

ISN Psychology - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	ISN Psychology Pty Ltd
Name of the Psychology AOU	ISN Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3) Master of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Master of Psychology (Sport & Exercise) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Doctor of Psychology (Sport & Exercise, Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4)
Campus	Austin Precinct, 443 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe VIC 3079
Date of virtual site visit	8 - 11 June 2021
Date of APAC Board Determination	11 October 2021
Accreditation start date	1 January 2022
Accreditation end date	31 December 2026

Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) first reviewed the Institute for Social Neuroscience Psychology's (ISN) suite of undergraduate Level 1, fourth year Level 2 Honours, four year packaged Level 1 and 2 Honours and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical programs for initial accreditation in 2016.

At the time of the 2016 desktop review, the Level 1, Level 2, packaged Level 1 and 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical programs under development offered at the Austin Precinct campus were accredited with conditions for a shortened period as a number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the initial review, a site visit was conducted mid-2017 to inspect facilities and physical resources. A follow up assessment was completed in September 2018 to assess the Institute's progress towards establishing the academic organisational unit and developing and implementing its undergraduate, Honours and Clinical programs. Further monitoring reviews were undertaken in April and August of 2019 to ensure that clinical placements, staffing and resources were sufficient to enable students to achieve program learning outcomes and attain the relevant graduate competencies along with a supportive and equitable student experience.

Since the last review, ISN had opened and moved to a purpose built space at the Austin Precinct campus located in Ivanhoe in early 2019 and later the same year, established an additional clinic located in University Hill, Bundoora. ISN undertook a restructure that resulted in a transitional period where the Institute experienced some staff turnover, including the departure of one of the Directors of ISN Psychology and the holding company, the Institute for Social Neuroscience, and the termination of the *Three Seas* placement arrangement. With a more streamlined operation, the Institute appointed two additional Directors shortly after and introduced a Professoriate to provide leadership in the Clinical program.

A number of changes to program offerings were made in 2019, and this included the accreditation of packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies, Level 3 Masters of Professional Psychology and packaged Level 3 and 4 Masters of Psychology (Sport & Exercise) and Doctor of Psychology (Sport & Exercise, Clinical) programs. Additionally, the Institute decided to discontinue its undergraduate Level 1 and four year packaged Level 1 and 2 Honours programs indicating its inability to compete with the university sector who can offer a large number of Commonwealth supported places, and insufficient demand.

The APAC Assessment Team considered the Institute's 109 page self-review, including attached appendices and samples of student assessments, against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team conference held on 20 April 2021, additional information was requested and received from ISN, including:

- ISN's written response to APAC's request for additional information
- *Section B-7: Grievance & Complaints* and *Section C: Grievance, Complaints, and Appeals Procedure*
- contracts with current external organisations providing external placement opportunities

- induction processes outlined in the *ISN Welcome Pack 2021*, *ISN Practicum A ISN Placement Handbook Master of Professional Psychology 2021 (A user guide for Students and Supervisors)*, *ISN Placement Handbook 2021 Master of Psychology (Clinical) (A user guide for Students and Supervisors)*, *ISN Placement Handbook 2021 MPsych/DPsych (Sport & Exercise, Clinical)*
- full list of academic staff and the units into which they teach
- competency matrix and a summary table indicating where cultural responsiveness is assessed within the packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs
- competency matrix and a summary table indicating where the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice is assessed in the units for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs
- detailed unit outlines including details of proposed assessments for all units of the packaged Level 3 and 4 Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs
- Level 3 Research Project Part A and Research Project Part B, including unit outlines, assessment details and marking rubrics detailed within the *Instruction Manual for ISN5104 of the Master of Professional Psychology* and *Instruction Manual for ISN5203 of the Master of Professional Psychology*, respectively
- complete list of test resources available to ISN students including assessments available on Q-global and a list of tests available specifically used by Sport and Exercise Psychologists
- *Section F5: Pre-emptive Remedial, At Risk, At Risk (Honours) and Show Cause Notifications* and *Section F6: Show Cause Policies and Procedures*
- summary report of de-identified data of students accessing counselling services
- updated SSR calculator as of 13 May 2021

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the range of facilities, including:

