

# PSY704 Advanced Research Design and Methods

**School:** School of Health - Psychology

2025 | Semester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast

**BLENDED  
LEARNING**

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

*Please go to [usc.edu.au](https://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

The UniSC postgraduate psychology programs are committed to maintaining the primacy of public safety in the delivery of the program within the education and placement environments. This course extends students' previous studies by providing a guide to clinical research methods. In recognising the Scientist Practitioner Model, there is a focus on research design with practical implications for clinical practice and on critical use of the research literature to guide evidence based practice.

### 1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
<b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>			
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – On campus workshop - 3 hours	3hrs	Week 1	13 times

### 1.3. Course Topics

Course topics encompass the scientist-practitioner model, boundaries of research design and methods, analysing research, designing interventions, and synergies between research and clinical practice.

## 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 MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	Australian Psychology Accreditation Council
1 Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of recent developments in clinical research methodology and design.	Knowledgeable	3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.12, 3.14, 3.16
2 Demonstrate an ability to access and, critique methodological strategies relevant to clinical research, and the ability to present, compare and contrast such methodologies in a cogent manner through professional presentations and materials.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered	3.2, 3.6, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.16
3 Demonstrate understanding and responsiveness diverse populations and critical analysis of relevant literature.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Ethical Problem solving	3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.10, 3.12, 3.16

#### \* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGY ACCREDITATION COUNCIL	
3.2	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, and consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings and codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically apply evidence-based and scientific methods to professional practice across the lifespan in empirically valid and culturally responsive ways.
3.3	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, and consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings and codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically employ professional communication skills, in a culturally responsive manner, with a range of socially and culturally diverse clients.
3.5	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, and consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings and codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically identify psychological disorders using a recognised taxonomy.
3.6	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, and consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings and codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically conduct professional interviews and assessments and synthesise information from multiple sources, including assessment of risk, to formulate a conceptualisation of the presenting issues to determine the most appropriate interventions.
3.7	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically monitor outcomes/modifications based on evolving case formulation, including health concerns, family/support networks, & organisational/cultural/community contexts, with care given to the appropriateness of interventions for the client.
3.8	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically interpret and communicate findings in oral and written formats, including formal psychological reports, using culturally appropriate language.
3.9	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically implement appropriate, empirically supported interventions, and monitor clients' progress and intervention outcomes.
3.10	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically demonstrate respect for the skills and contribution of other professionals.

CODE	COMPETENCY
3.11	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically work effectively with a range of professional and support staff in the workplace and communicate and collaborate effectively, within the bounds of ethical and legal requirements.
3.12	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically operate within the boundaries of their professional competence, consult with peers or other relevant sources where appropriate, and refer on to relevant other practitioners where appropriate.
3.13	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically rigorously apply professional practice policies and procedures, including as they relate to referral management and record-keeping, across a range of workplace settings and with recognition of different organisational cultures and practices.
3.14	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically engage in self-reflective professional practice, taking account of the impact of their own values and beliefs, and taking appropriate actions as a result.
3.16	Taking into account the broad diversity of clients, & consistent with current relevant legal frameworks, mental health practice standards, occupational settings & codes of ethical practice, graduates apply psychological knowledge to competently and ethically critically evaluate contemporary scientific literature to inform practice.

## 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 AR702 or AR703

### 5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

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

Fundamentals of Statistical Methods and Analysis

## 6. How am I going to be assessed?

### 6.1. Grading Scale

Limited Grading (PNP)

Pass (PU), Fail (UF). All assessment tasks are required to be passed for successful completion of the course.

### 6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

You should discuss the topic of your clinical decision making presentation with the course coordinator prior to commencing preparation on any of your presentations. You will be able to use the feedback from the clinical decision making presentation to guide your efforts for the best practice guide and for later presentations.

