COURSE OUTLINE

MHN708 Lifestyle Factors and Mental Health

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 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

Nutrition, physical activity, sleep, substance use, stress management, social networks and the environment are all lifestyle factors that shape and impact mental health and wellbeing. Lifestyle interventions are behaviours and actions that an individual can modify or change to improve their mental and brain health. In this course you will cover the emerging evidence base in lifestyle medicine and explore ways this approach can be adopted as an early intervention strategy as well as how it can supplement other therapies in the treatment of mental health disorders.

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

- Health promoting and health comprising lifestyle factors in relation to mental health
- The environment and mental health
- The ‘big 5’ lifestyle factors impacting mental health, including the neuroscientific evidence
- Lifestyle psychiatry
- Alcohol/other drug use and mental health problems
- Lifestyle factors and the glymphatic system

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 On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		GRADUATE QUALITIES Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Select and evaluate current and emerging approaches to mental health disorders, as well as propose novel approaches, based on current practice and theory in lifestyle medicine.	Creative and critical thinker
2	Argue persuasively for multidisciplinary approaches to complex mental health disorders to target a specific audience, based on neuroscientific evidence.	Empowered
3	Critique multidisciplinary lifestyle medicine approaches to mental health disorders against the limitations of traditional approaches, and then address the affordances and impacts, as well as justifying the methods of approach when proposing new approaches.	Sustainability-focussed
4	Apply advanced communication skills to targeted audiences using relevant presentation genres.	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

Enrolled in Program AR602 or 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

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	Case Study	Individual	20%	1200 words	Week 5	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Oral and Written Piece	Individual	30%	15 mins	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Written Piece	Individual	50%	3000 words	Exam Period	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Case studies

GOAL:	The goal is to evaluate a current approach to lifestyle based initiatives to improve mental health in the community.
PRODUCT:	Case Study
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	You will appropriately select and present a case study for this. Your case study will focus on either a health promoting factor being the environment, OR on addressing a lifestyle risk factor. You will find an initiative addressing the selected factor, and explain how the initiatives are evidence based. Your case study will evaluate their effectiveness based on current practice evidence, and suggest potential future avenues for such initiatives.
CRITERIA:	

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Appropriate selection of current community approaches to mental health disorders.	1
2	Evaluation of current approaches to mental health disorders based on current practice and theory in lifestyle medicine.	1
3	Proposal of novel approach to addressing a mental health disorder based on current practice and theory in lifestyle medicine.	1

GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Information literacy

All - Assessment Task 2: TED Talk style presentation

GOAL:	The goal is to argue persuasively for multidisciplinary approaches to address complex mental health disorders with a focus of highlighting the neuroscientific evidence.
PRODUCT:	Oral and Written Piece
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	You will present a TED style talk to an audience of the general population, evaluating the emerging 'Big 5' approaches utilised in multidisciplinary lifestyle approaches to mental health. You will argue for their inclusion as interventions for a specific mental health disorder, using the neurobiological evidence behind each as your core message.

CRITERIA:

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Argument of approach in persuasive manner.	2
2	Argument of approach based on neuroscientific evidence.	2
3	Proposal of novel approach based on current practice and theory in lifestyle medicine.	1
4	Critique of approach addressing impacts.	3
5	Application of communication skills pitching to relevant target audience.	4

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Applying technologies

All - Assessment Task 3: Grant funding application

GOAL:	The goal is to propose a multidisciplinary lifestyle medicine community intervention or research program, to address a specific mental health issue.
PRODUCT:	Written Piece
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	You will prepare a grant funding application to propose a multidisciplinary lifestyle intervention program or research project, addressing a specific mental health issue. Using the examples provided as a guide, your application to a funding body will also include addressing limitations of past approaches, affordances and suggested methodology of your proposed approach, and a discussion of its impacts.

CRITERIA:

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Critique of limitations of traditional approaches	3
2	Proposal of affordances of multidisciplinary approach	3
3	Proposal and justification of methods of approach	3
4	Address the impact of the multidisciplinary approach	3
5	Application of communication skills pitching to relevant target audience.	4

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation

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

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. Students will be able to participate in video conferencing, and therefore it is recommended to have computer capabilities to join these sessions (e.g. webcam, microphone).

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