

Curtin University - APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	Curtin University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Discipline of Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Initial and Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	<p>Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology, Human Resource Management) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology), Bachelor of Commerce (Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology), Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychology (packaged Level 1 and 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2)</p> <p>Master of Research (Psychology) (Level 2)</p> <p>Master of Psychology (Professional) (Level 3)</p> <p>Master of Clinical Psychology (Level 4)</p> <p>Programs in teach out:</p> <p>Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4) *</p> <p>Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4) *</p> <p><i>* Refer to the note on page 8 for further details.</i></p>
Campus	Bentley, Online
Date of site visit	28 June - 1 July 2022

Date of APAC Board Determination	28 November 2022
Accreditation start date	1 January 2023
Accreditation end date	31 December 2027

Background and overview

Curtin University's (Curtin) suite of Level 1 three-year, packaged Level 1 and 2 four-year, Level 3 Masters, packaged Level 3 and 4 Masters and packaged Level 3 and 4 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Clinical and Counselling programs were last reviewed for the purpose of re-accreditation by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) in 2017.

At the time of the 2017 review, the undergraduate and postgraduate programs offered were accredited with conditions for a shortened period as a number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the review, all outstanding conditions were satisfied and Curtin's range of programs have since been accredited without conditions.

Following the review, the former School of Psychology placed the packaged Level 3 and 4 PhD and packaged Level 3 and 4 Masters Counselling programs in teach out in 2018 and these programs were discontinued in 2021 and 2022, respectively. In 2019, the former School of Psychology then complemented the Honours offering with the addition of a degree, a fourth year Level 2 Master of Research (Psychology) program. Furthermore, the packaged Level 3 and 4 Masters and packaged Level 3 and 4 PhD Clinical programs were placed in teach out in late 2019 and the former School of Psychology sought initial accreditation for the Level 4 Master of Clinical Psychology program in early 2020. At the time of the review, the Level 4 Clinical program was accredited without conditions, however, subject to a monitoring requirement and further reporting as part of the re-accreditation review.

Since the last review, Curtin has undertaken a considerable restructure of the Faculty of Health Sciences (Faculty). An amalgamation of the former School of Psychology with the School of Public Health established the School of Population Health (School) in January 2021. The School is one of four academic Schools situated within the Faculty. The Discipline of Psychology (Discipline) is the largest discipline within the new School and for that reason, has oversight and leadership from two Discipline Leads.

The APAC Assessment Team considered the Discipline's 41-page self-review, including attached appendices and a range of samples of student assessments against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team conference held on 4 May 2022, subsequent information was requested and received from the Discipline, including:

- a revised curriculum and assessment mapping for all programs
- samples of a variety of completed placement logbooks demonstrating the students' journey of placements over the course of their program for the Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical programs
- a copy of the placement logbook template for the Level 4 Clinical program
- an update on the benchmarking activities for the Level 1 and Level 4 Clinical programs, future benchmarking plans 2022-2023 for the Level 1 and Level 2 programs, as well as any benchmarking report for the Level 2 program

- minutes of the Course Advisory Committee meetings for 2018 and 2019 and confirmation that the coursework for the packaged Level 3 and 4 PhD and Masters Clinical programs concluded in 2019
- minutes of the Level 1 Course Advisory Committee meeting held on 22 June 2022
- a response regarding the policies and procedures in place relating to Curtin's requirements for mandatory reporting and impairment, including a link to *Curtin's Statute No. 10 - Student Discipline*
- details of the systematic review assessment requirements and marking rubric for *PSYC6014 Psychological Theories and Applications* unit and examples of de-identified samples of student research projects for the Level 3 program
- clarification regarding how the shared Discipline Lead roles manage and provide leadership to the Discipline, including any role statements for the Discipline Lead - General Psychology and Discipline Lead - Mental Health Psychology
- clarification regarding any assessments to evaluate student competence in the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice, including details of the assessment activity (related to criterion 3.9)
- curriculum report for the packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical programs

