



Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)

Accreditation Assessment

Summary Report

Southern Cross University

Last updated: 6 December 2024



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## Southern Cross University – 2025 to 2029 Cycle

### Context

<b>Higher education provider</b>	Southern Cross University (SCU)
<b>Academic organisational unit (AOU)</b>	Discipline of Psychological and Social Health
<b>Campus</b>	Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Lismore, Online
<b>Assessment type</b>	Cycle re-accreditation
<b>Accreditation period</b>	From 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2029
<b>Accreditation standard</b>	<a href="#">Accreditation standards for psychology programs (effective 1 January 2019, version 1.2)</a>



## Assessment timeline

Dates	Assessment activities
16/02/2023	Provider attends information session with APAC team
31/05/2023	Provider submits NOIA
04/06/2024	Provider submits accreditation documentation to APAC
05/06/2024 – 02/09/2024	APAC conducts on-paper assessment
10/07/2024	APAC assessment team meeting 1 (align on-paper assessment)
30/07/2024 - 02/09/2024	Provider submits further information
13/08/2024	APAC assessment team meeting 2 (site-visit preparation)
03/09/2024 – 06/09/2024	Provider hosts site visit
30/09/2024	Accreditation Assessment Committee (AAC) endorses draft assessment report
01/10/2024	Provider receives draft assessment report
18/10/2024	Provider submits rejoinder to draft assessment report
28/10/2024	AAC considers draft assessment report after rejoinder
25/11/2024	APAC Board determines assessment outcomes



## Findings

APAC thanks SCU's discipline lead, academic and professional staff, supervisors, graduates, and students for their cooperation.

## Accreditation status

### Reaccredited

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

Program title	Campus	Level	Sequence	Program status
Bachelor of Exercise Science and Psychological Science	Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Lismore	Level 1	1–3 year	Accredited with conditions
Bachelor of Psychological Science	Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Online	Level 1	1–3 year	Accredited with conditions
Bachelor of Psychological Science, Bachelor of Business and Enterprise	Gold Coast, Online	Level 1	1–3 year	Accredited with conditions
Bachelor of Psychological Science, Bachelor of Laws	Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Online	Level 1	1–3 year	Accredited with conditions
Bachelor of Psychological Science with Honours	Coffs Harbour, Gold Coast, Online	Level 2	4th year	Accredited with conditions
Master of Professional Psychology	Online	Level 3	5th year	Accredited with conditions



## Summary of findings

<b>Standard 1: Public safety is assured</b>		
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
✓	✓	Substantially met
<b>Standard 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective</b>		
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
Substantially met	Substantially met	Substantially met
<b>Standard 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies</b>		
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
Substantially met	Substantially met	Substantially met
<b>Standard 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support</b>		
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
✓	✓	Substantially met
<b>Standard 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid</b>		
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
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
Level 3	1.3	Safety	<p>Evidence that effective management processes and procedures are in place to ensure students undertaking placements can practice competently and safely, including the presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implemented policies and procedures on the management of risks and safety, including client health risks and aggression and violence risks in the SCU Student Health Clinic in the Gold Coast campus (Clinic),</li> <li>• functional duress alarms are present in the Clinic.</li> </ul> <p>Evidence may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SCU's implemented guidelines, policies, and procedures on the management of risks and safety, including client health risks and aggression and violence risks in the Clinic, and processes for ensuring students are able to implement these</li> <li>○ completed risk assessments of the Clinic</li> <li>○ certificate(s) of duress alarm installation</li> <li>○ video footage of alarms being triggered</li> <li>○ logs confirming regular testing of duress alarms.</li> </ul>	31/12/2024



Program levels	Criteria	Issues identified	Information required	Due dates
Level 3	1.6 (i)	Ethics assessment	<p>Evidence that the student's competence to apply codes of ethical practice is assessed before students commence their placement.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amended rubrics</li> <li>• assessment task instructions</li> </ul>	30/01/2025
			<p>A range of de-identified samples of completed student assessments demonstrating competence to apply codes of ethical practice is assessed before students commence their placement.</p>	30/06/2025
Level 3	1.7	Staff qualification	<p>Evidence that appropriately qualified and experienced staff member(s) have been allocated to deliver the program.</p> <p>Evidence of appointments may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name of staff member allocated to teaching and unit coordination</li> <li>• position description(s)</li> <li>• CVs of new incumbent(s)</li> <li>• confirmed start dates for new incumbent(s)</li> </ul>	30/01/2025
Level 3	1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 3.7	Student placements	<p>A range of de-identified samples of completed 2024 student placement logbooks for internal and external placements, demonstrating that in 2024 students achieve the minimum required number of placement hours and supervision hours during their placements.</p>	30/01/2025



