



APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher Education Provider	University of Southern Queensland, School of Psychology, Counselling & Community
Date of determination	28 July 2014
Standards version	June 2010 ver 10
Programs of Study Assessed for Accreditation	Bachelor of Science (Psychology) Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science (Psychology) Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) Bachelor of Science (Honours) (Psychology) Postgraduate Diploma of Professional Psychology Master of Psychology (Clinical)

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the School of Psychology, Counselling and Community at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) 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 cycle accreditation assessment, USQ has adopted a new organisational structure consisting of two faculties and 11 schools. As part of the reorganisation the psychology Academic Organisational Unit (AOU) is now part of the multidisciplinary School of Psychology, Counselling and Community (PCC) which is situated in the Faculty of Health, Engineering and Sciences. PCC operates on three campuses – Toowoomba, Springfield and Fraser Coast. A noticeable change since the previous assessment is the substantial growth of psychology on the Springfield campus.

In terms of accredited programs, PCC offers three year sequences at all three campuses, a four year program at Springfield, fourth year programs at Toowoomba and Springfield, a fifth year program at Springfield and a postgraduate clinical program at Toowoomba. The undergraduate three year sequence and the fourth year program are also offered in the distance mode.

The Head is an established researcher and very experienced academic. Research endeavours in the AOU are increasing with substantial research funding having been obtained from both the University and competitive grants. PCC also produces a regular high quality e-newsletter which introduces new staff, highlights research activities, has interviews with staff, PhD students etc. This, together with information from other sources, indicates a collegial environment with a growing research culture. The School of Psychology, Counselling and Community at USQ currently meets all the Standards relating to the AOU, other than Standard 2.1.7 (inappropriate nomenclature of an unaccredited degree title).

While having the same titles and broad objectives, historically the units offered at Springfield and Toowoomba have sometimes differed in terms of textbooks, assessments and/or teaching approach.

However, there is a strong move to more closely align the offerings on the two campuses and the distance education mode. APAC strongly supports this initiative. Standard 2.2 (Multi-Campus Institutions) is met.

All the programs for which accreditation is sought conform with the relevant Standards relating to degree nomenclature and Standard 2.3 is thus met.

While student to staff ratios are acceptable, the two senior clinical psychologists who carry a substantial amount of the Clinical Psychology workload will be retiring in June. Plans are in place to fill these two positions but it will be necessary for APAC to monitor the situation as failure to fill them is likely to result in the relevant Standards not being met.

APAC has noted the collegiality of the staff and their commitment to good teaching. The quality of this teaching was demonstrated in the student evaluations of the units taught by PCC. Overall, compared to other schools, the ratings were the second highest in the University and on all items the mean rating was noticeably higher than the University mean. The students with whom APAC met also spoke highly of the supportiveness of the staff and their teaching ability.

On both the Springfield and Toowoomba campuses there are adequate computer lab and teaching spaces. While those can be used for research purposes, there are no true laboratory spaces as such which tends to limit the nature of the research that can be done. On the Springfield campus, the office and clinic space is rather cramped but this apparently will be addressed in 2015. There are test libraries at both the main campuses and they contain a range of tests appropriate to the programs of study taught. All Standards relating to Resources are met.

The teaching platform used by USQ is Moodle. Each unit has a 'Study Desk' site through which students can access learning materials and activities, and communicate with teaching staff and other students. For each unit, there is a comprehensive and up-to-date unit outline. The Study Desk for each unit is common across the different campuses and modes. In the undergraduate programs a lot of units have an assessment task related to report writing, however only three units are specifically nominated as have a laboratory training component. Examination of the assignments for these three units suggests that the nature of the research undertaken in them is survey research using correlational designs. There is no evidence of any laboratory training, (i.e. research using experimental methods rather than survey research). As such, Standard 2.6.5 is not met. All Standards relating to Teaching Materials and Methods other than Standard 2.6.5 are met.

