



APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher Education Provider	Western Sydney University	
Date of determination	24 October 2016	
Standards version	June 2010 ver 10	
Programs of Study Assessed for Accreditation	Programs	Campus
	Three year: Bachelor of Arts (Psychology)	Bankstown Penrith
	Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)	Bankstown Penrith
	Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies	Bankstown Penrith
	Bachelor of Psychological Studies	Bankstown Penrith
	4 th year: Graduate Diploma in Psychology	Bankstown
	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology	Bankstown
	Four year: Bachelor of Psychology	Bankstown Penrith
	Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)	Bankstown
	5 th year: Master of Professional Psychology	Bankstown

	5 th and 6 th years: Master of Clinical Psychology	Bankstown Penrith
	PhD/Master of Clinical Psychology	Bankstown Penrith

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the Psychology Discipline in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University (Bankstown and Penrith 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 last accreditation site visit in 2011, the School of Psychology has become the Psychology Discipline within the School of Social Sciences and Psychology. WSU has a flat organisational structure with the Dean of the School reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. The Head of the Psychology Discipline (a Level E appointment) reports to the Dean. Most of the Psychology staff are located at Bankstown with a few at Penrith (mainly the Kingswood campus but also at Werrington South where the Psychology Clinic is located). The Head of the AOU is located at Bankstown and most staff travel between the campuses for the delivery of lectures and tutorials.

WSU organises disciplines into academic groups, of which Psychology has three, Psychology: Behavioural Science, Psychology: Human Behaviour and Clinical Psychology and Therapy Studies, each headed up by a Director of Academic Programs. The distinction between the academic groups is seamless (i.e., there are no silos in teaching or research) and is made for management purposes only. The Discipline also has two groupings of researchers: Foundational Processes of Behaviour Research Laboratories and Clinical and Health Psychology Research Initiative. In addition, there are two major research centres associated with the Discipline, viz. the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development and Centre for Health Research.

The Psychology AOU is the Psychology Discipline in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology and has a strong milieu of research and scholarship with research-active staff in the Discipline and in the cognate University research Institute and Centre. The AOU has the necessary and appropriate level of staffing and other resources and facilities and sufficient academic, financial and administrative control to ensure provision of a high standard of education and training. Although the Head of the AOU has no budget *per se*, requests for resources (human and physical) have not been refused when supported by strong justification. The Head has responsibilities and accountabilities associated with quality assurance in teaching and research.

Psychology is taught on the Bankstown and Penrith (Kingswood) campuses of WSU. While the two campuses are 40 minutes apart, students are enrolled on a home campus. They usually attend classes (particularly tutorials) on their home campus but can also attend on the other one. The move to blended learning has meant that most lectures are on-line and students can view them whenever they wish and to fit in with the tutorial schedule. Staff also travel and repeat lectures and tutorials on both campuses. It is a very flexible system and ensures students have equivalent access to units, programs and facilities (both campuses have state of the art technological resources and a library), receive an equivalent (identical) standard of teaching and course experience and are required to meet the same standards of academic performance with the same assessment requirements.

All degrees, bar one, meet current AQF requirements regarding nomenclature. The Master of Professional Psychology meets AQF standards but does not meet Standard 2.3.8 on nomenclature. Until the *APAC Standards* align with the AQF, accreditation of this program can only be conditional.

The AOU meets all of the staffing requirements including the total student: staff ratio.

Through the School of Social Science and Psychology, the AOU is very well resourced with administrative and technical support. The University makes great use of technology, customised through SharePoint, for all its services including academic teaching. There is a well-resourced test library on the Bankstown campus with a smaller one in the Psychology Clinic on the Werrington South campus (Penrith). Libraries on both the Bankstown and Kingswood campuses were inspected and both are state-of-the-art facilities with 24/7 access to study areas for students. The Psychology librarian also met with the team.

The Psychology AOU meets all the *APAC Standards*.

Psychology is predominantly taught through blended learning with many staff delivering lectures electronically and tutorials face-to-face or vice versa. Students commented that they preferred the former arrangement. Staff can be flexible in how they deliver lectures/tutorials and examples of innovative teaching methods were described by students. Staff also deliver face-to-face lectures and tutorials on both campuses. Students have a home campus at which they are enrolled but can also attend lectures at the other campus.

The 3-year sequence is offered in the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) and the Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies (an 18 month sequence). The Bachelor of Psychological Studies is the exit degree for the four year Bachelor of Psychology should students wish to graduate at the end of 3 years or if they fail to meet the entry requirements for the fourth year.

While the emphasis for each degree is slightly different, all cover the core discipline of psychology and provide a solid foundation in the core graduate attributes listed in the *APAC Standards*.

All the *Standards* are met for the three year sequences.

There are two 4th year courses – the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology and the Graduate Diploma in Psychology. The difference between the two is noted in the weighting given to the thesis (50% and 37.5% respectively) and the inclusion of a unit called Counselling and Consultation in the Graduate Diploma. The other coursework units are identical. The 4th year is currently only available on the Bankstown campus.

The course content is identical for both programs except for the inclusion of the unit Counselling and Consultation in the Graduate Diploma. Students in the Honours stream felt disadvantaged as they were not able to complete this unit as it was the only opportunity to apply knowledge and learn some skills. It was suggested that this unit could be offered as one of the options in Advanced Topics in Psychology for the Honours students to take if they wished. Students who had completed the unit were however less enthusiastic about the amount of practical skill training the unit offered.

