

Flinders University - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	Flinders University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Discipline of Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	<p>Bachelor of Arts (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts and Science (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Arts (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Computer Science (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice (Honours)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Laws (Honours)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business (Marketing) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology (Honours) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Sport, Health and Physical Activity (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Graduate Entry) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Animal Behaviour)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p>

	Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (Level 2) Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Honours) (Level 2) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2) Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3) Master of Psychology (Clinical) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4)
Campus	Bedford Park
Date of site visit	29 June - 2 July 2021
Date of APAC Board Determination	29 November 2021
Accreditation start date	1 January 2022
Accreditation end date	31 December 2026

Background and overview

The Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) last reviewed Flinders University's (Flinders) suite of undergraduate Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, fourth year Level 2, and postgraduate packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical psychology programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2016. This report concerns only the programs taught at Flinders' Bedford Park campus; please refer to the separate report for Flinders' programs taught at the HELP University Malaysia campus.

At the time of the 2016 review, Flinders' range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs was accredited without conditions for a period of five years. Since the last review, Flinders has undertaken an organisational restructure, and, from 2017, the former School of Psychology was replaced with a consolidated College/Discipline structure. The Discipline of Psychology is now embedded within the College of Education, Psychology of Social Work.

In 2018, Flinders notified APAC that the Level 1 Graduate Diploma in Psychology bridging program no longer had students enrolled, and accreditation for the program was discontinued.

In 2019, the Discipline submitted an application for accreditation of the Level 2 Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced) program at the Bedford Park campus. At the time of the assessment, the program was accredited subject to eight conditions. Additionally, in 2020, the Discipline submitted an out of cycle initial application for accreditation of a Level 3 Master of Professional Psychology program. At the time of the review, the program was accredited, subject to four conditions and two monitoring requirements.

The Assessment Team considered the Discipline of Psychology's 79-page self-review and attached appendices against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team Zoom conference held on 10 May 2021, additional information was requested and received from Flinders, including:

- clarification of the process for mandatory reporting of student notifiable conduct or impairment
- comprehensive mapping to the graduate competencies, assessments and unit and course learning outcomes for all programs
- a variety of samples of complete de-identified student logbooks, as well as a rationale for the required placement hours of 1140 for the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical programs
- an update on the progress of external benchmarking exercises for all programs, and any outcomes, if available
- a list of the members and any recent minutes of the Course Quality Advisory Group meetings, as well as any recent meeting minutes for the Professional Advisory Committee
- a quality assurance and governance structure chart which outlines the relationship between the various Committees, Groups and Boards and their responsibilities
- a rationale for the high Student to Staff Ratio (SSR) of 60:1 for the Level 1 programs at the Bedford Park campus

- access to the topic information in the Resources Hub on Flinders Learning Online
- information regarding the grievance and appeals processes, including at HELP, and any de-identified examples of grievances and appeals

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the Flinders University Psychology Clinic located at the Bedford Park campus.

The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 29 June - 2 July 2021. During the virtual visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals based at Flinders' Bedford Park and the HELP Malaysia campuses via Zoom conferences, including:

- Executive Dean/Vice-President, College of Education, Psychology of Social Work
- Dean (Education), College of Education, Psychology of Social Work
- Dean of People & Resources
- Head of Discipline
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Teaching Program Directors
- Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Course Coordinators
- Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Topic Coordinators
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 sessional academic staff
- Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 current students
- Level 1, Level 2 and packaged Level 3 and 4 recent graduates
- Clinical Academic Staff
- Placement Coordinator
- Clinic Director
- Clinic supervisors
- External placement supervisors
- Professional staff

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with additional information, including:

- a list of the core units within the Level 1 and Level 2 programs and rationale for how the *Foundational Competencies* and *Pre-Professional Competencies* are assessed in these core units.
- placement allocations for all packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical students over the past three years

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, as well as information provided in the rejoinder to the draft report.

Key findings

The Discipline of Psychology is embedded within a group of disciplines and the broader College of Education, Psychology and Social Work. The Discipline has a focus on research excellence and evidence-based psychology education and provides students with the knowledge and training to achieve pre-professional and research competencies and become work-ready as a professional psychologist. The forward-thinking, strategically focused leadership team is well respected, and academic and professional staff are supported under the guidance and direction of the Head of Discipline and the College's senior staff.

The evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs are well established, coordinated and organised. The suite of undergraduate programs builds the foundations for students to progress towards further studies and a career as a psychologist or academic researcher in psychology. The packaged Level 1 and 2 program offers the option to undertake a placement unit within the mental health sector, providing students with exposure to the psychology profession.

At the time of the site visit, students spoke highly of the education and training within the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs, and the Assessment Team was impressed by the positive feedback received from external supervisors regarding Flinders' students, indicating that they are well trained and prepared to undertake services as a provisional psychologist. Further, the Assessment Team heard views that the administration of the placements is well coordinated, and the final evaluation tool is often used as an example for other education providers. However, it was noted that the first placement at the Flinders University Psychology Clinic is heavily focused on the psycho-educational assessment of children and adolescents, and when students undertake other placements at the range of Flinders' community clinics and services (i.e. Flinders' Sleep clinic, Flinders' University Services for Eating Disorders and Flinders' Medical Centre Pain Management Unit), the scope of these combined experiences may limit the students' ability to sufficiently acquire a breadth of clinical competencies. Additionally, there was evidence that Level 4 competencies and content relating to cultural responsiveness, and interprofessional learning and practice are not sufficiently embedded and appropriately assessed as required learning outcomes. The Discipline is required to address these issues.