- Ivanhoe offices, main teaching spaces, library, auditorium located at the Austin Precinct campus
- ISN Clinic Ivanhoe located at the Austin Precinct campus, including triage student room, reception, test kits and electronic resources, four sound attenuated clinic rooms, *Cisco WebEx Telehealth Connector* and *Cisco Spark Board* connectivity, including a room to room viewing in addition to direct observation capabilities

- ISN Clinic Bundoora located at University Hill, including reception and waiting area, triage space, eight large clinic rooms, including the Clinic Director's Consulting Room, large group work and teaching space, *Titanium Schedule* and *InPlace* software for client management and tracking student progress, respectively as well as dedicated car parking space for staff and clients
- both the Ivanhoe and Bundoora Clinics are fitted with duress sensors, alarm monitoring and security cameras and house psychological test kits and electronic resources

The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 8-11 June 2021. During the site visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals via Zoom conferences, including:

- CEO, President, Director, Head, ISN Innovations
- Academic Board Chair and members
- Assistant Registrar
- Clinic Director and Internal Placement Coordinator
- Director of Academic Studies and Director of Research Scholarship
- Director of Clinical Programs
- Director of Learning and Teaching
- Director, Registrar and General Manager
- Disability Support Officer and Student Liaison Officer
- Library Services and Digital Resources Officer
- Operations Support Officer/PA to CEO
- packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate Program Coordinator
- packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate Unit Coordinators
- packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate academic and sessional academic staff
- current students for all programs

- packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters graduates
- packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate Placement Coordinators
- packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate placement supervisors (external, internal)

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with supplementary information, including the *Instruction manual for ISN613*, samples of ISN613 research projects, list of research topics located within the *ISN Honours and Masters Student Research Handbooks - Semester 1, Governance Framework, May 2021*, and a copy of the *Final Resolutions of College Council Proposed Amendments to Governance Framework* document.

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

ISN's philosophy centres on *Thriving Minds in an Evolving World* through innovations and science, and utilises research, clinical training and education opportunities in psychology to realise its vision. Programs employ a multidisciplinary approach to social neuroscience and focus on ensuring graduates are at the forefront of advances in psychology. ISN's suite of psychology programs is designed to provide a pathway towards a career as a registered psychologist and prepare graduates for work in various settings through research, hospitals, government, and education. Programs at the Graduate Diploma and Honours level are aimed to provide students with a solid grounding in psychology study and research and the Masters level programs feature coursework, practical placements, research components and work-integrated learning.

The Institute has transparent governance processes with well-formed committee structures. At the time of the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was advised of the Institute's recent adoption of a new Governance Framework and the formation of two specific committees. The evidence gathered indicated substantial industry input incorporated into the design of its programs; however, the Institute would benefit from a more systematic method of incorporating external input into the ongoing management of its programs.

Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that the mechanisms in place to incorporate student feedback into the design and delivery of the programs are working well. While the Assessment Team acknowledges significant work has been undertaken in external benchmarking of telehealth processes, Graduate Diploma and Honours thesis marking, and internal benchmarking comparison across programs, programs would benefit further from systematic and ongoing external benchmarking.

The Institute has demonstrated a commitment towards cultural awareness and responsiveness, and there is evidence of integration of learning outcomes in several units of its programs. There are opportunities for the Institute to strengthen this and provide students with greater exposure in cultural competence and responsiveness, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both in content and assessment in education and practice. Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that all relevant programs would benefit from further development and integration of inter-professional learning and practice.

The Institute has policies and procedures in place for handling appeals, complaints and grievances and these processes are well communicated to students. The Assessment Team heard that the student experience in terms of application, enrolment and onboarding is excellent and this was identified as a strength of the Institute. The professional and academic staff involved in the process were found to be proactive, approachable, supportive and to provide a personalised approach students and graduates highly value. The Institute's facilities were identified as fit for purpose and students reported satisfaction with the physical resources.

