

MHN704 Understanding and Preventing Suicide

School: School of Health - Psychology

2026 | Trimester 2

Online

ONLINE

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

Please go to unisc.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

Suicidality is a significant, complex public health problem and its impacts on communities are far reaching. In this course, you will learn about theories of suicide, as well as the current evidence-base around its neurobiology and the innovations in assessment and suicide prevention. The emphasis in the course is on the integration of policy, person-centred practices and care, and the role of the community in suicide prevention. You will also explore approaches to preventing suicide in at-risk groups and vulnerable populations.

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

- How do we understand suicide?
- Neurobiology of suicide
- Suicide prevention approaches ranging from focused to broad
- Suicide prevention for vulnerable populations
- Wider considerations for suicide prevention

*Note that **all topics** above may contain mature content including 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 Identify and explain the evidence base supporting historical and contemporary considerations and complexities in suicide prevention, using appropriate scholarly or professional language.	Knowledgeable
2 Communicate and explain the various approaches to suicide prevention, and appraise each in the context of a relevant discipline.	Engaged
3 Apply appropriate and inclusive communication skills and strategies when discussing suicidality and suicide prevention to a broad audience.	Empowered
4 Review and examine the complex needs of different populations across the lifespan.	Creative and critical thinker Sustainability-focussed
5 Evaluate how current suicide prevention strategies address complex needs and propose appropriate future suicide prevention initiatives.	Creative and critical thinker Sustainability-focussed
6 Collaborate and reflect as an interdisciplinary team, to address complex issues in different populations.	Engaged

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, AR706, GC011, SC546 or SC514

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

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 engaging with your learning materials. These include interactive self-check activities in the modules, posting responses to discussion forums and responding to your practice activities in the indicated manner.

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	Oral and Written Piece	Individual	60%	20 questions AND 300 words AND 15 mins recorded presentation	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Written Piece	Individual and Group	40%	2500 words (500 + 2000 report)	Refer to Format	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Oral presentation to a professional group

GOAL:	The goal is to explain various approaches to suicide prevention, appraising the most relevant suicide prevention strategies relevant for specific professions.		
PRODUCT:	Oral and Written Piece		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Submit Weeks 5 and 8. You will firstly identify key components influencing suicide prevention in Australia via a fact checking activity examining articles written for the general public (submit Week 5). You will then develop a recorded presentation (slides and spoken audio; submit Week 8) with either your profession, or a chosen one, as the target audience. Your presentation will inform your audience of current approaches to suicide prevention, using appropriate language when discussing suicide, then highlight the key intervention strategies relevant to your chosen profession and how they may be implemented. Full details and guidance provided in your Learning Management System.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Identification of key components influencing suicide prevention in Australia.	1
	2	Explanation of the complexities and approaches to suicide prevention.	1
	3	Appraisal of the approaches to suicide prevention relevant to your current/chosen profession.	2
	4	Application of appropriate language to communicate suicide prevention.	3
	5	Application of professional communication skills.	1 3
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving		

All - Assessment Task 2: White paper report

GOAL:	The goal is to examine the complex needs of populations within the community in relation to suicide prevention, evaluate current prevention strategies and propose new initiatives.		
PRODUCT:	Written Piece		
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:			
FORMAT:	Submit: Week 11 and Exam period. Part A (submit in Week 11): You will identify a distinct population group in the community and review their particular needs and vulnerability to suicide. You will contribute your findings to build a class knowledge base, thereby working collaboratively as a interdisciplinary team, i.e., sharing your insights and reflecting on your peers' contributions. Part B (submit in Exam Period): You will choose a population to address on your own, to produce a 'White paper report', targeted at a government level, according to the guidelines provided. In the report, you will examine the complex needs of your chosen population, then evaluate current prevention strategies to propose appropriate new initiatives. Full details and guidance provided in your Learning Management System.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Review and examination of complex needs at a particular stage in the lifespan of chosen population.	4
	2	Evaluation of current suicide prevention strategies.	5
	3	Proposal of appropriate suicide prevention initiatives.	5
	4	Application of inclusive communication skills.	3
	5	Application of appropriate professional writing style.	1
	6	Collaboration and reflection as an interdisciplinary team, to address complex issues in different populations.	6
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

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the [Library](#) at no additional cost.

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. 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>

10.5. 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.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)