



Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)

Accreditation Assessment Summary Report Australian Catholic University

10 September 2024



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Australian Catholic University – 2025 to 2029 Cycle

Context

| | |
|---|---|
| Higher education provider | Australian Catholic University (ACU) |
| Academic organisational unit (AOU) | School of Behaviour and Health Sciences |
| Campus | Melbourne, Strathfield and ACU Online |
| Assessment type | Cycle re-accreditation |
| Accreditation period | 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2029 |
| Accreditation standard | Accreditation standards for psychology programs (effective 1 January 2019, version 1.2) |



Assessment timeline

| Dates | Assessment activities |
|-------------------------|---|
| 15/02/2023 | ACU attends an information session with the APAC team |
| 15/12/2023 | ACU submits an application for (re-)accreditation to APAC |
| 22/12/2023 – 30/01/2024 | APAC conducts an on-paper assessment |
| 31/01/2024 | Assessment team meets to discuss the on-paper assessment |
| 21/02/2024 | ACU submits additional information |
| 05/03/2024 | Assessment team meets to prepare for the site visit |
| 19/03/2024 – 22/03/2024 | ACU hosts the site visit |
| 06/05/2024 | Accreditation Assessment Committee (AAC) endorses the draft assessment report |
| 03/06/2024 | ACU receives the draft assessment report |
| 18/06/2024 | ACU submits a rejoinder to the draft assessment report |
| 29/07/2024 | AAC determines the accreditation outcomes |



Findings

APAC thanks ACU's discipline leads, academic and professional staff, supervisors, graduates and students for their cooperation and input.

Accreditation status

Accredited

The following programs are accredited from **1 January 2025** until **31 December 2029**:

| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|--|-------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Master of Teaching (Primary) | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Master of Teaching (Primary) | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Clinical Psychology (Post Registration) | ACU Online* | Level 4 | 6th year | Accredited with conditions |

Reaccredited

The following programs are re-accredited until **31 December 2029**:

| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| Bachelor of Psychological Science | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |



| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|--|-------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Arts | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Arts | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Commerce | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Commerce | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws (Honours) | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |



| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|---|-------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Laws (Honours) | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Nutrition Science | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science/Bachelor of Nutrition Science | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Graduate Diploma in Psychology | ACU Online | Level 1 | 3-year bridging | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) | Melbourne | Level 1–2 | 1–4 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) | Strathfield | Level 1–2 | 1–4 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) | Melbourne | Level 2 | 4th year | Accredited with conditions |
| Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) | Strathfield | Level 2 | 4th year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Professional Psychology | Melbourne | Level 3 | 5th year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Psychology (Clinical) | Melbourne | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Psychology (Clinical) | Strathfield | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Psychology (Clinical)/Doctor of Philosophy | Melbourne | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Psychology (Clinical)/Doctor of Philosophy | Strathfield | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |
| Master of Psychology (Educational and Developmental) | Melbourne | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |



| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------------------|
| Master of Psychology (Educational and Developmental)/Doctor of Philosophy | Melbourne | Level 3–4 | 5–6 year | Accredited with conditions |



Not assessed

The following programs are in teach out¹ and were not included in this cycle assessment:

| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) | Melbourne | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited until 31/12/2024 |
| Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) | Strathfield | Level 1 | 1–3 year | Accredited until 31/12/2024 |

Discontinued

The following programs are discontinued² and were not included in the cycle assessment:

| Program title | Campus | Level | Sequence | Program status |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Graduate Diploma in Psychology | Melbourne | Level 2 | 4th year | Accreditation ended on 05/08/2024 |
| Graduate Diploma in Psychology | Strathfield | Level 2 | 4th year | Accreditation ended on 05/08/2024 |

¹ APAC will remove these programs from its list of accredited programs and advise the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) that accreditation ends on 31/12/2024. Please note that the end of an accreditation period without subsequent renewal may adversely impact any students still enrolled in the program, particularly regarding their registration as a psychologist upon graduation.

² As per correspondence sent to ACU via email on 05/08/2024, APAC notes that there are no longer any students enrolled in the program and the program's discontinuation is effective from 5 August 2024. Therefore, the program's accreditation has since ended and the PsyBA has been advised.



