



Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)

Accreditation Assessment Summary Report Australian Catholic University

25 October 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	
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).