



APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher Education Provider	Charles Sturt University (CSU), Wagga Wagga, Bathurst and Port Macquarie campuses, and online	
Date of determination	4 December 2017	
Standards version	June 2010, version 10; Rules March, incorporating amendments as at May 30 2016	
Programs of Study Assessed for Accreditation	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Campus</b>
	<p><b>Three year:</b></p> <p>Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)</p> <p>Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Business (Management)</p> <p>Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management)</p> <p>Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Business (Marketing)</p> <p>Graduate Diploma of Psychology</p> <p><b>4th year:</b></p> <p>Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)(Honours)</p> <p>Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology</p> <p><b>Four year:</b></p> <p>Bachelor of Psychology</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)</p> <p><b>5th and 6th years:</b></p> <p>Master of Psychology (Clinical)</p>	<p>Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie &amp; Online</p> <p>Bathurst &amp; Online</p> <p>Online</p> <p>Bathurst &amp; Online</p> <p>Online</p> <p>Online</p> <p>Online</p> <p>Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie &amp; Online</p> <p>Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie &amp; Online</p> <p>Online</p>

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the School of Psychology in at Charles Sturt University 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.

The AOU is the School of Psychology in the Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Science. The School of Psychology has an identifiable Head of School who has budgetary and administrative responsibility and is line manager to academic staff. The exceptions are two academic staff seconded to the Faculty to Program Convener roles, one responsible for undergraduate programs, and one responsible for postgraduate programs, not reporting direct to the Head of School, but rather to the Dean. The division of duties between the three positions of HOS, Undergraduate Convenor, and Postgraduate Convenor was not completely clear and seemed to confuse and complicate the roles of senior psychology personnel on each campus.

The milieu of research and scholarship in the School of Psychology is variable. Some staff are actively involved in conducting and publishing their research work and their research informs their teaching. Only 14 of the staff of 31 are currently considered research active. Research leadership and mentoring is limited by the staffing profile of the school. This is an issue on all campuses and particularly so on the Port Macquarie campus where there are no senior research active staff.

The School of Psychology's level of staffing, resources and facilities is not currently adequate to ensure provision of a high standard of education and training in psychology.

The School of Psychology requires staff to comply with appropriate codes of ethical conduct. Students at all levels perceived a lack of procedural fairness and inconsistent application of procedures in relation to appeals suggesting this aspect of codes of conduct is not consistently followed. Comments from both staff and students suggested that procedures to do with a range of issues lacked a consistent and transparent process. The processes for regular quality review of teaching and training were not consistently clear.

The School of Psychology is located across three campuses, Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and Bathurst. There are appropriate teaching and learning spaces at Bathurst and Wagga Wagga campuses. Staffing at Port Macquarie does not meet required staffing levels and resources at there are currently not adequate, with plans currently progressing for new staff office and research space, which will better meet these needs.

Students on each campus have equivalent access to units and facilities, and processes are in place to ensure students receive an equivalent teaching and program experience, meet equivalent standards of academic performance and have equivalent assessment requirements.

The School of Psychology has 31 full time staff and several part time and sessional staff. The total student: staff ratio is 24.96:1 and therefore above the 22:1 ratio required. The staffing profile includes two full-time Level E appointments. However, the ratio of level C and D staff to full time equivalent staff

does not meet the Standard. For the clinical psychology program there are appropriately qualified staff, including the course director and placement coordinator.

Each campus is required to have at least eight full time staff; there are only six staff at Port Macquarie campus. At present there is only one member of staff at Level C and none at Level E or D.

The School of Psychology demonstrated adequate access to technical and computing resources. In mid-2016 administrative support for research and teaching activities was restructured, and at this stage administrative support is not sufficient to support the activities of the School.

The School of Psychology has an appropriately equipped test and resource library, appropriate arrangements for borrowing, and both an administrative officer and an appropriately qualified member of staff with responsibility for the test library. The CSU library also holds appropriate resources.

Unit outlines for programs were detailed and up to date, and consistent across modes of delivery. Residential schools are provided for third year students to enable practical skills training in research methods and statistics, as well as for all fourth, fifth and sixth year level units. Students reported assessed work is not consistently marked and returned in a timely manner. Information submitted by the AOU after the visit, however, confirms that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure and to track timely return of assessments, and that the School has been able to maintain a very good record of returning assessments within the expected turnaround timeframe.

There are five undergraduate 3 year programs. All students must complete 13 core units, elective psychology units and two compulsory sociology units, except for the Graduate Diploma of Psychology where students complete eight core psychology units. Core units cover major areas of study in psychology, with students developing skills in research methods, laboratory experiments, and report writing. All psychology units are available for on campus students at all three campuses, with the exception of the Indigenous Psychology unit which is online. On campus students also have the option to take psychology units online. Core content areas are covered in core units and graduate attributes are met in all required areas.

