



## APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

<b>Higher Education Provider</b>	<b>Swinburne University of Technology</b>		
<b>Date of Determination</b>	10 September 2018		
<b>Standards Version</b>	June 2010, version 10; Rules March 2014, amendments May 30 2016		
<b>Programs of Study Assessed</b>		Mode	Campus
	Bachelor of Health Science (Professional) (Psychology and Forensic Science)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Bachelor of Health Science (Professional) (Psychology & Psychophysiology)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Bachelor of Health Science (Psychology and Forensic Science)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Bachelor of Health Science (Psychology and Psychophysiology)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Bachelor of Psychological Sciences	Online	Open Universities Australia
	Bachelor of Psychological Sciences	Online	Swinburne Online
	Bachelor of Psychological Sciences	On campus	Hawthorn
	Graduate Diploma of Psychology	Online	Swinburne Online
	Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced)*	Online	Swinburne Online
	Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology)*	On campus	Hawthorn
	Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Doctor of Psychology (Clinical and Forensic Psychology)	On campus	Hawthorn
	Graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology	On campus	Hawthorn
	*New programs proposed for 2019 onwards		

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the Department of Psychological Sciences at Swinburne University of Technology 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.

At an undergraduate level, Swinburne University of Technology (SUT) offers three different modes of study for psychology: On-campus, online through Open University and online through Swinburne Online. Swinburne Online programs are administered and taught by Online Education Services (OES).

The Assessment team met with academic, administrative and technical staff as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Hawthorn campus. The team also met with some permanent OES staff at their premises in South Melbourne.

The AOU is the Department of Psychological Sciences which is located in the School of Health Sciences which in turn is located in the Faculty of Health, Arts and Design. The head of the AOU is Associate Professor Sunil Bhar, an experienced and recognised academic who has some control over staffing and resources.

The AOU staff meet the relevant qualification and level of appointment requirements and the overall student:academic staff ratio meets the required Standard. There also appears to be appropriate administrative and technical support for teaching and research.

The AOU has good laboratory and computing facilities and a well-stocked library. The test library has appropriate content and operating procedures.

The change in learning management system (from Blackboard to Canvas) appears to offer greater flexibility. There are no residential schools in the OUA mode but it does appear that students studying in that mode do generally receive an equivalent learning experience via appropriate online activities.

Assessment across the two modes is very similar but the fact that the sessions for the different modes are not synchronised means that identical assessments cannot be used. There are moderation procedures relating to both unit material and grades to ensure equivalence of standards across the two modes of delivery.

There are essentially two three-year undergraduate psychology programs of study – the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences and the Bachelor of Health Science, which has several versions. The former is also offered online by OUA while the latter is only available on-campus. The psychology sequence in both programs is identical. The length and course structure of the sequence meet the Standards.

With the exception of biological bases of behaviour, coverage of core content areas is adequate. All other Graduate Attributes for the three-year sequence are also adequately covered.

Inspection of the samples of assessed work indicated that it was of an appropriate standard and that the feedback given was generally appropriate.

The procedures for awarding credit or advanced standing are appropriate.

The Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) is a four-year program, the first three years of which are identical to the three-year Bachelor of Psychological Sciences. Entry requirements for the fourth year meet the Standards.

The coverage and content of the fourth year units is generally appropriate to the requirements of the Standards.

A range of appropriate assessments is used in the coursework units and students receive appropriate and timely feedback.

The research component and its assessment are in accordance with the Standards with the exception of that relating to external audit of students' work. A benchmarking exercise is currently being undertaken to meet this requirement.

A proposed new fifth-year program was assessed - the Master of Professional Psychology (School Psychology). It was determined that the highly specialised focus of the proposed program is inconsistent with the primary objective of fifth year programs which is that they 'should be to provide a general education in the professional practice of psychology'. Consequently, the proposed program cannot be accredited and will have no accreditation status.

There are two postgraduate 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year programs in Clinical Psychology - the Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) and Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology). The placement and coursework for the two programs is the same.

The student:staff ratio for the two programs is above the required ratio of 8:1 and will need to be addressed.

Minutes of the advisory committee which meets once each year, were provided and showed appropriate representation and evidence of appropriate review of the quality of training.

The Psychology Clinic has adequate facilities for training and seeing clients. Shortfalls in video recording equipment and the provision of confidential work areas for students are expected to be addressed when a new purpose built clinic comes in to operation in mid-2019.

