

Cairnmillar Institute - APAC accreditation assessment summary report

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| Higher education provider | Cairnmillar Institute |
| Name of the Psychology AOU | School of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy |
| 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 Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (Level 2) Master of Professional Psychology (Level 3) Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Doctor of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4) Master of Clinical Psychology (Post Registration) (Level 4) |
| Campus | Hawthorn East, Online |
| Date of site visit | 3 - 5 August 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 the Cairnmillar Institute's (Institute) undergraduate fourth year Level 2 Graduate Diploma and postgraduate Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical psychology programs for the purpose of re-accreditation in 2016. At the time of the 2016 review, the undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered on campus were accredited with conditions for a shortened period as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the review, all outstanding conditions were satisfied, and the programs have since been accredited without conditions.

In 2018 the Institute submitted an application to change the accredited program title for the Level 2 Graduate Diploma program to the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) program, and the Graduate Diploma program was placed in teach out with accreditation ending in 2019.

In 2020 the Institute submitted an application for accreditation of the Level 1 bridging Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science and the Level 4 Master of Clinical Psychology (Post Registration) programs to be offered online. At the time of the review, these programs were accredited subject to conditions as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*.

The Assessment Team considered the School of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy's (School) 131 page self-review and attached appendices against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team Zoom conference held on 15 June 2021, additional information was requested and received from the Institute, including:

- a student to staff ratio (SSR) calculator, including any rationale for supervision staff who may not be endorsed in the relevant area of practice and teaching staff who may not hold appropriate qualifications for the programs they teach in, as well as the total number of enrolled students in each program of study
- clarification regarding who is appointed as the Program Chair of the Doctor of Psychology program and their qualifications
- a variety of samples of complete de-identified student logbooks, including a record maintained to track the student's journey during placements and how the accumulated hours are calculated and cross-checked
- any update on the progress of external benchmarking processes for all programs, including any plans on cross marking or exchanging documentation with external education providers
- clarification on the moderation processes and how the Institute ensures that marking standards are consistent when there is a single marker
- a complete list of the test library resources
- a comprehensive mapping to the graduate competencies, assessments, and unit learning outcomes for all programs

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

- the Cairnmillar Institute Psychology Clinics located at Dandenong, East Hawthorn and North Melbourne sites

- East Hawthorn campus facilities, including the resources and test kits available at the Test Library

The APAC Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 3 - 5 August 2021. During the visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals, including:

- Executive Director, Cairnmillar Institute
- Head, School of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Associate Head of School of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Level 1 bridging, Level 2, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 Course Coordinators
- Level 1 bridging, Level 2, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 Unit Coordinators
- Level 1 bridging, Level 2, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 Academic staff
- Level 1 bridging, Level 2, Level 3, packaged Level 3 and 4 and Level 4 current students
- Level 2, Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 recent graduates
- Professional staff
- Internal placement supervisors
- External placement supervisors
- Clinic Director
- Placement Coordinators

During the site visit the Assessment Team was provided with additional information including a detailed mapping document outlining the unit learning outcomes and assessments against the APAC *Level 1 Foundational Competency 1.1*, including where each topic is taught and assessed throughout the Level 1 bridging program.

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 Institute focuses on advancing the delivery of innovative and accessible psychological services and professional mental health education throughout Australia. The School has a strong focus on equipping students to be self-driven practitioners and researchers. Academic and professional staff are effectively supported under the guidance and direction of the widely respected, forward-thinking, strategically-focused leadership team, and the psychology programs are well designed, established, and coordinated by the strong academic team.

For the Level 1 bridging and Level 2 programs, the Assessment Team noted a strong focus on research ethics throughout in preparation for academic research in future studies. The School's research and academic training is a strength, with students and graduates explaining that the education and training was invaluable. Further, the flexibility in choosing research projects and the accessibility and experience of staff was highly regarded.

For the Level 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 programs, the evidence indicated that the academic teaching team is a significant asset. The Assessment Team heard views from students, graduates, and external stakeholders who spoke highly of the work ethic, responsiveness, and commitment displayed. Further, the support offered to students during the COVID-19 pandemic was impressive, with students provided with a laptop and access to *Q Global* and *Q Interactive* to allow students to practice psychological tests virtually while the test library was unavailable.

For the Level 4 program, the Assessment Team was impressed with the clinical expertise invested into the development of the program and the ability to translate practical experience throughout the content to ensure students with a diverse level of experience and prior education are provided with the appropriate level of training and learning in clinical psychology. Further, the achievements in quality improvement and feedback processes utilised throughout the roll out of the program is creditable.

The findings confirmed the online learning environment, Psychology Clinic and test library resources are fit-for-purpose. The Assessment Team acknowledged the academic governance and quality assurance processes and the School's robust mechanisms to incorporate student feedback into the program design and delivery. At the time of the visit, the Assessment Team noted some evidence of desktop external benchmarking, however the School is required to show evidence of future benchmarking exercises.

The Assessment Team identified several commendable aspects of the programs. The School is commended for its collegiality, commitment, approachability, responsiveness and professionalism displayed amongst academic staff, particularly with their strength and focus for student learning and well-being. Commendation is also given for the Psychology Clinics' robust operations, including strong communication and transparent processes and requirements on placement, and for the School's commitment to providing authentic education and assessment concerning cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures integrated throughout the programs.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at the Cairnmillar Institute are re-accredited until **31 December 2026**:

- **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Online)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Hawthorn East)
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (Level 3) (Campus: Hawthorn East)
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Hawthorn East)
- **Doctor of Psychology (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Hawthorn East)
- **Master of Clinical Psychology (Post Registration)** (Level 4) (Campus: Online)

Subject to the following conditions:

For the Level 4 program

By **31 January 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 4 The student experience, criterion 4.2 is met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating how it ensures students have evidence of attainment of all of the *Level 3 Professional Competencies* prior to admission to the program.

For the Level 1 bridging, Level 2 and Level 4 programs

By **30 September 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2, 3.7 and 3.9 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating that the following competencies are adequately taught, clearly articulated as a required learning outcome and appropriately assessed:
 - i. *Foundational Competency 1.1 iii, v and vii* for the Level 1 bridging program (criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2)
 - ii. *Pre-Professional Competency 2.2* for the Level 2 program (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2)
 - iii. application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice for the Level 4 program (criteria 3.9, 5.1 and 5.2)

For all programs

By **30 September 2022**:

2. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.2 is met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating progress and outcomes of external benchmarking activities, including how the outcomes have been used to inform program development.

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

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3 and 4 Clinical | Level 4 Clinical |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Domain 1: Public safety | Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured | | | | |
| | Standard is met | Standard is met | Standard is met | Standard is met | Standard is 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 substantially met | Standard is substantially met | Standard is met | Standard is 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 met | Standard is met | Standard is 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 met | Standard is met | Standard is substantially met |

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 School of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy at the Cairnmillar Institute is commended for:

1. its commitment to providing authentic education and assessment regarding cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, integrated throughout the undergraduate and postgraduate programs to support students to further develop their skills and knowledge in cultural responsiveness
2. the Psychology Clinics' operations and the plans to conduct research across the clinics
3. its robust mechanisms in place to incorporate student feedback into the program's design and delivery, particularly with the touchpoint and end of semester surveys with examples of how programs at all levels have improved as a result of the feedback
4. its collegiality displayed amongst academic staff, the knowledge, commitment, and demonstrated leadership across all levels
5. the strong support provided to students with students, graduates and external stakeholders speaking to the approachability and responsiveness of staff and the culture indicating all stakeholders feel well respected and supported