The Psychology AOU received a grade of Accreditation with Conditions.

There is one undergraduate 3-year sequences offered at USQ which is the Bachelor of Science (Psychology). That degree is offered either singly or as part of a combined Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science (Psychology) degree. It contains 13 core psychology units, three at first year, six at second year and four at third year. Students are able to take a further six psychology electives at the second and third year level. While the psychology sequence does in general provide an education in the core discipline of psychology and a sound foundation for fourth year study, there are a few problems which need to be addressed. The first is the issue raised earlier regarding the apparent lack of training in laboratory type experimental work which is required by Standards 3.1.6 and Graduate Attribute 2 of Standard 3.1.7. The concern relates to the apparent lack of training in experimental methodology, rather than training in a particular location. The second problem is that there is no assessment of the effective

oral communication skills component of Graduate Attribute 5. A third problem related to the coverage of the core topic of learning in the undergraduate sequence. Standards 3.1.6 to 3.1.8 are therefore not met.

The materials for the units were relevant and up-to-date and students engaged in practical work. A range of assessments including essays, laboratory reports, in-class tests, and examinations is used. For assignments, a comprehensive criterion referenced system is used and students are provided with the criteria prior to the assignment. Inspection of assessed work indicated that it was of an appropriate standard and that the feedback given was appropriate. With regard to procedures to deal with student appeals, these are generally appropriate. However, where group assessments are used there appears to be no policy or procedure to deal with the issue of possible disproportionate input by students in the group which seemed to concern some students. Hence Standard 3.1.15 is not met.

USQ offers one fourth year course, the Bachelor of Science (Honours)(Psychology). This program uses a workshop mode and all students irrespective of whether they are enrolled on-campus or externally attend four compulsory workshops each of two days duration.

The fourth year course is one year in length (two years part-time), is 100% psychology and has appropriate entry requirements. It consists of a research project and five coursework units, four of which are compulsory. The compulsory units focus on advanced statistical methods, ethics and professional issues, advanced psychological assessment and counselling skills and issues. The elective is chosen from two possible electives – advanced psychological theory or positive psychology. The latter elective is only offered on the Springfield campus with weekly lectures.

Students produce an individual research project and participate in the various steps involved in the research. There are two components to the research report – a literature review and a journal article. The reports are marked independently by two members of staff who have not been involved in the supervision. Inspection of a few research reports suggested that they are of a satisfactory standard.

The 2012 benchmarking exercise was not sufficient to meet the requirements of Standard 4.1.20 for an external audit of students' work.

In addition to the fourth year program, USQ offers a four year sequence, the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) on the Springfield campus. All the units in this program are psychology and six are psychological skills units that allow students to develop skills such as testing, counselling etc. These skills units also involve a work integrated component. The underlying philosophy of this program is excellent and it is a good training model.

The program includes all the core psychology units that make up the three year sequence. In order to proceed to the fourth year of the program students have to have a GPA of 5.0. Those with a lower GPA are required to exit and take out the BSc(Psychology) degree. The fourth year of the program is the same as that for the BSc(Hons)(Psychology) other than there is no elective and students have to take the positive psychology unit.

USQ offers a fifth year Postgraduate Diploma of Professional Psychology (PDPP). The PDPP is offered on-campus at Springfield and can be taken either full-time or part-time. The 5th year program commenced in 2012. The program is unusual in that it is shared with the Australian Catholic University with four units

having combined classes of USQ and ACU students. Two of these units are taught by ACU staff and two by USQ staff.

In addition to the PDPP, USQ offers an accredited Master of Psychology (Clinical) on its Toowoomba campus. Staffing Standards for both programs are met.

For the PDPP there is an appropriately constituted advisory committee which includes representatives from ACU. For the Master of Psychology (Clinical) there is an advisory committee but it does not appear to have student representatives as required by Standard 5.1.4. Standard 5.1.4 is met for the PDPP but not for the Master of Psychology (Clinical).

