

Murdoch University - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	Murdoch University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Discipline of Psychology, College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education
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	<p>Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Criminology/Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Science Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws Honours/Bachelor of Arts Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws Honours/Bachelor of Science Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science/Bachelor of Science Psychology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts Honours Psychology (Level 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science Honours Psychology (Level 2)</p> <p>Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Level 2)</p> <p>Master of Professional Psychology (packaged Level 2 and 3)</p> <p>Master of Applied Psychology Professional (Level 3)</p> <p>Master of Applied Psychology Clinical Psychology (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Master of Applied Psychology Clinical Psychology + Doctor of Philosophy (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Doctor of Psychology Clinical Psychology (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Programs in teach out:</p>

	Bachelor of Arts Social and Developmental Psychology (Level 1) Bachelor of Science Cognitive Neuroscience and Health Psychology (Level 1)
Campus	Murdoch
Date of virtual site visit	17 - 20 May 2021
Date of APAC Board Determination	16 August 2021
Accreditation start date	1 January 2022
Accreditation end date	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 programs taught at Murdoch's Perth campus; please refer to the separate report for Murdoch's programs taught at the Kaplan Singapore campus.

At the 2016 review, Murdoch's range of Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and postgraduate packaged Level 3 and 4 programs offered at the Perth campus was accredited with conditions for a shortened period as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the review, all outstanding conditions were satisfied, and Murdoch's range of programs have since been accredited without conditions.

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 previously accredited suite of undergraduate programs containing the accredited sequence of psychology units has been in teach out since 2017 and was replaced by a revised suite of Level 1 programs. Several changes to program offerings were made in 2020, and this included modifications to the Level 1 programs to ensure compliance with the *2019 Accreditation Standards* and incorporated a three unit sequence, the *Murdoch Career Learning Spine*, to prepare students to be job ready. Additionally, the Discipline expanded its program offerings to include dual qualifications in undergraduate Psychology with combined degrees in Criminology, Laws, Laws Honours and Sports and Exercise Science and completed a review of the Honours course structure which led to the addition of interviewing skills in the program.

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
- *Curriculum Diagnostic Report, Postgraduate Professional and Clinical Program*
- 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, including:

- Murdoch Psychology Clinic and Psychology Test Library located at the Murdoch South Street campus
- Murdoch South Street campus library, computer lab, lecture theatres, small group learning space and Psychology staff offices
- Mind and Body Laboratories, including the Pain Research Testing Room, Specialist Clinical Laboratory, Trans-Cranial Magnetic Stimulation TMS Labs, testing rooms, designated student rooms, meeting rooms and kitchen areas
- Child Cognition and Autism Laboratory, student meeting areas and testing rooms
- Music Cognition Lab and Social Psychology Lab

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 campus and the Kaplan Higher Education Academy located in Singapore via Zoom conferences, including:

- Discipline Lead, Psychology Discipline
- Dean of Learning and Teaching
- Dean of Research
- Director of Clinical and Professional Programs
- Head of Psychology, Exercise Science, Counselling and Chiropractic
- Learning Enhancement Consultant and Learning Technologist
- Level 1, Level 2 Honours and Graduate Diploma, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Academic Chairs
- Level 1, Level 2 Honours and Graduate Diploma, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Unit Coordinators
- Level 1 and Level 2 Honours and Graduate Diploma casual staff
- Level 1, Level 2 Honours and Graduate Diploma, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 students
- Level 1, Level 2 Honours and Graduate Diploma, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 graduates
- Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Placement Coordinators
- Placement supervisors (internal, external and schools)

- Professional staff
- Western Australia Department of Education, Director of School Psychology Services

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, copies of incoming staff curricula vitae, 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, Level 3 School Psychology stream presentation slides and application form, as well as current enrolment numbers for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 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 Discipline embraces the scientist-practitioner model and emphasises examining the social and cultural context in which psychology is studied. The Discipline values basic, applied and translational research and has strengths in developmental, social, cognitive and clinical research, as well as well-established postgraduate programs, including Professional Masters, Clinical Masters and Doctorate programs.

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.

The Assessment Team identified serious concerns regarding the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs' ability to continue to meet the *Accreditation Standards*. Many of the issues identified are interrelated and affect these programs' ability to meet multiple Standards. The pressure on teaching and administrative staff that contribute to these programs was made repeatedly clear during interviews. The staffing profile is stretched to deliver these programs as documented. The stakeholders interviewed acknowledged the impact that the staffing changes have on the Discipline's ability to continue delivering these programs safely. The staffing shortage adds pressures on the remaining staff and raises concerns about how students can be adequately supervised to deliver safe client services within the Murdoch Psychology Clinic. The issues raised regarding the management of the Murdoch Psychology Clinic, including clinic infrastructure combined with a stretched staffing profile, raises serious concerns regarding the ability of the Discipline to continue to oversee the Murdoch Psychology Clinic safely. The Assessment Team heard evidence of plans to recruit additional staff, primarily to assist with managing the Murdoch Psychology Clinic and teaching in the Level 3 and 4 programs. The Discipline must consider interim measures to support student learning and placement opportunities until these roles can be filled as detailed in the plans advised to the Assessment Team, as well as provide updates on the outcomes of their recruitment activities.

The Assessment Team was reassured that despite the issues identified, all evidence indicates that previous and current cohorts will develop the required graduate competencies by the point of graduation to ensure they are competent and safe to practice. The Assessment Team has identified serious concerns, which if not addressed quickly, will impact these programs' ability to continue to deliver graduates prepared at the point of graduation. If not addressed in a timely way, these issues will jeopardise these programs' ongoing accreditation.