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the range of facilities at the Curtin Psychology Clinic housed within the Health and Wellness Centre, including:

- the reception and client waiting area, two staff offices, seven individual and three group consulting rooms, student preparation areas, dedicated duty screening room for phoning clients, additional office space for conducting confidential telehealth sessions, as well as the secure client file and test library area
- an account of the equipment fitted within each consultation rooms, such as recording facilities, duress alarms and one-way mirrors allowing live observation and an explanation of the Curtin *SafeZone* app made available for all students to request help, report an incident, concern or emergency and as a means to access first aid

The Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 28 June - 1 July 2022. During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals via Zoom conferences, including:

- Discipline Lead - General Psychology
- Discipline Lead - Mental Health Psychology
- Deputy Head of School

- Deputy Director and Clinical Psychology Program Practicum Coordinator and Clinic Director, Curtin Psychology Clinic, Curtin Health and Wellness Centre
- Faculty of Health Sciences Teaching Support Team Manager and Support Team members
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical Course Coordinators
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical Unit Coordinators
- Level 1 and Level 2 casual and sessional academic staff
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical current students
- Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 recent graduates
- Level 2 dissertation supervisors
- Level 3 internal supervisors
- Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical external supervisors
- Level 3 Placement Coordinator
- School of Population Health Director of Learning and Teaching
- School of Population Health Business Manager and professional staff members

During the virtual site visit the Assessment Team was provided with supplementary information, including a copy of the minutes for Level 1 Course Advisory Committee meeting held on 22 June 2022 and a revised copy of the *PSYC4009 Introduction to Counselling* unit outline detailing the new unit learning outcome 'demonstrate understanding of indigenous and cross-cultural issues within a counselling context' and the associated assessment task.

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 additional information provided in the rejoinder to the draft report.

Key findings

The Discipline offers a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs providing a wide range of learning and research opportunities. Programs at the undergraduate level place emphasis on applying knowledge to problems arising in professional practice, while providing an understanding of the theoretical framework within which various approaches and techniques have been developed. At the Honours level, programs provide students with applied skills and a strong grounding in research skills with a focus on planning, conducting and presenting a research project. Further, postgraduate programs are designed to prepare students to apply advanced professional training and equip them with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for careers as registered general or clinical psychologists.

The Assessment Team gathered evidence that a robust academic governance structure and well-formed committee structures are in place to provide oversight and management to the programs. However, external input from the wider profession is not currently incorporated within these structures for the undergraduate programs. The Discipline is encouraged to consider ways to strengthen the involvement of the profession with the inclusion of representatives from industry and prospective employers in the design and management of these programs. The Discipline's student-centred approach was evident throughout the virtual site visit in various areas, including governance, design and innovations in education experience. Information and support services available to students are also clear and appropriate.

It is evident that the Discipline has been through a period of change with the recent restructure and due to the physical relocation and ongoing building works, not all staff are located within the same building. The Discipline continues to face logistical challenges with ensuring adequate meeting spaces for staff and students and as such, is required to consider interim measures to support student learning until the relocation is complete. The two Discipline leads, Mental Health Psychology and General Psychology, support the programs well and provide ongoing leadership, development and coordination. The Discipline is well served by a committed staff group who are collegial, collaborative and appear to work well with each other and have established good working relationships with the students. The greatest risk the Discipline and its programs faces are the changes to administrative support available which appears to be impacting the programs. The reduction of professional support staff has resulted in academic staff taking on a greater administrative load and less time for scholarly, research activities and continuous improvement of the programs. The Assessment Team encourages the School to consider the sustainability and viability of the current staffing arrangements and workload model.

