

## Murdoch University - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

<b>Higher education provider</b>	Murdoch University
<b>Name of the Psychology AOU</b>	College of Science, Health, Engineering & Education
<b>Standards version</b>	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
<b>Purpose of assessment</b>	Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
<b>Programs and level of study assessed</b>	<p>Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)            Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Level 2)</p> <p><b>Programs in teach out:</b></p> <p>Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)            Bachelor of Arts Psychology Communication and Media Studies (Level 1)            Bachelor of Arts Psychology Human Resource Management (Level 1)            Bachelor of Arts Psychology Management (Level 1)            Bachelor of Arts Psychology Marketing (Level 1)</p>
<b>Campus</b>	Singapore
<b>Date of site visit</b>	17 - 20 May 2021
<b>Date of APAC Board Determination</b>	16 August 2021
<b>Accreditation start date</b>	1 January 2022
<b>Accreditation end date</b>	31 December 2026

## Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) last reviewed Murdoch University's (Murdoch) suite of undergraduate Level 1, fourth-year Level 2, Level 3 and postgraduate packaged Level 3 and 4 psychology programs for re-accreditation in 2016. This report concerns only the Murdoch programs taught and offered via its offshore partner, the Kaplan Higher Education Academy (Kaplan Singapore) based in Singapore; please refer to the separate report for the programs taught at Murdoch's Perth campus.

At the 2017 review, the undergraduate program delivered by the Discipline's offshore partner, Kaplan Singapore, was accredited without conditions. The previously accredited undergraduate program containing the accredited sequence of psychology units, along with combined degrees in Media Studies, Human Resource Management, Management and Marketing, were placed in teach out.

Since the last review, Murdoch has undertaken a restructure, and, from 2019, the former School of Psychology and Exercise Science was replaced with a College/Discipline organisational structure. The new structure brings together the four disciplines: Psychology, Exercise Science, Chiropractic and Counselling (PESCC). The Psychology Discipline Lead reports to the Head of the PESCC cluster, and the PESCC cluster is one of the nine disciplines within the College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education (SHEE) led by the Pro Vice Chancellor.

The Discipline implemented a Level 2 Graduate Diploma program in Singapore identical in structure to the Murdoch counterpart for the first time in 2020.

The APAC Assessment Team considered the Discipline of Psychology, College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education's 147 page self review, including attached appendices and samples of student assessments, against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team conference held on 29 March 2021, additional information was requested and received from Murdoch, including:

- Murdoch's written response to APAC's request for additional information
- Calibration and Benchmarking Reports (*PSY662, PSY669 and Graduate Diploma Thesis Benchmarking Report 2020*)
- *Student Representative Meeting Minutes, 15 March 2021*
- Cultural Responsiveness and Interprofessional Learning and Practice (*PSY101 Exam Part B, PSY101 Lecture 11 part 1 and 2 slides, PSY101 Tutorial 10 slides, PSY101 Tutorial 10 tutor instructions, PSY101 Tutorial 11 tutor slides, PSY598 Lecture 10*)
- Entry Requirements and Selection Processes (*Admissions and Pathways Guide 2022, Admissions International, Admissions Policy, Enabling Programs Policy, Rise-specifications, Student Disability Policy*)

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the range of facilities at the Murdoch-Singapore office and Kaplan Singapore facilities, including library facilities, classrooms, computer labs and student lounge area.

The Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 17 - 20 May 2021. During the virtual visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals based at Murdoch's Perth and the Kaplan Singapore campuses via Zoom conferences, including:

- Discipline Lead, Psychology
- Dean of Learning and Teaching
- Dean of Research
- Dean of Singapore
- Head of Psychology, Exercise Science, Counselling and Chiropractic
- Learning Enhancement Consultant, Learning Technologist and Learning Developer (Singapore)
- Level 1 and Level 2 Academic Chairs
- Level 1 and Level 2 Unit Coordinators
- Level 1 and Level 2 casual and affiliate staff
- Level 1 and Level 2 students
- Level 1 and Level 2 graduates
- Professional staff

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with supplementary information, including an update on the changes in unit coordination since the submission, *Murdoch Singapore student survey 2021*, minutes of the meeting of the Level 1 and Level 2 Student Representatives meeting, email clarification on the coverage of ethics and cultural responsiveness in the Level 2 programs. Additionally, the Assessment Team was provided with a live presentation of the Learning Management System (LMS) demonstrating the layout, content and user interface of the Moodle website.

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 Psychology Discipline is embedded within a group of disciplines and a broader College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education. The programs are delivered in partnership with Kaplan Singapore and for the Level 1 program, affiliate staff based in Singapore work in close collaboration with nominated unit coordinators based at the Murdoch Perth campus. Under the agreement between Murdoch and Kaplan Singapore and in accordance with Murdoch's *Transnational Education via Partnerships Policy*, offshore teaching staff, excluding academic staff specifically employed through the Murdoch Singapore office, are employed by Kaplan Singapore rather than by Murdoch. For the Level 2 program, all learning materials and assessments are developed by and taught under the direction of the Perth-based unit coordinators with minor teaching examples being amended slightly to localise content to the Singapore context.