The School offers a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) (Honours) and a Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology at fourth year. Both programs are 100% psychology and require students to complete the core units Ethics and Current Issues and Psychological Assessment. Post Graduate Diploma of Psychology students also complete a core unit Counselling Theory and Practice. Both programs require students to complete two additional psychology coursework electives.

Program content is appropriate with the exception of research methods. It was not evident that students are given sufficient grounding in relevant research methods. While completion of undergraduate research methods units is a prerequisite for these programs, there are no units on research methods at fourth year level.

Students in the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology complete a major research project which counts for 37.5% of the final grade. Students complete a research project as part of a group. Students share data

but they develop their own research questions and conduct their own data analysis to test their individual research question. The report is required to be 12,000 words in length (9,000 minimum).

Students in the Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) Honours complete a dissertation worth 50% of the final grade (9-15,000 words). This is an individual research project. An audit with Curtin University in 2013 was conducted.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for assessment and for resolving any discrepancies between examiners. The marking criteria for the research project have recently been revised and some concerns were raised that students completing their research project this year were not given marking criteria until their research was underway. Procedures for good governance relating to student appeals were reported by students to not be consistently applied.

The School of Psychology offers a Bachelor of Psychology and a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) as four year programs. Students achieving a Distinction grade average progress to the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) that is identical to the Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) (Honours) while students with a Credit average progress to the Bachelor of Psychology Pass strand that is identical to the Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology. Students can complete Years 1 to 3 on any campus or online but then all 4th years are online.

The School of Psychology currently offers a fifth and sixth year Master of Clinical Psychology in an online format, which requires a minimum of two fulltime academic years to complete. The program is online and combines coursework, placements under supervision and a research project. Residential schools are included for all units.

Typically there is a total intake of 15 EFTS into the clinical program; however it is important to note that many of the students are part time. Approximately 14 (2.71 FTE teaching component) staff, most of whom have PhDs, and with endorsement in Clinical Psychology, teach into the program.

There are currently 46.1 EFTS in the clinical program and 2.85 EFT staff teaching into the program resulting in a student: staff ratio of 16.18:1.

The staff members responsible for practical placement supervision associated with the clinical psychology program are registered psychologists with endorsement to practice in the area of clinical psychology.

There is an Advisory Board which is scheduled to meet annually. The composition of the committee does not include student representatives nor at least four representatives from agencies providing practical placements and future employers.

There is a well-equipped test library including multiple copies of the most commonly-used assessments that are readily accessible by students for coursework activities, as well as resources that students can access for their practicum work. The School has available space for teaching students interviewing, testing and assessment skills. There are appropriate holdings in the University library, and students

have access to computers with a range of software for word processing and data analysis and presentations.

Based on interviews with the staff and students, and inspection of teaching materials, completed assignments, log books, and supervisors' reports, it appears that the core capabilities and attributes of are covered across the coursework, practica and research units.

The forms of assessment were varied and included, where appropriate, competency demonstrations, exams, clinical tasks, and research reports, reports and practical testing exercises and responsible test use assessment.

Log books and progress reports for the students in the clinical program were inspected. They were sufficiently detailed with respect to the nature and hours of placement. Supervisor signatures were evident in the supervision logs and progress records.

The Master of Clinical Psychology consists of coursework, research and practical placement. The components are integrated and students must pass all three. The coursework is all psychology and is taught by Psychologists, the majority of whom are registered and teaching in their professional area of expertise.

The coursework contains 17 units and no electives. The assessment team inspected some of the coursework of the clinical students and reviewed unit outlines and the clinical program handbook. The coursework appears to meet the core capabilities and includes some coverage of the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce and the issues of practice management, record keeping and storing psychology files. The coursework clearly links research and practical application.

Several theses at the Masters level were examined during the site visit and were found to be of a good quality with interesting topics. The theses are independent pieces of work and are written in the format of a publication of between 5,000 and 15,000 words.

Students are required to complete in excess of 1000 hours of supervised practical placements in four placement units. Students complete two external placements in Year 1 and the other two external placements in Year 2 of their program. All placements are undertaken in the field. Given the registration of students as a criterion of entry, students appear to be adequately prepared to undertake these placements. Placements are provided at a variety of agencies across all states and appear to provide a range of different experiences to the students.

The placement coordinator is a registered and endorsed Clinical Psychologist. Students appear to be obtaining the appropriate amount of supervision and the procedures and forms relating to supervision contracts, mid-placement reviews and final placement assessment are appropriate. All copies of these forms and other documentation seen by the team during the visit had been signed off appropriately.

The accreditation outcomes are summarised in the attached Accreditation Summary Checklist.