Summary of findings

| Standard 1: Public safety is assured | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3–4 Clin | Level 3–4 Ed & Dev | Level 4 Clin |
| Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met |
| Standard 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective | | | | | |
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3–4 Clin | Level 3–4 Ed & Dev | Level 4 Clin |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Standard 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies | | | | | |
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3–4 Clin | Level 3–4 Ed & Dev | Level 4 Clin |
| Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met |
| Standard 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support | | | | | |
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3–4 Clin | Level 3–4 Ed & Dev | Level 4 Clin |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Standard 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid | | | | | |
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3–4 Clin | Level 3–4 Ed & Dev | Level 4 Clin |
| Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met | Substantially met |



Conditions

Further evidence is required to demonstrate the Accreditation Standards are met.

| Program levels | Criteria | Issues identified | Information required | Due dates |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|---|------------|
| All | 3.3, 3.4 | Staffing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategies to manage staff workloads and ensure plans for projected growth are implemented in a manner that supports teaching staff, particularly sessional staff (3.3). 2. Plans and supporting mechanisms to ensure adequate access to Indigenous expertise is consistently available (3.3). 3. Rationale and SSR calculations to demonstrate that plans for increased student cohorts remain sustainable (3.4). | 30/11/2024 |
| Level 4 | 1.7, 3.3, 3.4 | Staffing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Evidence that appropriately qualified and experienced staff members have been recruited to deliver into the standalone Level 4 program (1.7, 3.3, 3.4). Evidence of appointments may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • position descriptions • CVs of new incumbents • confirmed start dates for new incumbents | 30/11/2024 |
| All | 3.8, 5.1, 5.2 | Cultural responsiveness | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. An overview of planned updates to program content and assessments relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (3.8) to demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scaffolding of program content • comprehensive constructive alignment between content (3.8) and assessments (5.1, 5.2) • visibility and frequency of teaching and learning activities • mandated assessments for all students (5.1, 5.2). | 30/11/2024 |



| Program levels | Criteria | Issues identified | Information required | Due dates |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--|---|------------|
| Level 3 Level 3–4 Level 4 | 3.9, 5.1, 5.2 | Inter-professional learning and practice (IPL) | 6. An overarching plan that demonstrates how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL-related content (3.9) and assessments (5.1, 5.2) are constructively aligned program design and teaching and learning activities inform and support students' application of IPL practice principles, respectively. | 30/11/2024 |

Monitoring

Monitoring is required to ensure the Accreditation Standards continue to be met.

| Program levels | Criteria | Issues identified | Information required | Due dates |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---|------------|
| Level 3 | 3.2 (PC 3.17) | Research project | 1. De-identified samples of completed simulated research projects with assessor feedback to demonstrate the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> depth and breadth of individual research questions alignment of research projects to learning outcomes. | 30/04/2025 |
| Level 1 Level 2 | 2.3, 3.8 | Cultural responsiveness | 2. Updates to program content and assessments based on feedback from the Course Advisory Committee and academic staff. | 30/04/2025 |



Recommendations

The assessment team offers the following recommendations for continuous improvement.

Considering the evidence provided at the site visit, ACU may wish to:

- expedite the implementation of its recruitment plans, particularly in the postgraduate programs (1.7, 3.3, 3.4)
- invite external input into the Course Management Committee's activities to:
 - strengthen the management of ACU's programs, and
 - support the Course Advisory Committee's annual course review process (2.3)
- increase through existing academic governance arrangements the systematic monitoring of the Master of Clinical Psychology (Post Registration) to:
 - build program capacity and resources
 - manage risks to program quality associated with the projected growth, and
 - meet placement- and supervision-related demands (1.7, 2.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5)
- develop ways to consolidate learning outcomes achieved through the micro credentials to increase the teaching staff's confidence and ability to deliver cultural responsiveness in a consistent manner across all programs (1.7, 3.3, 3.8).

Commendations

The assessment team is impressed by ACU's organisational culture, which supports the effective quality assurance of placements and programs in line with Standards 1, 2 and 3.

Specifically, the assessment team commends ACU on its demonstrated ability to:

- maintain the quality of placements through robust communication channels and coordination processes (1.4, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10)
- implement quality improvements to a high standard because of its appetite for change and culture of collaboration (2.1, 2.2)
- invest substantial effort into consolidating benchmarking arrangements and actioning benchmarking outcomes for improved program quality (2.2)
- drive innovative mechanisms to respond to contemporary developments in Educational and Developmental psychology through discrete and purposeful leadership of this area of practice endorsement (2.4)
- support teaching staff through thorough feedback, mid- and exit reviews from all placement coordinators (3.6, 4.4, 5.4).