APAC–APPA Towards Good Practice Guide Series

Simulated Learning Activities

Purpose

Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC), in partnership with the Australian Psychology Placement Alliance (APPA), have developed a series of *Towards Good Practice Guides* that focus on the placement components of accredited and approved psychology programs of study.

This example has been generously shared to support the sharing of knowledge and approaches across different program types and education providers.

Examples and exemplars are intended to encourage discussion and reflection, rather than provide prescribed models of compliance. Adopting an example does not, in itself, demonstrate that a program meets the Accreditation Standards.

We thank all education providers for contributing examples and exemplars to this project.

APAC Accredited program

Education provider:	Southern Cross University
Program:	Master of Professional Psychology
Unit/subject (if applicable):	N/A

Overview

Southern Cross University provided this example for its Master of Professional Psychology program. This example is an excerpt from the Student WIL Handbook, which outlines the requirements for client contact and simulated client contact and guides students in understanding and recording simulated learning activities.

SCU SLA Procedures – taken from SCU WIL Handbook pages 25-26)

4.2. Client contact

Across the 300 hours of Work Integrated Learning (WIL), students must complete a minimum of 100 hours of client contact. These hours may include a combination of direct client contact and simulated client contact, with a maximum of 20 hours of simulated client contact permitted. The balance between direct and simulated client contact will vary according to the student's developmental needs, the practice context, supervisor judgement, and the availability and suitability of client opportunities within the placement setting.

4.2.3. Simulated client contact

Client contact may include up to 20 hours (20%) of simulated client contact learning activities across the 100 hours of client contact. "*These are activities that allow the student to experience problem-based learning with simulated clients which allow the development of clinical reasoning and communication skills in a realistic but controlled learning environment. Simulation allows the provisional psychologist to experience dealing with feelings and emotions stimulated by clinical and professional scenarios, while not putting real patients at risk*.:" (p.13, PsyBA Guidelines for 5+1 internship programs).

Simulated client contact must be approved by the supervisor as relevant to skills development for the WIL and actively contribute to achieving core competencies (see the below cited text from PsyBA guidelines).

"*Simulated learning activities should be followed by review and discussion to confirm that skills development using simulated techniques is actively contributing to achieving core competencies. Simulated learning activities may include role play and reflection, use of standardised patients or student/peer actors, simulated testing techniques, computer clients using screen-based/virtual worlds, DVDs of real or simulated clients, shadowing a senior psychologist with a real client, and discussion and treatment planning after the simulation. They may include both the client contact and client-related activities aspects of practice, such as a role-play client consultation followed by practise of planning, research, and report writing skills in relation to the role-play client.*

The supervisor must provide oversight of simulated activities and clear guidance about which aspects are appropriately claimed as client contact and client-related activities. The supervisor must also ensure simulated learning activities are directly relevant to the acquisition of relevant competencies for work with clients." (p.14, PsyBA Guidelines for 5+1 internship programs)

A maximum of 20 hours of simulated learning can be claimed as client contact hours, any additional simulated learning activities approved by the supervisor as client contact must be logged as "client related" activities in Sonia.

For example, of the 100 hours of client contact, a student may have 80 hours of direct client contact and 20 hours (maximum) of simulated client contact.

4.2.4 Recording of simulated client contact in the eLogbook

The student must record simulated client contact (simulated learning) in their eLogbook as occurring with or without their supervisor being present. Each simulated client contact must be recorded in the eLogbook and briefly described in the eLogbook comments section: "Psychological Practice: Simulated Client Contact".

Include sufficient details in the comments section to indicate the type of activity conducted (e.g., assessment, intervention), simulated client details (de-identified where applicable) to demonstrate diversity (e.g., child, adult, cultural background) and the time (minutes) taken to complete.

Psychological practice: Simulated client contact	**Provide details on type of activity and time (mins)**
Provide details of: place of practice, client ID, presenting issue(s), specify type of work conducted (psychological assessment and/or intervention/ prevention/evaluation (e.g., psychometric assessment – (e.g., DASS, WISC, WIAT; therapy – CBT; delivery of mindfulness workshop) and that it was simulated activity (e.g., role play with supervisor)	• Client A, 45-year-old male presenting with depressive symptoms following injury at work. Therapy- individual basis- CBT (60 mins) • Client B, Standardised case (video vignette) 17-year-old female presenting with suicidal ideation. Risk assessment (60 mins)