



APAC Accreditation Assessment Summary Report

Higher Education Provider	University of New England (UNE)
Date of determination	4 December 2017
Standards version	June 2010 (Version 10); Rules March 2014, amendments May 30 2016
Programs of Study Assessed for Accreditation	Three year: Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Bachelor of Social Science Bachelor of Science Bachelor of Psychological Science Bachelor of Audiometry Graduate Diploma in Psychology 4th year: Bachelor of Arts with Honours (Psychology) Bachelor of Science with Honours (Psychology) Bachelor of Social Science with Honours (Psychology) Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced) Four year: Bachelor of Psychology with Honours 5th year: Master of Professional Psychology 5th and 6th years: Master of Psychology (Clinical) Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)

This is a summary of the outcomes of an APAC accreditation assessment of the Psychology Discipline in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England (UNE). This summary highlights selected key features of the assessment. Comprehensive analysis of the assessment is contained in the full APAC Assessment Team report.

The Psychology Discipline (the AOU) is in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. There is one full time Level E plus a 0.2 (the Head of School) and two Emeritus Professors. The Psychology Discipline Convenor (a Level C academic) has some responsibility in relation to academic, financial and administrative control of the AOU. This is a little limited as there is no independent control over the budget. The Discipline meets all the Standards relating to ethical conduct, grading

and quality review. All programs are taught on the Armidale campus with on-line options for all programs.

There are 21.2 FTE academic staff, with one Level B appointment imminent and three more to be advertised and filled by Trimester 1 (T1) in 2018. The Head of School is 0.2 (FTE) in the Discipline. The student : staff ratio overall is 22.88:1, slightly above Standard 2.4.3 but this will reduce with the new appointments. The student : staff ratio for the Master of Professional Psychology is reported to be 10.07:1 and for the Clinical programs, both the Masters and the PhD, is 5.49:1. There is Level D Coordinator of the postgraduate professional programs who is currently serving 0.5 (FTE) as Deputy Head of School but retains overall responsibility for the clinical/professional programs and teaches in them. There are at least four additional staff members with Clinical area of practice endorsement.

The expertise of the academic staff at UNE is broad and well-established as demonstrated by their research work. They easily cover the range of core and elective subjects in all curricula.

At present, the Psychology Discipline is well served by technical and administrative staff to support its teaching and research. It was noted that IT services have been centralised and this is causing some difficulties for the conduct of research by Honours and PhD students as well as staff who require specialised and specialist software for running psychology experiments. It is essential that the University recognises that particular technical and specialist expertise is necessary for the successful conduct of research in such areas as biofeedback and cognitive EEG as well as the maintenance of the animal laboratories.

Teaching spaces were inspected and all were well equipped. Laboratory spaces for students were also well equipped. Many of the staff have small dedicated laboratories and some of these also have PhD students located in the lab. Access to computers for students was reportedly adequate. Bearing in mind that many students study on-line and hence off campus, the spaces were not huge. Many students also use their personal laptops for study purposes on campus. There is a Test Library on campus plus one in the Clinic. The on-campus test library contains current and some very interesting historical material such as the Rorschach cards on slides. The Clinic test library was well stocked with tests and materials required on a regular basis. Both are overseen by appropriate staff.

The institutional library was not inspected but accessed instead remotely by APAC team members. It appears to be adequate in terms of providing the necessary resources of psychology students.

All Psychology units at UNE have an on-line presence and students can opt to study exclusively on campus, on-line or through a combination of the two. Some units have mandatory intensive residential schools although this is at fourth year and above. Some undergraduate units have non-mandatory intensive schools but in general, they are not offered. Students commented favourably about the various options and the word 'flexible' became the hallmark of the site visit. Students recognised that their learning styles could match their preferred mode of teaching and this was appreciated.

Both on-campus and on-line teaching was resourced at equivalent levels and the unit outline material provided to students was the same. The unit outlines all appeared to include up-to-date references reflecting current knowledge in the area. The content, objectives and methods of assessment were identical for all students. Laboratory training in the undergraduate program was

conducted through on-line experiments and all students undertook the same laboratories. Students indicated that access to staff, whether they were studying on campus or on-line, was good and it was recognised that on-campus students perhaps had an advantage of being able to speak face-to-face with lecturers.