Program levels	Criteria	Issues identified	Information required	Due dates
All	2.1, 3.4, 3.5	Governance and resources	<p>Evidence that the Head of the AOU has sufficient influence to oversee and manage the Discipline and its suite of psychology programs, including financial, human, and physical resources.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of the Head of AOU's ongoing input into Academic Governance and resourcing matters</li> </ul> <p>Evidence may also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCU's framework for delegations</li> <li>Head of AOU's position description</li> <li>Minutes of the meetings demonstrating Head of AOU has influenced key decisions regarding hiring, resourcing, and finances.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025
Level 1 Level 3	2.2	Benchmarking	<p>Evidence demonstrating the range of benchmarking activities undertaken.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>benchmarking reports and outcomes relating to the benchmarking activities</li> <li>actions arising from benchmarking activities, including proposed improvements to program content and/or delivery, examples of implemented changes.</li> </ul>	30/04/2025



Program levels	Criteria	Issues identified	Information required	Due dates
Level 1 Level 3	3.2, 5.1, 5.2	Graduate competencies and assessment	<p>Evidence that the following graduate competencies are sufficiently taught, clearly articulated, and will be appropriately assessed as required learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Level 1 programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Foundational Competency 1.1 ii (individual differences in capacity, behaviour, and personality)</li> <li>○ Foundational Competency 1.1 vi (language)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For Level 3 program:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Professional Competency 3.4 (perform standardized psychological testing)</li> <li>○ Professional Competency 3.7 (monitoring outcomes)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information about how the relevant skills are taught (e.g. outline of learning and teaching activities)</li> <li>• mapping of assessment tasks to competencies and learning outcomes</li> <li>• assessment rubrics showing how the competency is assessed against the relevant skills-based criteria.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025



Program levels	Criteria	Issues identified	Information required	Due dates
			<p>Evidence that the following graduate competencies are appropriately assessed as required learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Level 1 programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Foundational Competency 1.1 ii (individual differences in capacity, behaviour, and personality)</li> <li>○ Foundational Competency 1.1 vi (language)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For Level 3 program:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Professional Competency 3.4 (perform standardized psychological testing)</li> <li>○ Professional Competency 3.7 (monitoring outcomes)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• samples of related assessment tasks</li> <li>• de-identified samples of marked student responses to assessment tasks.</li> </ul>	30/06/2025
Level 1 Level 3	3.4	Sufficient staffing	<p>Evidence that appropriate staff ratios are in place to support the student cohort.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outcomes of recruitment processes</li> <li>• updated SSR calculator</li> <li>• updated staff profile.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025



Program levels	Criteria	Issues identified	Information required	Due dates
Level 3	3.9	Inter-professional learning (IPL) and practice	<p>Evidence that the application of IPL and practice is taught.</p> <p>Evidence may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learning and teaching materials and resources to support the application of IPL and practice principles.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025
Level 3	4.4	Identifying students at risk processes	<p>Evidence that there are robust and consistent processes in place for identifying students at risk and strategies to assist underperforming students, including opportunities for academic staff, including casuals, to have regular meetings to identify and discuss strategies regarding students at risk.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amended 'Students at risk' policies, and procedures</li> <li>Information on processes within the MPP teaching team to systematically identify and support students at risk.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025
Level 3	5.4	Moderation	<p>Evidence that internal moderation procedures across units are undertaken and the findings are used to improve assessment approaches.</p> <p>Evidence should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the process and outcomes for moderation when there is one marker for an assessment piece.</li> </ul>	30/01/2025



## Recommendations

The assessment team offers the following recommendation for continuous improvement.

- To develop and implement equitable admission pathways for Aboriginal and Torres strait islander people, specifically for Level 2 and Level 3 programs (criterion 4.6).

## Commendations

The assessment team is impressed by the Discipline of Psychological and Social Health's (Discipline) commitment to the regional community and first-in-family university students' engagement in studying psychology.

The assessment team further commends the Discipline on the following.

- Development of a new pathway from Level 1 to Level 2 program to support local students. Strong opportunities and potential for Inter-professional learning (IPL) and practice in the SCU Student Health Clinic in the Gold Coast campus (Clinic).