

MHN700 Research Principles in Mental Health and Neuroscience

School: School of Health - Psychology

2026 | Trimester 1

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

Mental health and neuroscience research is diverse and varied, with complex and challenging ethical aspects. You will learn about a variety of research areas, including preclinical, basic neuroscience, clinical trials and longitudinal designs, and about national and international standards on ethical conduct and clinical practice guidelines. You will consider the strengths and weaknesses of research and study designs in the context of feasibility and translation, and you will develop critical appraisal skills to evaluate the merit and utility of standalone research, and programs of research.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
ONLINE			
Online – The online activities will include a combination of interactive content, learning activities, videos, opportunities for asynchronous discussion and peer to peer collaboration, as well as optional lecturer and peer zoom drop-in sessions.	3hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

- General ethics principles in research, National Statement on Ethics (Human & Animal)
- Good clinical practice (GCP), Consort & PRISMA guidelines
- Research design considerations & appraisal relevant to mental health and neuroscience
- Research and statistics fundamentals relevant to mental health and neuroscience
- Publication issues in the field of mental health and neuroscience

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Build a knowledge of literature review styles relevant to mental health and neuroscience.	Knowledgeable
2	Identify advanced research principles and methods relevant to mental health and neuroscience research.	Knowledgeable
3	Identify advanced ethical standards specific to mental health and neuroscience research.	Knowledgeable
4	Critique integrated research approach and design methodologies in mental health research.	Empowered
5	Apply advanced research knowledge to make expert judgement when considering the complexities of contributing to scholarly knowledge in mental health and neuroscience.	Empowered

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Successful completion of 96 units in AR706 and must be enrolled in program AR706

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Formative example self-check questions will be provided in learning activities each week providing immediate feedback. A Zoom drop in session will be early on to respond to any questions regarding the learning activities and provide general feedback.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Portfolio	Individual	40%	Maximum 40 questions plus 1000-2000 words	Refer to Format	Online Submission
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	60%	4000 words	Exam Period	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Learning portfolio

GOAL:	The goal of this assessment task is to build your understanding of research principles, ethical standards, research design and methodologies, and apply this to then critique research design and approaches in mental health and neuroscience.	
PRODUCT:	Portfolio	
FORMAT:	Submit: You will respond to a series of activities throughout the first half of the course. You will submit these according to the guidelines provided in Canvas. The activities will progress from quiz style questions to short answers and summaries. Your final submission will build on your foundational knowledge gained, and this will be applied to critically appraise the appropriateness of the research design for given contexts in mental health and neuroscience research.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Identification advanced ethical standards specific to relevant guidelines/source. 3
	2	Identification advanced ethical standards specific to the relevant research project type. 3
	3	Identification of research methodology. 2
	4	Identification of integrated approaches to research design. 2
	5	Critique of integrated research approach. 4
	6	Critique of research design methodologies. 4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 2: Perspectives piece

GOAL:	The goal of this task is to identify issues in neuroscientific publication, and justify approaches to publishing articles in the field of mental health and neuroscience.	
PRODUCT:	Written Piece	
FORMAT:	You will prepare a Perspectives Piece in the context of an academic researcher pursuing journal publication. You will present your article in line with the relevant journal's guidelines and format. Your piece will identify issues to consider, and complexities to address, as you justify your position on how to successfully contribute to the field of mental health and neuroscience via research publication.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Identification of literature review styles relevant to mental health and neuroscience. 1
	2	Identification of research principles to consider when contributing to mental health and neuroscience research. 2
	3	Application advanced research knowledge when contributing to scholarly knowledge in mental health and neuroscience. 5
	4	Justification of perspectives when contributing to scholarly knowledge in mental health and neuroscience. 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy	

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

This course may require the use of the software package SPSS. This is available for free via USC Anywhere, however, students may prefer to purchase their own licence (please discuss with Course Coordinator).

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au