



APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher Education Provider	University of the Sunshine Coast
Date of Determination	10 September 2018
Standards Version	June 2010, version 10; Rules March 2014, incorporating amendments as at May 30 2016
Programs of Study Assessed	<p>3 year sequence: Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Criminology and Justice Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Counselling</p> <p>4 year sequence: Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)</p> <p>4th year: Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)(Honours) Graduate Diploma of Psychology</p> <p>5th year: Master of Professional Psychology</p> <p>5th & 6th year: Master of Psychology (Clinical)</p>

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the Discipline of Psychology, School of Social Sciences at the University of the Sunshine Coast 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 Accreditation Assessment report.

The Assessment team met with students and staff at the University of Sunshine Coast campus at Sippy Downs for the undergraduate and fourth year programs and the Thompson Institute Campus for the postgraduate professional programs.

The AOU (Discipline of Psychology) sits in the School of Social Sciences and is located in the Faculty of Arts, Business and Law. The Discipline of Psychology has an identifiable Head of Discipline (HOD), Professor Mary Katsikitis. While workloads, leave, performance appraisal, etc. were all carried out by the Head of School, the HOD has input into the decision-making processes.

The AOU is an identifiable core of psychologists, with two groups of staff presented in program structure and in geographical location; an undergraduate and fourth year group of staff at Sippy Downs (SD) and the postgraduate professional programs staff at the Thompson Institute (TI).

Sufficient administrative support is in evidence. In terms of technical and computer support this was part of a whole of USC support service. There was also some administrative and technical support offered for research at the USC level.

A research milieu was evident, evidenced by research leadership, research mentoring, research administrative support and research support for HDR students.

Resources, including staffing, and facilities at the respective campuses (SD and TI) support the education and training of psychology. The Head of Discipline has appropriate experience and qualifications.

The Discipline of Psychology requires staff to comply with appropriate codes of ethical conduct. Advice from students suggests these codes of conduct are consistently followed. Privacy and confidentiality of the recorded client files at TI is ensured.

Grades of assessment and grading systems are appropriate, and the processes for regular quality review of teaching and training was clear.

The Discipline of Psychology has sufficient staffing and the total student: academic ratio meets the Standards.

The ratio of level C and D staff to full time equivalent staff is sufficient, and sufficient staff have a PhD, as well as expertise in the teaching of psychology. There are several staff currently considered research active. The psychology academic staff have demonstrated teaching experience, and teaching is routinely evaluated by students. There is a staff performance management system in place. For the clinical psychology program there are appropriately qualified staff, including the program coordinator and placement coordinator.

There is appropriate access to teaching spaces and computer facilities that meet current teaching requirements. There is an appropriately equipped test and resource library, with appropriate staffing and access for students.

Unit outlines for courses were detailed and up to date and provided relevant information to students regarding requirements of their courses. Core content areas required in the Standards for undergraduate 3 year programs are covered in the core units, and graduate attributes are met in all required areas.

Students reported that feedback on assessment was consistently received in a timely manner and procedures were undertaken consistently to ensure standards are maintained and that all assessment and awarding of marks is treated with care and attention. Students did report that processes in place to deal with student appeals were consistently followed.

The minimum entry requirement for the two 4th year programs meets the Standards. Course content is appropriate within the fourth year.

Students in the Graduate Diploma of Psychology complete a research project as part of a group, and may share data collection, although they must develop their own research questions, do their own data analyses to test their individual research questions, and complete an individual write up.

Students in the Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) (Honours) and Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) complete appropriate research projects. Staff supervise approximately 4 students each. It was confirmed that all primary supervisors will be Psychology AOU staff.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for assessment, and for resolving any discrepancies between examiners. Procedures for good governance relating to student appeals were reported by students.

The Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) offers the same psychology structure as the undergraduate bachelor programs, and entry requirements are appropriate. Students who do not reach the fourth year of this program will exit with a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) degree at the end of three years.

The postgraduate professional programs of study are all delivered on the TI Campus of USC.

The Master of Professional Psychology (MPP) is one year of full-time or two years part-time study and prepares the student for the professional practice of psychology. The MPP staff are appropriately qualified and the student:staff ratio meets the Standard. Selection and entry to the course is carried out appropriately. The course contains 100% psychology in course work and practice units.

The TI consulting rooms and teaching observation rooms are very good; the test library, library holdings (at SD) and computing resources all facilitate the learning of students in the MPP.

The core capabilities and attributes required by the Standards are covered across the coursework and practica. The forms of assessment were varied and where appropriate, included competency demonstrations, exams, clinical tasks, reports and practical testing exercises and responsible test use assessment.

Log books were sufficiently detailed with respect to the nature and hours of placement.

The MPP consists of coursework, and practical and skills training components, and is taught by appropriately qualified teaching staff. It appears to meet the core capabilities indicated in the Standards and clearly links to skills and practical training which have the required hours and supervision. Students appear to be obtaining the appropriate amount of supervision and the relevant procedures and forms are appropriate.

The fifth and sixth year Master of Psychology (Clinical) is offered at TI. The program combines coursework, placements under supervision and a research project. The weighting of the components is appropriate, and coursework appears to meet the core capabilities required in the Standards.

The student:staff ratio meets the Standards. The staff members responsible for practical placement supervision associated with the clinical psychology program are registered psychologists with endorsement to practise in the area of clinical psychology.

There is a well-equipped test library including multiple copies of the most commonly-used assessments that are accessible by students for coursework activities, as well as resources that students are able to access for their practicum work. The test library is appropriately secure at TI.

The Discipline has available space for teaching students interviewing, testing and assessment skills and students have secure workspace for confidential work relating to client documentation.

The core capabilities and attributes required in the Standards are covered across the coursework, practica and research units, and the forms of assessment are varied and meet the requirements.

Log books and progress reports for the students in the clinical program were inspected and were sufficiently detailed with respect to the nature and hours of placement. Supervisor signatures were evident in most but not all the supervision logs and progress records.

Entry and selection procedures for applicants to the Clinical program are appropriate.

Several research project and thesis components of the Master's degree were examined during the site visit and were found to be of a good quality with interesting clinical topics.

Practical placements are appropriate and meet the requirements, with students provided with a range of different experiences. Supervisors and the placement coordinator are appropriately qualified. Students appear to be obtaining the appropriate amount of supervision and the relevant procedures and forms are appropriate.

Commendation

The AOU at USC should be commended on the high levels of satisfaction reported from students in both the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. In addition, the field supervisors for the Master of Clinical Psychology program indicated support for the high level of skill the students brought to their field work which they felt was a result of their preparation and training.

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