All the *Standards* for 4th year programs are met.

The four year program is a Bachelor of Psychology with or without Honours. The four year sequence has the same three year structure as the Bachelor of Arts with an additional three core units, two in Year 1 and one in Year 3. The fourth year is the same as the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Psychology. The Bachelor of Psychology has the same structure at fourth year as the Graduate Diploma in Psychology. There is an exit degree, the Bachelor of Psychological Studies, for students who wish to graduate after three years or if they fail to meet the entry requirements for the fourth year.

All *Standards* for four year programs are met.

There are two postgraduate professional programs – the Master of Professional Psychology and the Master of Clinical Psychology which can also be taken as a double degree with a PhD.

Staffing requirements are met as is the student: staff ratio for both programs.

It is unclear if there is one or two Advisory Committees as the listings provided had considerable overlap. The only difference is the inclusion of the Director of the Clinic and two students (one from each year, from each campus) on the Clinical Advisory Committee. The Master of Professional Psychology representative has not been appointed nor has the alumnus as there are no graduates of the program as yet. Standard 5.1.4 is, however, met.

A comprehensive table was provided in the documentation of where the core capabilities were taught, experienced and assessed. This was supported by an examination of assignments, log books and case studies.

Log books from the Clinical program were inspected and were found to be very comprehensive and exemplary in their recording and regular signing.

The Master of Professional Psychology is a fifth year taken full time or two years part time.

This was the first year of the program and students had only completed half of the coursework. Of the four units studied so far, one (Core Skills and Ethical Practice) is common to this program and the Master of Clinical Psychology. A further two units (Assessment: Cognitive Functions and Clinical Research Methods) are also common. The other units in the Master of Professional Psychology cover the same or similar material to units in the Master of Clinical Psychology but are titled and weighted differently. The content is aimed at preparing students to work in the field as provisional psychologists to compete their 6th year of registration.

Students had not yet undertaken their practical placements at the time of the site visit.

Standards 5.2.12 and 5.2.13 required a follow-up site visit later in 2016 to assess the log books and hours of client contact and supervision and Standards 5.2.17 and 5.2.18 were not met at the time of the site visit.

Standard 5.2.15 requires that supervisors hold registration as a psychologist and now they must also have completed a Psychology Board of Australia-approved training program (full training) in psychology supervision. While a list of supervisors for the Clinical Masters students was available, there was no separate list of supervisors for the Master of Professional Psychology students as these placements had not yet been arranged. Supervisor CVs are kept electronically and a sample of CVs in hard copy was inspected. Note that until the APAC *Accreditation Standards* align with the AQF, the Master of

Professional Psychology, the nomenclature of which does not meet Standard 2.3.8, can only receive accreditation with conditions.

The Master of Clinical Psychology is a two year postgraduate program that can also be undertaken with a PhD. It is taught on both the Bankstown and the Penrith campuses. All lectures are held on both campuses, delivered by the same staff. Students at Bankstown attend lectures on Mondays and Tuesdays and those at Penrith on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Bankstown students have their internal Clinic placement (at Werrington South) on Wednesdays and Thursdays and Penrith students on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students are enrolled to a specific campus but can attend lectures on either campus.

The PhD/Master of Clinical Psychology has only just commenced and students spend their first two years on the PhD before starting the coursework in the Master of Clinical Psychology. The Masters program is identical in relation to coursework and practical placements and the research units are replaced with the HDR thesis.

The three components of coursework, placements and research are all closely integrated and the linkage was clearly demonstrated by the documentation and comments made by staff, students and supervisors. Students complete four placements, one (the first) in the Clinic (Placement A in semester 2 year 5 and the continuation of the placement as Placement B in semester 1 year 6). The other three placements are all in external agencies. Students undertake a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised practice. Log books from all placements (internal and external) were inspected.

Supervision as documented in the log books met Standard 5.3.25. The log books also contained supervision contracts, mid-placement reviews and final placement reports. Supervisors commented on the good and frequent contact, either by phone or in person, from the Placement Coordinator.

All the *Standards* for the fifth and sixth Masters courses of professional education are met.

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: Western Sydney University

Date of Site Visit: 31 May, 1 – 2 June 2016

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	✓		



Four Year Sequence Program of Study	Standard Number	Satisfied	Not Yet Satisfied	N/A
Program of Study Structure	3.1.2-5 /4.1.3	✓		
Program of Study Content (Years 1 - 4)	3.1.6-7 /4.1.4-7	✓		
Research Methods and Professional and Research Ethics	4.1.8	✓		
Research Project	4.1.9-15	✓		
Assessment	3.1.11-16 /4.1.16-17	✓		
Assessment of 4 th Year Research Project	4.1.18-20	✓		
Awarding of Credit or Advance Standing	3.1.17-19	✓		
Master of Professional Psychology (5th Year) Program of Study				
	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 Studies	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	5.2.1-2	✓		
Length	5.2.3	✓		
Program of Study Structure	5.2.4-6	✓		
Coursework	5.2.7	✓		
Practica and Skills Training	5.2.8-18		✓	



Fifth and Sixth Year Masters Program of Study - Clinical	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	✓		

Comments

Master of Professional Psychology – 5th year program

Until *APAC Accreditation Standard 2.3.8* aligns with the AQF, the program can only receive Accreditation with Conditions.

A follow-up site visit to be undertaken later in 2016.

Authorised:

Professor Simon Crowe

Chair, Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

Date: 5 December 2016