The Assessment Team identified some shortfalls against the Standards and areas for further quality improvement. At the time of the virtual site visit, there was some evidence of external benchmarking exercises which have taken place with further plans for future benchmarking. However, the Discipline is required to provide further evidence demonstrating the progress and outcomes of these exercises as part of future monitoring. Evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that all programs would benefit from further development and integration of content and assessments to measure students' understanding of cultural responsiveness, particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Further, evidence gathered indicates an absence of a formal onboarding and training process to support staff and tutors who are new to academia and may lack experience with online teaching. As such, the Discipline is required to ensure new staff, especially early career and sessional teaching staff teaching into all programs are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to teach and assess student performance. While there is a strong focus on inter-professional

learning and practice within the undergraduate programs, the Discipline is encouraged to build on current practice by exploring the opportunity for students to have further inter-professional experiences and collaboration across the postgraduate programs.

Throughout the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team identified several commendable areas. The Discipline is commended for its strong integration of research and a clear strength of the programs is its breadth of focus including qualitative and mixed methods in research training. The research facilities available to staff and students are excellent and fit-for-purpose. The Discipline is commended for the collegiality, commitment, approachability and support displayed amongst staff and the level of support and leadership provided by the both the Discipline Leads. A key strength in the undergraduate programs is the inter-professional experiences offered to students and the strong collaboration amongst the Discipline, School and Faculty to facilitate and enable health sciences students to learn with, from and about each other.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at Curtin University are re-accredited with conditions until **31 December 2027**:

- **Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bentley, Online)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology, Human Resource Management)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology), Bachelor of Commerce (Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology), Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing)** (Level 1) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Bachelor of Psychology** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Master of Research (Psychology)** (Level 2) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Master of Psychology (Professional)** (Level 3) (Campus: Bentley)
- **Master of Clinical Psychology** (Level 4) (Campus: Bentley)

That the following programs in teach out at Curtin University are re-accredited until **31 December 2027**:

- **Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Bentley) *
- **Master of Psychology (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Bentley) *

** the coursework and practicum components for these programs in teach out were not assessed as part of the re-accreditation assessment as the Discipline advised APAC that students remaining in these programs have successfully completed all coursework and practicum requirements.*

Subject to the following conditions:

For all programs

By **31 March 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that the following competencies are appropriately assessed as required learning outcomes:

- i. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for all programs (related to criterion 3.8), and
 - ii. the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice for the Level 3 program (related to criterion 3.9).
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For the Level 2 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 programs

By **31 March 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 2 Academic governance and quality assurance, criterion 2.3 is met, the Discipline is required to provide further evidence demonstrating there is relevant external input into the design and management of these programs.
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For the Level 2 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 Clinical programs

By **31 March 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.5 is met, the Discipline is to provide evidence demonstrating that all cohorts across these programs have adequate access to facilities and resources to support the achievement of the program learning outcomes.
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As a monitoring requirement, the Discipline is to provide:

1. the minutes and the terms of reference for the *Student-Staff Consultative Committee* demonstrating that there is relevant and regular external input into the design and management of the Level 1 programs by **31 March 2023**, and
 2. an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise to be provided as part of the 2023 and 2024 annual reports for all programs.
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Table 1: Summary of findings regarding each criterion for each Standard

	Level 1	Level 1 & 2	Level 2	Level 3	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 met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially 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 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 met	Standard is met	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	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 suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the Discipline of Psychology at Curtin University:

1. amends wording to correct the reference to accreditation by the 'Australian Psychology Council' within the *Professional recognition, Accreditation* section of relevant APAC-accredited programs on the *Curtin Handbook* website with accreditation by the 'Australian Psychology Accreditation Council'.

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 Curtin University is commended for:

1. its strong integration of research and a clear strength is its breadth of focus including qualitative and mixed methods in research training.
2. the collegiality, commitment, approachability, and support displayed amongst staff and the level of support and leadership provided by the Discipline Leads.
3. fostering inter-professional learning and teamwork in the Level 1 programs and the strong collaboration amongst the Discipline, School, and Faculty to facilitate and enable health sciences students to learn with, from and about each other.