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. The Assessment Team was impressed by the effort towards the development of the proposed packaged Level 2 and 3 program and innovations made, specifically how research training was embedded throughout the Level 1 program and authentic formative assessments at the first and third year of the Level 1 program. The Discipline has strong industry links and long-term constructive partnerships with a range of placement providers, and external supervisors stated they were impressed with the quality of Murdoch students.

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 its suite of 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 progress. Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs provide students with a breadth of training and approaches required to develop the *Professional Competencies*. However, the Assessment Team recommends that the Discipline consider ways to expand and strengthen offerings in the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice opportunities, both in content and assessment.

APAC Board determination

That Murdoch University's **Master of Professional Psychology** (packaged Level 2 and 3) (Campus: Murdoch) program is not granted accreditation until the program is further developed and the Discipline can provide supporting evidence that the newly proposed program meets the relevant *Accreditation Standards*.

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

- **Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Arts Social and Developmental Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch) **in teach out*
- **Bachelor of Criminology/Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Science Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Laws Honours/Bachelor of Arts Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Laws Honours/Bachelor of Science Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Science Cognitive Neuroscience and Health Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch) **in teach out*
- **Bachelor of Science Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Sport and Exercise Science/Bachelor of Science Psychology** (Level 1) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Arts Honours Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Bachelor of Science Honours Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Graduate Diploma in Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Master of Applied Psychology Professional** (Level 3) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Master of Applied Psychology Clinical Psychology** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Master of Applied Psychology Clinical Psychology + Doctor of Philosophy** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Murdoch)
- **Doctor of Psychology Clinical Psychology** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Murdoch)

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 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 in place to ensure that students are provided with timely feedback in all units.

For the Level 2 programs

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.

For the Level 3 program

By 31 December 2021:

1. 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 in place to ensure that students are provided with timely feedback in all units.

For the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.1 and 1.6 i are met and the Murdoch Psychology Clinic providing psychological services to clients is safe, Murdoch must provide evidence demonstrating that students have the pre-requisite education and training in professional skills and knowledge, including ethics, to provide psychological services safely. A report detailing the process and actions

taken to ensure student readiness, in particular, students' competency in risk assessment prior to commencing placements, is to be provided by **31 July 2021**.

2. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.3, 1.4 and 1.7, Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 and Standard 4 The student experience, criterion 4.4 are met and the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs are appropriately staffed, the learning needs of students are identified, students' competence in consistently practising safely in placements are assessed and recorded and registered psychologists and Board-approved supervisors supervise students, Murdoch must
 - i. ensure that the Murdoch Psychology Clinic is adequately staffed by staff who are appropriately qualified for teaching, supervision and administrative duties at all times and put in place a process to ensure that staff are able to monitor and discuss student progression effectively and that concerns relating to progression are identified early. A report detailing staffing arrangements, including which supervisors are allocated to supervise students in Semester 2, 2021 for internal placements at the Murdoch Clinic is to be provided by **31 July 2021**.
 - ii. provide updates by **31 July 2021** and **30 September 2021** of the staffing profile available to support the program and identify any changes. These reports are to include an update on the progress to fill staffing vacancies and how casual and adjunct appointments are used to address gaps in the staffing profile previously identified, as well as an updated student to staff ratio for both programs. The report must detail staffing roles and responsibilities and advise how this is communicated to staff and students.
 - iii. ensure that the Murdoch Psychology Clinic has sufficient well-equipped spaces, including sufficient sound-proofed rooms with access to duress alarms, computers and phones, and learning and assessment resources to ensure that program learning outcomes and the relevant graduate competencies are achieved. A report detailing how Murdoch ensures sufficient, sound attenuated and safe spaces and Clinic infrastructure for students to work with confidential materials to provide an adequate and safe experience is to be provided by **31 July 2021**. Additionally, an onsite monitoring site visit is to be undertaken after the reported changes to the clinic infrastructure has taken place (August-September 2021) to inspect and ensure the clinic space is safe and fit for purpose.

By 31 December 2021:

3. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.8 and 1.10 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that students receive regular and sufficient individual supervision during their internal placement to enable them to always practice safely.
4. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.1 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that robust academic governance arrangements including systematic monitoring, review and improvement are in place.

5. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2, 3.8 and 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that
 - i. *Professional Competency 3.6,*
 - ii. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and
 - iii. the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practiceare integrated across the program, clearly articulated as a learning outcome, taught and appropriately assessed.

For packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **31 December 2021:**

1. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating the outcomes of external benchmarking activities.

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.
 - 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.

For Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs:

3. an update and supporting evidence to demonstrate that the workload model supports research active staff to provide sufficient research supervision at the Honours and Masters level by **31 December 2021.**

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

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2 and 3	Level 3	Level 3 and 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
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective				
	Standard is met	Standard is 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 substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially 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 substantially 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 not met	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:

1. the introduction of the *PebblePad* system to assist with tracking student progress in achieving the relevant graduate competencies.
2. the innovations made in the areas of research training and formative assessments for the Level 2 programs.
3. their strong links to industry and continued constructive partnerships with a range of placement providers.
4. providing students in the professional programs with a breadth of training and approaches to develop the *Professional Competencies*.
5. the innovation demonstrated in the elective unit *PSY380 Psychological Research Placement* and providing Level 1 students the opportunity to participate in a research placement.