USQ has psychology clinics at both the Springfield and Toowoomba campuses. At Springfield space is at a premium but will improve when new facilities are complete. The clinic on the Toowoomba campus is a very good facility.

There is a test library on both the main campuses. The test library facilities are appropriate, well organised, having a suitable range of holdings, and are appropriately administered and secured. The University library facilities and holdings, and computer resources are appropriate for these professional programs.

A feature of the professional programs at USQ is the clear and strong linkages between competency assessments and the required APAC capabilities and attributes stated in Standard 5.1.12. A wide range of assessment methods is employed, including essays, case studies, tests, and video recorded interviews. Excellent detailed and comprehensive documentation is provided on placement contracts, reviews, and supervisor rating. The log books and Supervision Forms inspected were all appropriately completed and signed by the relevant parties.

The PDPP program has been designed to meet the needs of provisionally registered psychologists taking the "5+1" pathway to general registration. The program has appropriate aims of providing foundational practitioner training as preparation for a final year of supervised practice in the field, as well as preparing candidates for a broadly-based national registration examination.

The program meets course structure Standards, consisting of 8 equally weighted units, consisting of five core coursework units, two practicum units, and a choice between two electives - 'Introduction to Psychoactive Drugs' or 'Relapse Prevention'. The program is delivered via Saturday workshops throughout the year, except for the elective, which is undertaken in distance mode. The coursework is focussed on the core capabilities and attributes specified in Standard 5.1.12. The two practica provide students with the opportunity to develop psychological skills including clinical interviewing, self-assessment/reflection, report writing, and a range of assessment skills consistent with the requirements of Standards.

The documentation and procedures relating to reports, case-notes, supervision contracts and assessment of performance during a practicum are essentially the same as those used for the Master's program and are satisfactory.

USQ offers a single accredited fifth and sixth year program – the Master of Psychology (Clinical) which is located on its Toowoomba campus. The Master of Psychology (Clinical) is a two calendar years full-time and the entry requirement and selection procedures Standards are met.

The coursework in the clinical program is all psychology and is taught by psychologists, the majority of whom are registered and teaching in their professional area of expertise. The program consists of coursework, research and practical placement and these components are integrated. The weighting of the three main components are coursework 50%, research 25% and practical placement 25%. Students are required to pass all three components.

The clinical program has eight coursework units – Issues and skills in professional practice, advanced research techniques, individual assessment, clinical intervention, advanced clinical intervention, health psychology, adult psychopathology and child and adolescent psychopathology. The coursework appears to cover the core capabilities indicated in Standard 5.1.12. The coursework clearly links research and practical application.

The research project for the Master's program involves an individual project result in a final written report that can be up to 20000 words. The topics of the samples of theses that were viewed were appropriate and the quality of the research was satisfactory. The thesis marking procedures and criteria met the Standards for each level.

In the program, there are three placements providing students with 1000 hours of supervised practical experience. The first of these is in the School's Clinic. Prior to being allowed to undertake the first placement students must pass a viva. In this assessment, a student has to interview an actor (a student training to be an actor) who has been briefed about a particular mental disorder. The interview is recorded and the student then has to formulate a diagnosis and a treatment plan which are presented to a panel of the clinical staff. APAC was pleased to learn that a staff member won a Faculty teaching award for this innovative assessment task.

There is a range of suitable placements in the field for the external placements, and the School has a number of registered external supervisors with appropriate endorsement. The placements are coordinated by a registered psychologist with clinical endorsement and approved as a supervisor. APAC met with six external supervisors and was struck by their commitment to the program and their keenness to work with the University.

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: University of Southern Queensland

Date of Site Visit: 31 March – 2 April 2014

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	✓		
Graduate Diploma 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 Psychology	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	✓		

Authorised:

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Chair, Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

Date: 28 July 2014