

Australian Psychology Accreditation Council Limited (APAC) is implementing a new multi-purpose tool to:

1. Collect academic staff profile data, and
2. Calculate the Student-to-Staff Ratio (SSR).

APAC has aligned its SSR methodology with that of the Department of Education and adjusted for its purposes (e.g. calculating the SSR at program sequence rather than Academic Organisational Unit level).

1. Why has APAC re-developed this tool?

The tool was re-developed to systematize APAC's data collection, ensure a more consistent approach and provide greater clarity on what we are asking of providers. It was designed to reduce manual data entry and duplication of effort (i.e. avoid similar documents from being submitted in different formats for different purposes). The new tool also allows APAC to track SSR data over time.

2. Why is APAC collecting data on the academic staff profile?

The academic staff information is crucial in the assessment of staff resourcing, the suitability of staff qualifications and may inform other staff-related standards. For example, ensuring that staff have at least an AQF+1 qualification relative to the programs they teach into. The data also feeds into the SSR calculator to avoid duplication of data entry and enhance data quality.

3. What does the SSR measure?

The SSR is calculated as the sum of student Equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) divided by sum of staff full time equivalence (FTE) in teaching functions, including actual casual staff. The EFTSL and FTE only relate to psychology programs. Research activities are not included in APAC's SSR calculation.

4. Which activities are counted as teaching?

Teaching includes activities such as lecturing, group or individual tutoring, preparation of teaching materials, supervision of students, marking, and preparation for these activities. It also includes the management and leadership of teaching staff and of staff who support teaching staff. Placement supervision (*excluding* by external parties) also counts as teaching. If there are activities that do not fall neatly within these categories, for example a staff member contributes to the design and delivery of a program but does not teach or manage it, we recommend that you include them in the file but make a note in the comment field to explain to our assessors why they should be included in the calculation.

5. What is the breakdown of staff FTE?

If an academic staff member works full-time (1 FTE, typically equating to 36.25 hours per week) and spends 40% of their total hours teaching psychology programs, then their total teaching FTE should be 0.4 FTE. If this same staff member splits their teaching activities (0.4 FTE), spending equal time teaching into two psychology programs, then you would record their fraction as 0.2 FTE for each program. If there is a Level 3-4 program and a staff member only teaches into the Level 4 component, you should enter the program sequence level as "Level 3-4" in the "Staff FTE" tab (i.e. it is a program attribute not a person attribute).

Note that these teaching hours are *not* associated with your institution's workload model but should closely reflect the actual distribution of teaching hours.

6. Why does the SSR use the reference date for full-time or fractional full-time (FTFFT) staff?

This is an approach that is adopted by the Department of Education, using 31 March as the reference date. The reference date refers to the full-time and fractional full-time staff employed on that date. FTFFT Staff who are not employed on the date are excluded from the calculation. All casual staff are included in the calculation. APAC will accept a different reference date that reflects the highest level of staff engagement.

The reference date avoids double counting of FTE. Take the following example: *Professor A taught the Master of Professional Psychology in Semester 1 on a part-time basis (0.6 FTE) but resigned in June. In Semester 2, Professor B was employed as a replacement, teaching at the same fraction of 0.6 FTE. If no reference date is used, the total FTE would equal 1.2 FTE. However, using the reference date, only Professor A's FTE would be counted which accurately reflects that the role was employed for 0.6 FTE across the full year – not 1.2 FTE.*

While the SSR only counts staff employed on the reference date, you would need to include *all* academic staff details in the academic staff profile table. This is so assessors can check compliance against other standards, including suitable qualifications.

7. How will APAC use the SSR data?

If submitted as part of re-accreditation or monitoring requirements, the SSR data are typically reviewed alongside other evidence, such as student feedback, attrition and progress rates. This is so that assessors can make informed judgements about the adequacy of staff resourcing, taking into consideration the broader context of the provider's operations and student outcomes. The aggregated quantitative data will also be used to benchmark sector trends and allow APAC to review the appropriateness of SSR thresholds.

8. How will the data be managed and stored?

The personal information that is sought in the tool is only used to carry out our accreditation functions and activities under the National Law. The data collected from this tool will be managed the same way as other accreditation information. Accreditation information is handled in accordance with the [Ahpra's Privacy Policy](#) which is consistent with requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act) and the Australian Privacy Principles found in that Act.

We retain, manage and destroy this information in accordance with our record-keeping obligations under state and territory public records legislation.

9. When is reporting by campus required?

Our assessors need the data to be reported by campus if there is a completely different cohort of staff who teach at different locations.

Scenario 1: If there is an entirely different group of staff who teach at the Melbourne campus compared to the Sydney campus, you would need to report Melbourne and Sydney separately.

Scenario 2: If the same cohort of staff teaches both online and at the Melbourne campus, you would not need to report by campus. However, if the program is also delivered at the Sydney campus by a different staff cohort, you should report by two campus groupings: a) Melbourne & online combined and b) Sydney.

Scenario 3: If the same group of staff teaches at the Melbourne campus and the Bundoora campus, you would not need to report by campus.

If you are unsure about campus reporting, please contact us at: accreditation@apac.au.

10. What needs to be reported for initial program accreditation?

Providers would only need to report on staff who teach into the new program (rather than the whole suite of programs being delivered). If staff have not yet been recruited, you should include placeholders for each position to be filled and indicate the FTE/hours that they are anticipated to work. It would be helpful to include estimates across at least three years to give our assessors a longer-term view of staff resourcing.

11. Do all providers need to submit their SSR data to APAC each year?

Based on current practice, providers only need to submit their SSR if they are required to do so as part of re-accreditation, imposed condition, monitoring requirement or assessor request for information. However, APAC recommends as good practice, that all providers regularly track their SSRs to ensure that there is oversight and monitoring of staff resourcing and that students are adequately supported.

12. Are providers required to use the tool?

No, the tool is optional, but we strongly encourage that providers use it as it ensures a consistent approach to data collection and reduces the amount of effort to maintain the information over time.