



**APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report**

<b>Higher Education Provider</b>	<b>University of Wollongong</b>
<b>Date of determination</b>	<b>30 October 2017</b>
<b>Standards version</b>	<b>June 2010 (Version 10); Rules March 2014, amendments May 30 2016</b>
<b>Programs of Study Assessed for Accreditation</b>  <b>All programs are offered at the Wollongong campus, with the Bachelor of Psychological Science also offered at the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM).</b>	<b>Three year:</b> Bachelor of Arts (Psychology). Bachelor of Psychological Science. Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)* to be replaced. Bachelor of Psychological Science / Bachelor of Commerce. Bachelor of Psychological Science / Bachelor of Laws. Bachelor of Psychological Science / Bachelor of Social Science* new in 2018. Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) / Bachelor of Commerce. Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) / Bachelor of Laws.  <b>4<sup>th</sup> year:</b> Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours). Graduate Diploma in Psychology.  <b>Four year:</b> Bachelor of Psychology (Honours). Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) / Bachelor of Commerce.  <b>5<sup>th</sup> year:</b> Master of Professional Psychology.  <b>5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years:</b> Master of Psychology (Clinical). Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the School of Psychology at the University of Wollongong (UOW). This summary highlights selected key features of the assessment. Comprehensive analysis of the assessment is contained in the full APAC Assessment Team report.

The School of Psychology is an identifiable AOU with a core set of staff and recognised Head. It is an autonomous stand-alone School in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The current Head has responsibility for a budget to cover salaries, operational matters and staff research and for the line management of academic staff and the Director of the Northfields Clinic.

Psychology is also taught as part of the partnership agreement between UOW and SIM, a high quality private education provider in Singapore. Currently the three year Bachelor of Psychological Science is taught with the degree badged as the University of Wollongong with the Bachelor of Science (Psychology) being taught out.

An aspect of the AOU to note is the stability of both the academic and the professional staff (all of whom are School-based) in Wollongong with many serving long periods with the School. This has built a strong sense of community and camaraderie which in turn has a beneficial effect on student outcomes. Similar stability was noted in the staffing, both academic and administrative, in SIM.

The School has a dedicated professional team who report to the School Manager. IT is the main service that has been centralised but, for example, administrative access to specialist software for research is granted to academic staff.

There is good access to lecture theatres, tutorial rooms and computer laboratories and much of the space in the main building that houses the AOU is available as priority to Psychology. There is also generous open space where students can work or socialise. The research laboratory space for academic staff is very impressive with many staff having a suite of rooms to conduct research and host Honours, Masters and PhD projects.

There is a test library in the School which has dedicated staff and is overseen by a Level C academic. It is well stocked with a good range of current and specialised tests. There is also a small test library in the Northfields Clinic for use by students on placement.

Most of the undergraduate teaching is conducted via traditional lectures, although both students and staff reported low attendance at lectures, mainly because the lectures are subsequently available on-line. There is no distance education *per se* so all teaching is resourced at the same level. Students are all provided with very comprehensive unit outlines and the unit material is updated regularly. Lab training and the teaching of statistics are regarded a strength of the undergraduate program at both Wollongong and SIM and commented on favourably by students.

Staff are all required to make themselves available for student consultation for between two and four hours a week. There is a three week turnaround for assignment marking (done in Turnitin) although for some first year units there is a 10 working day turnaround to allow for moderation of marks across tutors. All units provide opportunity for formative assessment as well as final exams and a large sample of assessments was made available for inspection and the matrix of the Graduate Attributes also listed the forms of assessment used.

Student evaluation of units is undertaken regularly.

The University of Wollongong has a partnership with Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) and delivers the three year sequence in the Bachelor of Psychological Science. Similar face-to-face teaching occurs at SIM with UOW staff conducting the third year lectures at SIM with first and second year lectures delivered by staff employed by SIM based on materials supplied by the AOU and contextualised (and approved) where relevant.

A tour of the SIM campus facilities was given and lecture theatres, seminar rooms and computer laboratories are well resourced.

The three year sequence is offered in three degrees plus four combined degrees based on the three year degrees. The Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) is to be discontinued and taught out and will be replaced with a combined degree Bachelor of Psychological Science / Bachelor of Social Science in 2018.

Overall, the course provides a broad education in the discipline of psychology. One interesting feature is the unit entitled History and Metatheory of Psychology at third year, compulsory for those wishing to enter Honours. Students felt intimidated by the course before they started but, on completion, had enjoyed the philosophical challenges it offered and appreciated a deeper understanding of the origins of the empirical scientific method used in psychology.