The test library and the university library are appropriate for student needs as are computer facilities

Processes for awarding credit are clearly documented and appropriate.

The teaching and assessment of core capabilities meet the Standards.

Feedback from field supervisors indicated that students were well prepared for placement and had appropriate capabilities. They also reported that students' strengths include flexibility and breadth in intervention approaches, and a good knowledge of diagnosis.

The AOU has trialled OSCEs for assessment of capabilities with success and currently has plans to introduce OSCEs for all students in the clinical programs from next year.

Logbooks provided to the assessors, and feedback from students suggested that logbooks may not always be regularly signed off by supervisors. Other aspects of the logbook were appropriate, and staff have well developed systems in place to monitor placements and logbooks.

Entry and selection requirements meet the relevant Standards.

The course structure is appropriate, all coursework is taught by psychologists and students must pass coursework, research and practical placement to successfully complete the degree. In addition, the links between coursework, research and practical placements are appropriate.

Research project topics cover a broad range of topics appropriate to clinical psychology, are supervised by at least one academic member of staff from the AOU and are appropriate in length and format.

All students complete their first placement in the Psychology Clinic, and then many complete a second smaller placement also in the Clinic. The range of experiences students obtain within the Clinic are varied and provide them with opportunities to work with older adults, online delivery of interventions, and group programs.

The third and fourth placements are completed externally to the university and students are placed in a range of appropriate settings, and are supervised by Clinical Psychologists, who are approved supervisors. Student logbooks and feedback from students indicated that students receive appropriate amounts of supervision, documentation of placements are appropriate and the Placement Convenor, supported by an administrative assistant, provides excellent oversight of placements.

The Doctor of Psychology (Clinical and Forensic Psychology) permits graduates to seek area of practice endorsement in both specialities. The four-year program, which has appropriate entry requirements, is a research higher degree and builds on, and overlaps considerably with, the Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology).

The Director of the professional doctorate is an endorsed Clinical Psychologist and Forensic Psychologist. He is also the placement coordinator for the forensic psychology placements. There are two other members of staff who are endorsed Forensic Psychologists.

The advisory committee which meets at least once each year, has appropriate membership.

The forensic psychology staff are part of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science (CFBS) which is a spacious and well equipped facility located in Alphington. While taking the forensic psychology units, completing the forensic psychology practicums and working on their research, students are located in the Centre and immersed in a strong research milieu.

The test library and the university library are appropriate for student needs as are computer facilities.

Processes for awarding credit are clearly documented and appropriate.

The teaching and assessment of core capabilities meet the Standards.

Feedback from the forensic psychology field supervisors was very positive and indicated that students were well prepared for placement and had appropriate capabilities.

The course structure – comprising coursework, practicums and thesis – meets the required Standards.

The two year part-time Graduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology meets all the Standards relating to entry requirements, course length, course structure, practicum and coursework.

Programs offered under the Swinburne Online badge are administered and taught by Online Education Services (OES). Currently, this includes the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences and Graduate Diploma of Psychology. The assessment was made on the consideration that OES is a separate campus of SUT.

The course content of the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences is the same as that of the on-campus and OUA although it is slightly adapted to fit the SOL approach. The Graduate Diploma of Psychology is a three-year bridging program comprising the 12 core psychology units that are included in the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences.

In addition, based on a visit to the SOL campus, it does appear that permanent SOL staff are very enthusiastic and committed to their approach to education and that students are provided with a lot of support to assist them with their studies. The policies relating to the administration of the programs appear to be robust. Consequently the Bachelor of Psychological Sciences and the Graduate Diploma of Psychology can be accredited with the same conditions that apply to the on-campus and OUA 3-year programs.

The accreditation application also sought assessment of a fourth year Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced) to be offered through SOL.

The proposed coursework content of the program appears to be appropriate. However, there are problems with the teaching process in regard to limitations on contact time for students.

For the research project, all the actual supervision will be done by a SOL casual staff member and students will have no access to the SUT academic responsible for the research component of the program.

It is clear that students in the Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced) would not have an equivalent course experience or access to facilities compared to on-campus fourth year students as required by the Standards. In particular, the staffing arrangements are not sufficient or appropriate for a fourth year program.

In view of the above, the proposed program cannot be accredited and will have no accreditation status.

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### ***Commendation***

The AOU is commended on providing the students in the clinical psychology program opportunities to work with older adults, online delivery of interventions, and group programs.

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