

Frequently Asked Questions – Academic Staff Profile and Student-to-Staff Ratios (SSR) Calculator



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 a 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 (including fixed-term staff) who are not employed on the date are excluded from the calculation. **All casual staff are included in the calculation for the full 12 months.** 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. Which year of data should be reported?

SSR data should typically cover the previous full calendar year to ensure that all casual staff data are complete. For example, if a report is due in 2026 it should include 12 months of data for the 2025 calendar year. The reporting period may be different if APAC assessors have requested more recent data as part of a condition or monitoring requirement. For example, assessors may ask for recent evidence that new staff have been appointed and for an estimated SSR for the current year to demonstrate an improvement in resourcing. **However, see Question 13 for instances where this timeframe may need to be adjusted.**

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Do all providers need to submit their SSR data 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.

13. What if teaching delivery spans across two different calendar years?

For institutions that run on a trimester model or have summer units/subjects, there may be instances where the unit is taught at the end of one year and continues into the subsequent year. In these cases, the data for the whole unit should be reported. For example, there is a provider that delivers the unit, Psychology 101 in Trimester 3 from November 2025 to February 2026. The provider would report both the full staff FTE and student EFTSL for that *entire* teaching period (rather than split up the data by calendar year), as it accurately reflects the teaching profile for that unit. To adjust for this timeline, the reporting period should be based on the academic calendar to cover the 12-month period up to the end of the trimester 3 unit (eg. 20 February 2025 to 20 February 2026). This information should be specified in Tab 1.

14. What if a unit is taught across different programs?

There may be some units that are commonly taught across multiple programs and the data need to be treated differently. For example, there may be two different cohorts of students from the Master of Counselling Psychology (8 EFTSL) and Master of Clinical Psychology (5 EFTSL) who attend the same Psychological Assessment classes. In this example, the staff FTE would need to be repeated for each program. For the sake of simplicity, let's assume that that one staff member (0.1 FTE total appointment) teaches the subject. The data should be treated as per the table below to ensure that the FTE reflects the actual teaching for each program.

Program that the unit is taught under	Student EFTSL for the unit	Staff FTE for the unit
Master of Counselling Psychology	8	0.1
Master of Clinical Psychology	5	0.1

In the staff FTE tab, the data would be entered as:

ID (Select the staff member from the list and enter their teaching details)	Program sequence that the staff member teaches into	Campus (Optional - leave blank if not reported)	Program area of specialisation (Note that this cannot be left blank)	Full-Time Equivalence in teaching and/or supervision in an accredited program (FTEFT staff only)
Marie Curie 2023	Level 3 - 4	Melbourne	Counselling psychology	0.1
Marie Curie 2023	Level 3 - 4	Melbourne	Clinical psychology	0.1

The rationale for this approach is that both groups of students were provided with 0.1 FTE of teaching in that unit. Again, for transparency purposes, it is recommended that a note be made in the file about commonly taught units.

15. 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. There is also a [troubleshooting document](#) that might be helpful if you encounter any issues with the template.