Mapping of the Graduate Attributes showed where the core discipline areas were taught and how they were assessed. Reference material in the unit outlines was all up-to-date and included peer-reviewed published articles as well as textbooks. Formal practical work is included in laboratories in the majority of units.

Examples of student assessments were provided by the School Teaching and Learning Coordinator. Not only was a good range of assessments provided for inspection but the types of assessment also varied and covered exams, lab reports and essays. Sufficient time was available for a thorough inspection of the materials. Appropriate procedures are in place for marking, grades, appeals and plagiarism.

The University of Wollongong offers two stand-alone 4<sup>th</sup> year programs – the Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) and the Graduate Diploma in Psychology.

The Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) offers traditional on-campus 4<sup>th</sup> year psychology training. Students come predominately from the University of Wollongong undergraduate psychology major programs, with a number of students (5 – 10 per year) coming from the Singapore campus undergraduate psychology program to complete their 4<sup>th</sup> year.

The Graduate Attributes are appropriately met. The coursework includes teaching in an appropriate range of advanced topics, including research methods, psychological assessment and intervention. Students complete coursework in advanced research methods, including a variety of approaches to undertaking research, and research ethics. Students complete a traditional thesis of 12,000 words.

Students undertake a range of assessment activities, including presentations, formal examinations and written coursework. The thesis is marked by two internal members of staff and the final mark moderated where required.

The Graduate Diploma is hosted jointly by the School of Psychology and the School of Education, with the support of the New South Wales Department of Education. The program aims to provide the taught component of a '4+2' training for prospective school counsellors, and uses a mixture of online and intensive teaching blocks undertaken at the Wollongong campus and the Sydney Business School. Students are employees of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, and the program runs part time over a two-year period.

Applicants are required to have a degree level qualification in Education, with a major in psychology. They must have also have been selected by the New South Wales Department of Education to

participate in the School Counsellors in Training (SCIT) program.

Students undertake a number of psychology units and the Graduate Attributes are appropriately met, with units covering assessment, intervention, research, health psychology, social psychology, child psychology and abnormal psychology. Research methods and professional and research ethics are appropriately covered in a number of the courses offered.

Students undertake an individual research project within an educational setting, and are co-supervised by staff from the School of Psychology.

Assessment methods used include written reports, case reports, formal examinations and a research thesis.

Students from both programs spoke highly of the quality of the teaching.

There is one four year course, the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), that can be taken alone or in combination with a Bachelor of Commerce. It is identical in all respects to the three year course and the 4<sup>th</sup> year Honours course.

There are two postgraduate professional programs – the Master of Professional Psychology (MPP) and the Master of Psychology (Clinical) which can be taken in conjunction with a PhD. They meet all staffing requirements and the student: staff ratio for the MPP is 14.72: 1 and for the two Clinical programs combined, 2.75 : 1.

The staff members who are responsible for placements and, on occasion, practicum supervision are all registered and hold area of practice endorsement in Clinical Psychology.

There is a single Advisory committee – the Professional and Clinical Programs External Advisory Committee. It meets twice a year. It is quite large as it has representation from the two postgraduate programs plus including external members and appropriate student representatives. Students and external members were amongst those interviewed and indicated it was a useful vehicle for input and discussion.

The training facilities are located in the Northfields Clinic, an on-campus public clinic. Both groups (the MPP and the Clinical students) commence their training in the Clinic – both for 60 hours prior to their external placement and the latter group can complete further hours in the Clinic.

The Clinic comprises a reception and waiting area, six consultation rooms and a group room. It has a full-time and a part-time receptionist. There are offices for the Clinic Director, the Clinic Supervision Coordinator and the MPP Practicum Coordinator. The consulting rooms all have recording facilities and a duress alarm. The Clinic also has a large work area for students where they can score tests and write reports.

Careful and clear mapping of the core capabilities and attributes for both the MPP and the Clinical programs was included in the submission. This was augmented at the site visit by detailed overviews of the content and assessment tasks of each of the programs separately. Both courses are very comprehensive. One or two students annually transfer from the MPP to the Clinical program.

Students must demonstrate they have attained a minimum average credit level of competence, proficiency and professionalism in each of the core capabilities and attributes. Weekly teaching and supervision staff meetings are used to monitor each student's progress and to identify any specific learning or competency development issues.