The Institute has a strong research focus and through its research, provides learning opportunities for students to conduct research and undertake work-ready evidence-based methods used in pursuit of translational research opportunities. There is evidence that many staff are active researchers and leaders in their field of research; however, varying employment contracts with the different arms of the Institute (ISN Psychology or ISN Innovations) and differing workload models resulted in minimal integration between teaching, practice, and research.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at ISN Psychology are re-accredited with conditions until **31 December 2026**:

- **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Studies** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Austin Precinct)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Austin Precinct)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Austin Precinct)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Austin Precinct)
- **Master of Psychology (Sport & Exercise)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Austin Precinct)
- **Doctor of Psychology (Sport & Exercise, Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Austin Precinct)

Subject to the following conditions:

For all programs

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.4 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating that students are provided with timely feedback in all units.

By **28 February 2022**:

2. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.3 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating relevant external and internal input into the management of the programs.
3. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.5 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating that all staff are supported to undertake and engage in learning and teaching development opportunities to support effective and contemporary teaching approaches.

For the packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Institute is to provide evidence of a range of de-identified samples of student assessment tasks demonstrating that the following competencies appropriately assessed as a learning outcome:
 - i. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (criterion 3.8), and
 - ii. the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice (criterion 3.9 for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs only).

For the packaged Level 1 and 2 Graduate Diploma, Level 2 Honours and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters programs

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 4 The student experience, criterion 4.1 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating that learning and assessment requirements are accurate, clear and accessible.

For the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters program

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.1 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence that appropriate research projects are allocated to students relevant to their specific area of study in psychology education.

For the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters program

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criterion 1.3 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence that effective management processes are in place for both internal and external placements to ensure that students have the ability to practise competently and safely.

For the Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs

By **15 October 2021**:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10 and Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.7 are met, a monitoring site visit is to be undertaken after the cohorts have commenced their placements (October-November 2021) to interview staff, students, and supervisors. Additionally, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating that
 - i. suitably qualified placement supervisors provide sufficient hours of supervision (criterion 1.8), and

- ii. the quality and quantity of professional practice education and placements are sufficient in duration to enable students to practise safely and to demonstrate the relevant competencies (criteria 1.9, 1.10 and 3.7).

For the Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs

By 15 October 2021:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criterion 1.7 and Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.3 are met, the Institute is to provide a rationale on how staff is appropriately qualified and experienced for research teaching and research project allocation.

By 28 February 2022:

2. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating the progress and outcomes of external benchmarking activities.
3. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.4 is met, the Institute is to provide evidence demonstrating that mechanisms exist for responding to contemporary developments and to ensure research informs teaching and/or practice.

As a monitoring requirement **for the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters program**, a monitoring site visit is to be undertaken after the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate student cohorts have commenced their placements (October-November 2021) to interview staff, students, and supervisors.

Additionally, the Institute is to provide the following reports as part of the 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 annual reports

For all programs

1. update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise (criterion 2.2).
2. evidence demonstrating that there is relevant and regular external and internal input into the management of the programs (criterion 2.3).
3. an updated staff to student ratio and a rationale for how these programs continue to meet Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.4.

For the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters program

4. an update and evidence demonstrating that the mechanisms in place for managing a range of safe student placement experiences is effective and meet all the relevant regulations and standards (criterion 1.4).

-
5. an update and evidence demonstrating that suitably qualified placement supervisors continue to provide sufficient placement supervision for future cohorts to enable safe practise (criterion 1.8 and criterion 1.10).

For the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Sport & Exercise Masters and Sport & Exercise, Clinical Doctorate programs

6. an update and evidence demonstrating that the learning and teaching methodologies for the programs enable students to achieve the desired learning outcomes when assessed (criterion 3.6).
-

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

	Level 1 and 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 and 4 Clinical	Level 3 and 4 Sport & Exercise, Clinical
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured				
	Standard is met	Standard is 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 substantially met	Standard is substantially 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 met	Standard is 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 substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is met	Standard is substantially 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 ISN Psychology:

1. investigate opportunities to introduce a formal induction, training and mentoring program for new academic teaching staff.
2. 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.

ISN Psychology is commended for:

1. the fit-for-purpose facilities available at ISN's Ivanhoe and Bundoora Clinics.
2. the level of support and personalised service provided to students during the admission, enrolment, and onboarding process.
3. its strong links to the Sport and Exercise industry and engaging the field to develop a high-quality program.
4. providing students in the professional programs with a breadth of placement opportunities and experiences.