At the time of the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team learned that one of the significant challenges for the Discipline is how it continues to deal with the impact of financial constraints on the Discipline as a result of COVID-19. The Discipline reported a reduction in the casual staff budget, reduction in research allocation in 2020, and voluntary redundancies that were a contributing factor to the loss of many key teaching and administrative staff from December 2020. There was, however, some increase in the casual budget for 2021. The Assessment Team heard that there will be a change of Vice-Chancellor from July 2021. This may present further challenges to the availability of resourcing and the staffing profile.

The evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that overall, the Level 1 and Level 2 programs are well designed, established and coordinated. The mechanisms in place to incorporate student feedback into the design and delivery of the program are working well. There is an openness to gathering and acting on feedback from students, with examples of how the Level 1 program has been improved as a result of this feedback. Recent changes made to its units within the Level 1 and Level 2 programs demonstrates the Discipline's commitment to continuous improvement.

Throughout the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team identified several commendable aspects. The students interviewed spoke highly of Murdoch teaching staff and felt well supported in their learning. Long-standing affiliate staff have strong industry links and facilitate professional practice volunteer experiences for the Level 1 and Level 2 students. The Assessment Team was impressed with the innovations made, specifically how research training is embedded throughout the Level 1 program and authentic formative assessments at the first and third year of the Level 1 program, as well as the introduction of an e-portfolio as a tool to track and monitor student progress against the graduate competencies.

The Assessment Team identified several opportunities for further quality improvement. Clarification of the workload and research allocation and timely confirmation of staff roles and responsibilities will assist in addressing issues regarding communication. There are opportunities for the Discipline to further the Level 1 and Level 2 programs by developing students' understanding of cultural competence and responsiveness, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Discipline provided evidence to show this was currently in process. The Assessment Team acknowledges the Discipline's efforts to pivot to an online learning and teaching experience during the COVID-19 crisis; however, it is recommended that the Discipline further enhances the learner experience on LMS by providing a stable platform for staff and students to access their learning.

## APAC Board determination

That the following programs at Murdoch University are re-accredited with conditions until **31 December 2026**:

- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)
- **Graduate Diploma in Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Singapore)

That the following programs in teach at Murdoch University are re-accredited until **31 December 2026**:

- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)
- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology Communication and Media Studies** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)
- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology Human Resource Management** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)
- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology Management** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)
- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology Marketing** (Level 1) (Campus: Singapore)

Subject to the following conditions:

### For the Level 1 and Level 2 programs

By **31 December 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2 and 3.8 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that *Foundational Competencies 1.4* and *1.5* for the Level 1 programs and cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, are integrated across the Level 1 and Level 2 sequence of psychology, clearly articulated as a learning outcome, taught and appropriately assessed.
2. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.5 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that students have access to learning and assessment resources across all delivery sites and modalities and the LMS Moodle platform is stable for the learner.
3. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.3 and 5.4 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that assessment tools, modes and techniques for formative assessment are fit-for-purpose for assessing the learning outcomes and the processes and practices to ensure that students are provided with timely feedback in all units.

### For the Level 2 program

By **31 December 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criterion 1.2 and Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.7 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that the codes of ethical and professional practice are taught and assessed, and students develop the relevant graduate competencies.
2. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.2 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that *Pre-Professional Competency 2.2* is appropriately taught.

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As a monitoring requirement, the Discipline is to provide the following reports:

For all programs:

1. an update on recruitment, including the strategies in place to manage staff retention and the staffing profile available to support the programs and identify any changes by **31 December 2021**.
2. as part of the 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 annual reports
  - i. an updated staff to student ratio and a rationale as to how these programs continue to meet Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.4 and
  - ii. evidence demonstrating that there is relevant and regular external and internal input into the design and management of the programs, including student representation and input on the Student Representative Committee.

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

	Level 1	Level 2
Domain 1: Public safety	<b>Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured</b>	
	Standard is met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	<b>Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective</b>	
	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 3: Program of study	<b>Standard Statement 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies</b>	
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 4: The student experience	<b>Standard Statement 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support</b>	
	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 5: Assessment	<b>Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid</b>	
	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 suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the Discipline of Psychology, College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education at Murdoch University:

1. consider timely communication to staff of their workload allocation as well as timely confirmation of their roles and responsibilities.
2. improve communication regarding timetable changes and changes to assessments so that all staff and students impacted are advised in a timely manner.
3. formalise a process to identify and develop the academic staffing profile as a means of succession planning.

## 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 Discipline of Psychology, College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education at Murdoch University is commended for the:

1. introduction of the *PebblePad* system to assist with tracking student progress in achieving the relevant graduate competencies.
2. innovations made in the areas of research training and formative assessments.
3. level of support and flexibility provided to students.
4. dedication of the affiliate staff who had strong links to industry and were able to facilitate professional practice volunteer experiences.