Log books including practical, casework and supervision experiences were inspected. They were very detailed and included tasks, logged hours, supervision and client contact. MPP students' log books are signed manually. The electronic sign-off for the Clinical students does not place a signature on the notes and files; rather it is an acknowledgment that the supervisor has viewed and approved the record(s). It was agreed that this provides an adequate trail of completion and perusal of the practical experiences. Ways to insert an electronic signature will be explored.

An extensive range of assessments was made available to the assessment team, for both the MPP and the Clinical programs. A guide to the assessments was also provided for each of the programs.

The MPP meets the criteria for one year of full time education to prepare students for a final year of supervised practice. While there are two, and possibly, three units that are the same as those in the Master of Psychology (Clinical), it is argued that these are foundational, broad and generalist, providing an education in core, not specialist, content. The coursework provides education in core content and the application detailed the foundation education and training provided. This was supported by perusal of the assessments and log books, as well as comments from the teaching staff, students and external supervisors.

Students complete 60 hours of supervised practical in the Northfields Clinic prior to or concurrent with going out on a single external placement, usually of 290 hours (two days a week for six months). Placements are typically in government departments or in small NGOs.

Reports and case notes are signed manually. Most supervision occurs in individual and group supervision undertaken in the Clinic at one hour a fortnight and two hours weekly respectively. Supervision follows a clear pathway from generalised skills through to client-focused and reflective practice. All MPP students receive similar supervision experiences from supervisors in the Clinic.

Supervisors for the MPP all hold general registration plus supervisor training and a file of CVs of current supervisors was sighted. Formal recognition of the supervisors seemed limited to the provision of supervision training at no cost and an invitation to the Clinic Christmas lunch.

The practicum supervisor is registered and liaises directly with field supervisors and completes the mid-placement review.

The fifth and sixth years of professional (clinical) education can be taken either as a Masters course or as part of an integrated course with the PhD. Of the annual intake of about 16 students, half enter the Masters course and half the PhD. Transfer between the two is only possible for students initially enrolled in the Masters program. The PhD is very flexible and students are encouraged to start their research before commencing the coursework, although if the proposed research area requires some clinical knowledge, then the coursework can be started. Students can chart their own progress through the coursework, broadly following the sequence of the Masters. This ensures timely completion of the PhD (just over four years for the students interviewed by the assessment team) as well as the coursework.

In addition to specialist clinical content, the course covers the core content, the current version of the *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce*, teaching in practice management, storing and accessing psychology files and record keeping, and managing people.

In the coursework, links are made to application of skills learned during class into practice. This is done through the use of role plays, feedback using video recording, vignettes, case studies and clinical material such as test results. The components of the course work are sequenced to parallel the development of skills necessary for practical placements

Like the coursework and practica, the research project is started early on in first year. The Masters students are expected to be part of the full scientific process associated with their project and in their first year complete a literature review and in the second, a manual for analysing their data sets and a research article. Students also present a poster in their first year during one of the School's biannual Research Weeks. There is a clear timetable for the progress of the research project and supervision by project supervisors is complemented by statistical advice provided by a consultant within the School of Psychology.

A small number of these were inspected and were appropriate in terms of length, topic and examination process.

The PhD research process is governed by university policies and procedures and those students interviewed were conducting some interesting clinical topics.

All Clinical students spend 1000 hours in supervised practice. They complete a minimum of 400 face to face hours and 180 hours of supervision (at least 50% individual). As the placements commence early, ethics is taught on-line supplemented by group supervision. Time is spent teaching the *Code of Ethics* and other issues such as ethical decision-making, self-care and psychology and law.

Students complete at least one placement in Northfields Clinic and then at least two external placements. Students are placed in a range of settings and a comprehensive document was provided to the assessment team that described the students and their placements since 2012.

All placements are supervised by appropriately qualified and registered psychologists. In cases where the supervisor did not have area of practice endorsement, a staff member with such endorsement served as a co-supervisor.

Electronic log books are maintained by students and are signed off by the supervisor. Supervisors for the Clinical placements all hold general registration plus area of practice endorsement in Clinical Psychology. The current list of supervisors and a sample of CVs were inspected. Formal recognition of the supervisors included application to be an Honorary Fellow of the School and the provision of supervision training at no cost.

Examples of supervision contracts, mid-placement reviews and final placement reviews were inspected.

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