

MHN702

Youth Mental Health and Neurobiology

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

Adolescence is a dynamic period of significant physical changes, cognitive development and emotional maturation. It can also be a tumultuous period, as the brain undergoes significant structural and functional changes. Half of mental health conditions emerge by 14 years of age, hence the need for understanding of adolescent neurobiology. In this course, you will investigate the neurobiology of the disorders that emerge in adolescence, and focus on specialised youth mental health services, as well as key factors including social connectedness, digital life and sleep-wake patterns.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

| ACTIVITY | HOURS | BEGINNING WEEK | FREQUENCY |
|--|-------|----------------|-----------|
| ONLINE | | | |
| Online – The online activities will include a variety of asynchronous, interactive learning materials, and options for lecturer and peer to peer collaborations, and lecturer and peer zoom drop-ins. | 3hrs | Week 1 | 12 times |

1.3. Course Topics

- The adolescent brain and neurocognition
- Youth mental health services
- Mental health disorders in youth
- Current issues in youth mental health e.g. cyberbullying, suicidality (*mature content)
- Lifestyle factors in youth mental health

*Mature content may include adult themes

1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

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 an advanced understanding of adolescent neurocognition, neurobiology, and treatment approaches to youth mental health. | Knowledgeable |
| 2 | Identify and interpret the scientific evidence base on major themes in youth mental health and neurobiology. | Empowered |
| 3 | Critically appraise and synthesize the scientific evidence base on major themes in youth mental health and neurobiology. | Creative and critical thinker |
| 4 | Apply advanced science communication skills appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context when discussing complex youth mental health issues and concepts. | Engaged |
| 5 | Identify and explore the impact of a youth mental health issue in a given sub-group. | Creative and critical thinker |

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

Must be enrolled in program AR503, AR602 or AR706 or SC546 or ED508

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

You will be provided with multiple opportunities to gain early formative feedback relevant to your first assessment task, by completing the interactive self-check questions incorporated into your weekly online modules and learning materials.

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 | Examination - not Centrally Scheduled | Individual | 20% | 1 hour | Week 4 | Online Test (Quiz) |
| All | 2 | Written Piece | Individual | 35% | 1500 words | Week 9 | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |
| All | 3 | Literature Review (or component) | Individual | 45% | 3000 words | Exam Period | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |

All - Assessment Task 1: Online open book exam

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| GOAL: | The goal is to demonstrate your understanding of adolescent neurocognition, neurobiology, and treatment approaches to youth mental health. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Examination - not Centrally Scheduled | | |
| FORMAT: | You will respond online to a series of questions which will cover the learning materials from the first block of this course. This online exam will consist of 40 questions ranging from multiple choice, fill in the blank, true or false and short answer questions (practice questions will be provided). | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Build an advanced understanding of youth mental health concepts. | 1 |
| | 2 | Identification of scientific evidence base in youth mental health and neurobiology. | 2 |
| | 3 | Interpretation of scientific evidence base in youth mental health and neurobiology. | 2 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Problem solving, Information literacy | | |

All - Assessment Task 2: Frontiers for Young Minds paper

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| GOAL: | The goal is to identify and explore the impact of mental disorders in youth and apply science communication skills to adapt this to be suitable for a young audience. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Written Piece | | |
| FORMAT: | You will interpret evidence for the impacts of mental disorders in youth relevant to a chosen sub-group and will present your piece in line with the Frontiers for Young Minds article guidelines and format. Your article will develop the younger audiences' appreciation of vulnerability to mental health disorders within certain sub-groups. | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Interpretation of evidence-base | 2 |
| | 2 | Identification of the impact of a youth mental health issue within a given sub-group. | 5 |
| | 3 | Exploration of the impact of a youth mental health issue within a given sub-group. | 5 |
| | 4 | Application of advanced communication skills appropriate to purpose, audience, and context. | 4 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Communication, Problem solving | | |

All - Assessment Task 3: Review paper

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| GOAL: | The goal is to appraise and synthesise the advancements in our understanding of youth mental health disorders in relation to current issues affecting youth. | | |
| PRODUCT: | Literature Review (or component) | | |
| FORMAT: | In relation to a youth mental health disorder, you will interpret the evidence for how current issues impacting youth affects their neurobiology. You will present this as a review article in line with the guidelines and format provided, and your review will synthesise the impact of the issues with regards to brain development and neurocognition on your chosen disorder. | | |
| CRITERIA: | No. | | Learning Outcome assessed |
| | 1 | Interpretation of evidence base on major themes in current youth mental health issues and neurobiology. | 2 |
| | 2 | Critical appraisal on major themes in current youth mental health issues and neurobiology. | 3 |
| | 3 | Synthesis of major themes in current youth mental health issues and neurobiology. | 3 |
| | 4 | Application of advanced communication skills appropriate to purpose, audience and context | 4 |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Communication | | |

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

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

| REQUIRED? | AUTHOR | YEAR | TITLE | EDITION | PUBLISHER |
|-----------|--------|------|---|---------|-----------|
| Required | n/a | 0 | No prescribed text. Key readings will be provided each week through the library course readings | n/a | n/a |

8.2. Specific requirements

All work submitted for assessment is to be word processed and submitted electronically. It is expected that students will have ready access to a computer with common productivity software and reliable Internet access.

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