Department of Education
- lecturers and senior lecturers
- current students
- placement supervisors

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 program is currently in the second year of its implementation and prepares graduates to work as school psychologists by providing a fifth-year sequence of psychology as part of the 5+1 internship program. The Assessment Team heard positive feedback about the quality of the program in training and preparing students to fill an important workforce gap. There is strong support for the program from the NSW DoE and senior staff in the School of Psychology. The staff team delivering the program are well qualified, displayed a strong sense of collegiality and a commitment to continuous improvement of the program.

At the time of the virtual site visit, students had completed the first of two, five-day intensive residential teaching blocks and commenced supervised placement hours in NSW public schools throughout the state. Although commencement of placements was delayed until May due to COVID-19, the School did not anticipate any issues with the completion of placement hours this calendar year. A decision was also made by the UoW to cancel the second residential block with the curriculum components scheduled for the second intensive block now being integrated into the usual coursework timetable.

Evidence gathered indicates that assessment in the program is appropriate. Case studies, simulated exercises and reflective tasks are utilised to scaffold skill development and competency-based assessments ensure evaluation of student progress.

Students interviewed were enthusiastic about their experience to date in the program and felt well supported in the school setting, with dedicated supervisors providing appropriate oversight.

In its rejoinder, the School of Psychology reported progress toward meeting the quality improvement suggestions, including changes to subject outlines and further plans for revising logbooks to reflect direct client activities that address the requirement for practice across the lifespan and creating a peer support forum to enable supervisors who are spread widely across NSW to assist and learn from one another in 2021. The Assessment Team was satisfied with the UoW's proposed plans to address the quality improvement suggestions.



APAC Board Determination

That the University of Wollongong's **Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology)** (Level 3) (Campus: Online) program remains accredited without conditions until **31 December 2022**.



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

Level 3	
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured
	Standard is met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective
	Standard is 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
Domain 4: The student experience	Standard Statement 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support
	Standard is met
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid
	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 suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong consider:

1. creating a peer support forum to enable supervisors who are spread widely across NSW to assist and learn from one another
2. revising the existing logbook to reflecting direct client activities that address the requirement for practice across the lifespan

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 School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong is commended for the:

1. strong partnership and constructive engagement with the NSW DoE in developing a program to address an area of community need
2. staff team's enthusiasm and commitment to continuous improvement of the program