

Flinders-HELP University - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	HELP University in partnership with Flinders University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Department of Psychology in conjunction with the 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	Bachelor of Psychological Science (Level 1) Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) (Level 2)
Campus	Malaysia
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 Flinders programs taught and offered via its offshore partner, the HELP University (HELP) based in Malaysia; please refer to the separate report for the programs taught at Flinders' Bedford Park campus.

At the 2016 review, the Level 1 and Level 2 programs delivered by the Discipline's offshore partner, HELP, were accredited without conditions.

The Assessment Team considered the Flinders-HELP's 79 page and 45 page self-reviews, respectively, 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 information regarding the grievance and appeals processes at HELP, and any de-identified examples of grievances and appeals.

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with photographs of the teaching facilities located at HELP's Malaysia 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:

- Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Education and Languages
- Head of Department, HELP University
- Academic Chair/Program Leader
- HELP-Flinders Joint Degree Coordinator
- HELP-Flinders Joint Degree Coordinator
- HELP teaching staff
- Flinders' Moderation Team
- Level 1 and Level 2 current students
- Level 1 and Level 2 recent graduates

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with additional information, including further information relating to the moderation and assessment procedures between Flinders and HELP, evidence concerning cultural responsiveness, and further evidence demonstrating where the *Pre-Professional Competencies* are taught and assessed throughout the Level 2 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 Department of Psychology is a unit located within the HELP and is embedded within the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Education and Languages. The programs are delivered in partnership with Flinders University, and for the Level 1 and Level 2 programs, academic staff based at HELP in Malaysia work in close collaboration with the HELP-Flinders Joint Degree Coordinators and Flinders' Moderation Team. Under the agreement between Flinders and HELP, all offshore academic teaching staff are employed by HELP rather than Flinders.

At the time of the site visit, the evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicated that the Level 1 and Level 2 programs are well designed, established and coordinated. First and second year components of the Level 1 program are developed and designed by HELP, and for the third year of the Level 1 program and the Level 2 Honours program, the learning materials and assessments are developed in collaboration with and taught under the direction of the Discipline of Psychology at Flinders with minor teaching examples being amended to localise content related to the Malaysian context. The HELP-Flinders Joint Degree Coordinators located at HELP and Flinders work collaboratively to oversee and coordinate the administrative duties of the programs, and the Flinders' Moderation Team facilitates regular assessment review and moderation exercises to ensure that feedback meets the expectations and standards of Flinders' policies.

While the student cohorts of the third year of the Level 1 program and the Level 2 Honours year program are small, students spoke highly of the programs' content and learning experience. In addition, students were appreciative of the opportunity to undertake studies in an Australian-based APAC accredited program, with some aspiring to undertake further studies in APAC accredited postgraduate programs in Australia. Further, the Assessment Team heard views that graduates of the Level 1 and Level 2 programs are of high calibre and that some have furthered their careers in academia by obtaining research opportunities in Australia with Australian-based psychology academics.

The Assessment Team noted that while a smaller cohort can be advantageous, this presents challenges in undertaking certain in-class activities and exercises, such as group work and class discussions. Additionally, the Assessment Team gathered evidence indicating that while ethics and protection of the public are taught throughout the programs, this is not assessed as a required learning outcome. Similarly, although cultural responsiveness is embedded and taught throughout the programs, this content is based on Malaysian contexts, and as such, the Department is required to include content and assessment relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The Department is commended for its attention to skills training and supporting students attain the necessary skills for employability in various areas of the mental health sector, and postgraduate studies.

APAC Board determination

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

- **Bachelor of Psychological Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Malaysia)
- **Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Malaysia)

Subject to the following conditions:

For the Level 1 and Level 2 programs

By **31 January 2022**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2, 3.7 and 3.8 and Standard 5, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Department in conjunction with the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that the following competencies are integrated, clearly articulated as a learning outcome, taught and appropriately assessed:
 - i. *Foundational Competency 1.4* for the Level 1 program (criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2),
 - ii. *Pre-Professional Competencies 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4* for the Level 2 program (criteria 3.2, 3.7, 5.1 and 5.2),
 - iii. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for the Level 1 and Level 2 programs (criteria 3.8, 5.1 and 5.2), and
 - iv. ethics and protection of the public for the Level 1 and Level 2 programs (criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2).

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

	Level 1	Level 2
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured	
	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 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
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
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid	
	Standard is substantially 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 Department of Psychology at HELP University in partnership with the Discipline of Psychology at Flinders University is commended for:

1. its attention to skills training and ensuring students attain the necessary skills for employability in various areas of the mental health sector.
2. a record of producing high quality graduates who have successfully transitioned to further studies in APAC accredited programs in Australia or to academic careers in psychology.