All units in the 4th year have mandatory intensive residential schools while two units in each of 5th and 6th years have mandatory intensive schools.

Forms of assessment are the same for all students and are marked and returned in a timely manner. Students reported that feedback varied especially in relation to the marking criteria. Inspection of the work samples would support this as instances where markers 'corrected' correct material were noted as were occasions where the feedback was vague and incorrect APA referencing not corrected.

Student evaluation is obtained and because students submit their work electronically, markers do not know if they are studying on-campus or on-line (and students can vary their mode of learning) so periodic comparisons are not required.

All students interviewed expressed concern about the trimester system. Issues mentioned included the reduction of the trimester to 11 weeks meaning teaching was compressed and assessments often occurred too close together and sometimes too close to the end of the Trimester and exams. This may contribute to the issue of markers having pressure to return assignments quickly, leading to errors.

The three year sequence of study is in six different degrees and three double degrees and is the same in all of them. All take three years of full time study to complete except for the Graduate Diploma which, because students have already completed a degree, can be completed in 1.5 years as students only study the units in the three year sequence.

Detailed descriptions of where the Graduate Attributes were taught and how they were assessed was provided in the application. Work samples showed that various forms of assessment were used and covered the breadth and depth of knowledge of the core subjects. Feedback on assessment was provided although, as noted above, sometimes the feedback was vague and inaccurate. Appropriate procedures for marking, appeals and dealing with plagiarism are in place.

The 4th year can be completed in four different sequences, each of which is equivalent to one year in length. The Honours sequences can be studied full time or part time while the Graduate Diploma in Psychology (Advanced) can only be studied part time. The sequences are identical in terms of content; the only difference is in the research as students in the Graduate Diploma complete a 'group project' and a reading unit. The coursework in fourth year covers applied topics and basic skills and is supported by up-to-date reference material. The Graduate Attributes are appropriately met. The coursework includes teaching via two 4-day residential schools in an appropriate range of advanced topics, including research methods, psychological assessment and intervention

A residential intensive school is held early in the year in which the research is planned. It includes preparation of the research proposal and ethics approval. Professional ethics are covered in a coursework unit.

Both fourth years include a research component comprising 50% of the year (in the Graduate Diploma the thesis and literature comprise 37.5% of the year with the additional reading unit comprising 12.5%). Students in the Honours streams complete an individual project while students in the Graduate Diploma complete a unique dimension to a project suggested by a supervisor as well as a reading unit.

In the Graduate Diploma, students form part of a team to complete a project offered by a supervisor. From the documentation provided (given the team was not able to interview students or the coordinator of this program), it appears the relevant Standards are all met and theses inspected were of an adequate quality.

The assessments in fourth year ranged from lab reports to essays to exams. Work samples were inspected. The literature review and the thesis are examined by two examiners and appropriate procedures are in place in cases of disagreement or discrepancy. An external audit was undertaken in early 2017 with modest results. There are procedures to deal with student appeals and various forms of unethical conduct.

The awarding of credit or advanced standing is in accordance with the relevant Standards although it was noted that admission to Honours is not always conducted as diligently as it ought to be in the current decentralised admission and enrolment model and the School (for the Discipline) has had to deal with some errors of judgement.

There is a single four year course, the Bachelor of Psychology with Honours. It is, in all respects, identical to the three year sequence plus the Honours year.

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. Staffing requirements are met. There is a recruitment process in train to appoint additional clinically-qualified staff for both teaching and supervision.

There is an Advisory/Liaison Committee, common to all postgraduate professional programs with appropriate external and student representation. The new Psychology Clinic is in the Tablelands Clinical School near the Armidale Hospital and is thus well situated to extend its services, and placement opportunities for students, in the future. A tour of the facilities was provided and the clinic rooms and work areas for students are more than adequate and suitable for clinical training. There is a small test library in the Clinic containing frequently used materials and tests plus a small library of useful books and handbooks and remote access to the main University library. A thorough Policy and Procedures Manual has been developed and students are well prepared for their clinical training.

The application clearly demonstrated where the core capabilities were learned and assessed. Work samples and completed log books were inspected and supported the documentation. Each student must pass each assessment task and placement to be able to pass the course overall. The students' placement evaluations formally assess each of the core capabilities using the Clinical Psychology Practicum Competencies Rating Scale (CΨPRS). Log books for both professional programs follow the same format and completed examples of them were inspected and found to meet all relevant Standards.