The Assessment Team heard a range of views that the online learning environments and teaching facilities are fit-for-purpose. However, while Flinders' Psychology Clinic has appropriate safety measures in place, including sufficient recording facilities and resources for students to use, the consultation rooms are not sufficiently soundproofed, resulting in staff using the clinic's radio to mask confidential consultations from being overheard in the waiting area. As a result, the Discipline must warrant that the facilities are equipped for psychological services by ensuring the consultation rooms are sufficiently soundproofed to guarantee an adequate, safe, and confidential experience for students and clients.

It was further noted that students who complete the Level 2 Graduate Diploma program are not eligible for admission into the Flinders' packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical program, despite graduates acquiring the Level 2 *Pre-Professional Competencies*. Therefore, the Assessment Team recommends that the Discipline reconsider the scope of entry requirements into the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical program to allow articulation from the Level 2 Graduate Diploma program. Additionally, the Discipline is required to provide evidence demonstrating equitable formal admission policies and

procedures to facilitate members of equity groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to gain admission into the range of Level 2 and postgraduate psychology programs.

The Level 3 program is a unique offering in the state of South Australia and will open opportunities for students to undertake an alternative pathway to registration as a psychologist. While the plans in place for the Level 3 program are sufficient, the Discipline will be required to provide further evidence to demonstrate that the program meets the Standards as it rolls out.

The Discipline is commended on the collegiality displayed amongst academic staff, its demonstrated excellence in online teaching, and efficient and nimble processes that allow for timely amendments to units.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at Flinders University are re-accredited until **31 December 2026**:

- **Bachelor of Arts** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Arts and Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Arts** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)/Bachelor of Computer Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice (Honours)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Laws (Honours)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Business (Marketing)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology (Honours)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Sport, Health and Physical Activity** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Graduate Entry)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Science (Animal Behaviour)/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Arts (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Bedford Park)

- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced)** (Level 2) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Bedford Park)
- **Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Bedford Park)

Subject to the following conditions:

For the Level 3 program

By **31 January 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 1 Public safety, criteria 1.7 and 1.8, Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.3 and 3.4 and Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.5 are met, the Discipline is to provide a report demonstrating that
 - i. the number of staff is sufficient to support the student cohort and that staff are appropriately qualified to teach, supervise and assess students in the program.
 - ii. supervisors provide sufficient hours of supervision to psychology students during their placements.

For the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **31 January 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of Study, criterion 3.5 is met, the Discipline is to provide a report outlining how it demonstrates the Flinders University Psychology Clinic has sufficient well-equipped space and learning and assessment resources to ensure that program learning outcomes and relevant graduate competencies are achieved.

For the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2 Honours, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **30 June 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence, including evidence of the criterion-based marking rubrics and a variety of de-identified samples of

student assessment tasks demonstrating that the following competencies are integrated, clearly articulated as a learning outcome, taught and appropriately assessed:

- i. *Foundational Competencies 1.2 and 1.5* for the Level 1 programs (criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2),
- ii. *Pre-Professional Competency 2.2* for the packaged Level 1 and 2 program (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2),
- iii. *Pre-Professional Competencies 2.2 and 2.3* for the Level 2 Honours program (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2),
- iv. *Professional Competencies for specialised areas of practice (Clinical) 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3* for the packaged Level 3 and 4 program (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2),
- v. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, for the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2 Honours and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs (criteria 3.8, 5.1 and 5.2), and
- vi. the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice for the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs (criterion 3.9, 5.1 and 5.2).

For the packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **30 June 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 4 The student experience, criterion 4.2 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating equitable formal admission policies and procedures to support members of equity groups to gain admission into the range of psychology programs.

As a monitoring requirement, the Discipline is to provide

1. for the Level 2 Graduate Diploma program, a curriculum map demonstrating that there is adequate and integrated coverage of the *Pre-Professional Competencies 2.3 and 2.4* as part of the 2022 annual report (criterion 3.2), and
2. for all programs, an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise as part of the 2022, 2023 and 2024 annual reports.

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

	Level 1	Level 1 & 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3 and 4 Clinical
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is 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 substantially met	Standard is substantially 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 met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially 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 quality improvement suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the Discipline of Psychology at Flinders University:

1. explores opportunities to structure the programs that share relevant graduate competencies, such as the Level 3 MPP and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

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. The Discipline of Psychology at Flinders University is commended for:

1. its collegiality, unity and high level of morale displayed amongst the academic teaching staff and professional staff
2. academic staff members' willingness and eagerness to actively engage in regular professional development activities
3. its demonstrated excellence in the practice of online teaching
4. its nimble, responsive and efficient unit amendment processes