### 6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Oral and Written Piece	Individual	20 minutes	Refer to Format	In Class
All	2	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece	Individual	2500 words	Refer to Format	Online Submission

### All - Assessment Task 1: Clinical decision-making presentation

<b>GOAL:</b>	The goal of this assessment is to communicate your understanding of research about current treatments for psychological disorders, through an oral presentation and a handout that demonstrates the decision-making process.		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Oral and Written Piece		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	You will present the information in two parts. First, as an oral presentation and second, as a brief summary of the articles and your conclusions (minimum 750 words). You should discuss the topic of your clinical decision-making presentation with the course coordinator prior to commencing preparation of your presentation. Presentations will run between weeks 4-12 of the teaching semester.		
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Explanation and understanding of psychological disorder or condition	2 3
	2	Explanation and understanding of the statistics used in the research articles and issues that apply to assessing effectiveness of psychological treatments	1 3
	3	Clarity of the decision-making process using the statistics	2 3
	4	Ability to synthesise outcomes of research with clinical practice	1 2 3
	5	Recommendations for treatment, based on research that is presented	2 3
	6	Design and content of the handout, including summaries of the articles and conclusions	1 2 3
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy		

### All - Assessment Task 2: Best Practice Guide

<b>GOAL:</b>	The goal of this assessment is to communicate your understanding of research about current treatments for psychological disorders. You will gather and synthesise evidence for treatment options, and through the preparation of a Best Practice Guide communicate this evidence to other allied health professions.		
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	The Best Practice Guide will follow from the work you have completed for Task 1 Clinical Decision-Making presentation. You will write a guide for psychologists and other allied health professionals (e.g., social workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, and medical professionals) on the psychological disorder that you covered in Task 1. The final date of submission for this task will be determined once public holidays and the course timetable have been published prior to the commencement of semester. Please refer to your course Canvas site at the commencement of the teaching semester to confirm the due date for this assessment task.		
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>		<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Explanation and understanding of psychological disorder or condition within the clinical practice of multidisciplinary teams	2 3
	2	Appropriateness of theoretical perspective and research literature applied to the disorder	1 2 3
	3	Explanation and applicability of treatment options or interventions	2 3
	4	Explanation/understanding of the statistics used in the research articles and issues that apply to assessing effectiveness and risk of bias of psychological treatments	1 2 3
	5	Clarity of explanation of the decision-making process, using the statistics, critical analysis and original thinking, and formal academic language	1 2 3
	6	Recommendations for treatments or interventions that are appropriate for the disorder	2 3
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy		

#### 6.4. Assessment to competency mapping

PROGRAMME DELIVERY MODE	ASSESSMENT TYPE	TITLE	COMPETENCY	TEACHING METHODS
APAC AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGY ACCREDITATION COUNCIL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: GRADUATE COMPETENCIES				
All delivery modes	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece	Best Practice Guide	3.2	Assessed
			3.3	Assessed
			3.5	Assessed
			3.6	Assessed
			3.8	Assessed
			3.11	Assessed
			3.16	Assessed
	Oral and Written Piece	Clinical decision-making presentation	3.2	Assessed
			3.3	Assessed
			3.5	Assessed
			3.6	Assessed
			3.7	Assessed
			3.11	Assessed
			3.12	Assessed

#### 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

You are expected to attend all lectures. For any lectures that are missed you will need to demonstrate to your course coordinator that you have covered the required material. This will usually take the form of a detailed summary and reflection of the Directed Study Activities for the missed lecture.

#### 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

This course will be graded as Pass in a Limited Grade Course (PU) or Fail in a Limited Grade Course (UF) as per clause 5.1.1.3 and 5.1.1.4 of the Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA) - Academic Policy.

In a course eligible to use Limited Grades, all assessment items in that course are marked on a Pass/Fail basis and all assessment tasks are required to be passed for a student to successfully complete the course. Supplementary assessment is not available in courses using Limited Grades.

## 10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

You must contact your Course Coordinator and provide the required documentation if you require an extension or alternate assessment.

Refer to the Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs – Procedures.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au)