There is one fifth year program, the Master of Professional Psychology (MPP), which provides education in the professional practice of psychology. APAC assessors were provided with a package that contained the Master of Professional Psychology Course Handbook 2017 as well as forms and information related to the mapping of core capabilities and a selection of applicants' process material.

The coursework component of the MPP course includes foundational education and training. As it mirrors the first year units contained in the Master of Clinical Psychology, as such the course content (in both programs) addressed all of the core capabilities and a mapping was provided to APAC. The units were delivered both as lectures and in intensive schools. Various different teaching techniques are used to meet the needs of the students using lectures, lecture notes, videos and intensive schools. For full time students the course is structured such that in first semester there are six weeks of on-line lectures followed by a two-day mandatory residential school, focusing on adult disorders and interventions. This is then followed by a further five weeks of lectures. In semester two, there are two further mandatory residential schools focusing on child and adolescent psychology and research methods

Students complete one placement of 300 hours in a community placement. External placements can take place anywhere but are mainly in NSW and south Queensland. Students can identify their own placements in their home region but any such opportunity has to be carefully scrutinised by the Placement Coordinator to assess the suitability of the placement and the supervisor. Log books were inspected and were signed off appropriately. They are sent monthly to the Placement Coordinator.

There is one fifth and sixth year program which can be taken alone or in a PhD (Clinical Psychology). APAC assessors were provided with a very informative package which contained the Clinical Psychology Postgraduate Degrees Handbook 2017 as well as all the necessary forms for supervised practice and a mapping of the core capabilities.

The Masters degree can be completed in two years full time or up to five years part time. The PhD (Clinical Psychology) is four years full time. Students complete the first half of first year on campus studying four coursework units. The two coursework units in semester two are delivered on-line and week-long intensive schools. The second year has two coursework units both delivered on-line and via intensive schools. The first placement takes place in first year, with the other, usually external, placements in second year. The research thesis is completed during the second year.

The course has two particular foci – the practice of psychology in rural and remote communities including working with Indigenous populations and working in private practice; both are intended to meet the needs of populations in rural New South Wales not easily serviced by public sector professionals.

The course content addressed all of the core capabilities in Standard 5.1.12. The National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce, practice management, storing and accessing files, record keeping and managing people were all covered in coursework for all professional programs. The units were delivered both as lectures and in intensive schools.

Theses were inspected and were found to be relevant to clinical psychology and were supervised and written up appropriately. In the case of students wishing to upgrade to a PhD, the proposal must be able to be extended to the PhD.

Students complete three placements – one of 40 days (300 hours) in the Clinic, then two of 46 days each (350 hours each) in community placements. The first placement, starting in the second Trimester of the first year, can be taken as 100 hours in the Clinic followed by 200 hours either in the Clinic or in the field. It is expected in the future that students will complete all 300 hours of their first placement in the new Clinic which can cater for more clients and more students than previously.

External placements can take place anywhere but are mainly in NSW and south Queensland. Students can identify their own placements in their home region but any such opportunity has to be carefully scrutinised by the Placement Coordinator. An aim of the Clinical programs is to develop local capacity for health service delivery so diversity in placements is encouraged.

Log books were inspected and were signed off appropriately. They are sent monthly to the Placement Coordinator. A future on-line arrangement of logbook completion, planned for 2018, will enable more frequent perusal of logbooks by the Placement Coordinator. If there are any concerns with students on placement, they are brought back to the Clinic for intensive supervision.

The APAC team met concurrently with seven supervisors, some by Skype, some by phone and some face-to-face. Three supervised students in both professional programs while four supervised Clinical Psychology students. They were unclear about how the University recognised their contribution despite the website listing some of them as Adjunct Supervisor. They did appreciate financial assistance with supervisor training.

Clinical students were reportedly very well prepared, MPP students less so, as they had not had the first placement in Clinic. Nonetheless, these students were perceived as professional and suitable although they were less knowledgeable about working in systems. The benefit to supervisors of students was noted in an increased client load being able to receive services.

All supervision involves one hour of direct contact for every 7.5 hours of placement. The Placement Coordinator is suitably qualified with the Clinical area of practice endorsement. A supervision contract, mid-placement review and final placement review and evaluation are undertaken and completed examples of each inspected.

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