

PSY754

Clinical Health Psychology and Psychopharmacology

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 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 USC 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 provides an overview of neurophysiology. The course then introduces evidence regarding the role of psychological factors in physical health and illness, the biopsychosocial assessment of chronic disease, and evidence-based interventions for prevention and management of serious or chronic illness. Current pharmacotherapy for common psychological disorders is presented. Ethical issues will be addressed as they arise. There is also a focus on neurocognitive disorders within this course. Lastly, somatic symptom and related disorders will be covered.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus workshop - 3 hours	3hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Course topics encompass theoretical models of healthy psychology, psychopharmacology, chronic disease management, somatic symptom and related disorders, and neurocognitive disorders.

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 knowledge of and practice in accessing research regarding the role of psychological factors in the aetiology of and reactions to illness and health maintenance	Knowledgeable	3.2, 3.8, 4.2.1.1, 4.2.1.2, 4.2.1.3, 4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.3, 4.2.3.1, 4.2.3.3
2 Demonstrate knowledge of and practice in the use of relevant assessment procedures	Empowered Ethical	3.5
3 Demonstrate knowledge of and practice in accessing and applying appropriate evidence-based interventions	Empowered Sustainability-focussed	3.7, 3.9
4 Demonstrate knowledge regarding the nature, modes of action, effects and side-effects of drugs, recreational, social and therapeutic, and an understanding of pharmacotherapy, to facilitate effective communication with medical carers.	Knowledgeable Empowered	4.2.1.4
5 Show awareness of potential ethical issues involved in practising clinical psychology and an understanding of how to use the APS Code of Ethics and its accompanying Guidelines to resolve ethical questions	Empowered Ethical	3.10, 3.14
6 Demonstrate logical reasoning skills and objectivity in clinical decision making	Knowledgeable Ethical	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.
3.5	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.
3.7	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.

CODE	COMPETENCY
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.
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.
4.2.1.1	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge of the following to their practice in clinical psychology: psychological theories of the aetiology, progression and/or recovery, precursors and sequelae of psychological disorders, including incidence, prevalence and predisposing, risk, protective and maintenance factors
4.2.1.2	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge of the following to their practice in clinical psychology: both developmental systems and biopsychosocial models of health as they apply to psychological disorders as well as the multiple factors that impinge on mental health across the lifespan
4.2.1.3	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge of the following to their practice in clinical psychology: psychopathology and relevant international taxonomies of classification of psychological disorders, including severe, complex and chronic mental illness
4.2.2.1	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge to culturally responsive assessment in the area of clinical psychology, including: evaluation of psychological disorders with reference to relevant international taxonomies of classification, including disorders of moderate to severe level and complexity
4.2.2.3	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge to culturally responsive assessment in the area of clinical psychology, including: integration, interpretation, and synthesis of clinical psychological assessment data with the knowledge of psychopathology to inform case formulation, diagnosis and intervention
4.2.3.1	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge to culturally responsive interventions in the area of clinical psychology, including: selection, tailoring and implementation of appropriate evidence-based interventions on the basis of an initial case formulation, whether individuals, dyads or carers/dependents
4.2.3.3	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge to culturally responsive interventions in the area of clinical psychology, including: consultation and collaboration with other professionals regarding clinical planning and referrals, particularly in the context of complex case presentations
4.2.1.4	Graduates apply advanced psychological knowledge of the following to their practice in clinical psychology: psychopharmacology, particularly as it relates to complex psychological disorders

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)

Ability to write in APA format

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

Early formative feedback will be incorporated into class activities.

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	Quiz/zes	Individual	10 minutes per quiz, 10 quizzes total	Refer to Format	Online Test (Quiz)
All	2	Artefact - Creative, and Oral	Group	30-40 minutes	Refer to Format	In Class

All - Assessment Task 1: Quiz/zes

GOAL:	You will complete weekly online quizzes via Canvas to ensure your understanding of theory, knowledge, and content in the course.					
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes					
FORMAT:	<p>Weekly online quizzes comprised of 10 multiple-choice questions aimed at assessing knowledge of health psychology and psychopharmacology. The tests will be based on material covered during the workshops and from the prescribed textbooks. Each quiz will be 10 minutes in duration.</p> <p>This assessment will be due between Weeks 1-10 of the teaching semester. The final dates for this task will be determined once public holidays and the course timetable have been published prior to the commencement of the semester. Please refer to your Canvas site at the commencement of the teaching semester to confirm the due date for this assessment task.</p>					
CRITERIA:	No.					Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Accuracy of responses.				<div>123456</div>
GENERIC SKILLS:						

All - Assessment Task 2: Professional Webinar Presentation in Groups

GOAL:	You will demonstrate an understanding of and communicate about a neurocognitive disorder (e.g., Delirium or neurocognitive disorder associated with Alzheimer's disease, Vascular disease, traumatic brain injury, etc.) via the production of a professional webinar.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Oral		
FORMAT:	<p>Submit: Presented during workshops.</p> <p>The aims of producing a webinar are to provide an opportunity to work closely with colleagues to explore, present, and discuss a neurocognitive disorder while providing an artefact of your developed knowledge for sharing with peers.</p> <p>Prepare and present a 30-40 minute presentation (excluding questions) on a neurocognitive disorder (provided and allocated in Week 1). Relevant evidence-based research should be used as the foundation of your webinar.</p> <p>Webinars will be presented and marked during workshops to ensure that knowledge regarding neurocognitive disorders is collectively reviewed for student competency. Groups will also need to be prepared to answer questions regarding the content of their webinar.</p> <p>This assessment will be due between Weeks 11-12 of the teaching semester. The final date for this task will be determined once public holidays and the course timetable have been published prior to the commencement of the semester. Please refer to your Canvas site at the commencement of the teaching semester to confirm the due date for this assessment task.</p>		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Ability to use evidence based research as the foundation of your webinar. Ability to effectively evaluate research related to the topic area. Demonstration of your knowledge of the topic area.	1
	2	Relevant diagnostic criteria (i.e., DSM-5) and differential diagnosis if applicable. Particular attention to differential diagnosis from other neurocognitive disorders and other mental health diagnoses.	2
	3	Prevalence of the disorder. Primary theoretical model(s) & aetiology. Relevant, primary assessment measures.	1 2 6
	4	Treatment approaches as indicated by research evidence base. Ability to comment on areas of debate within the topic area. Consideration of the ethical issues relevant to the topic area.	3 4 5
	5	Presentation skills: adhere to time allocation. Generate discussion and respond to questions. Preparation and familiarity with the material. Coherence and clarity regarding content presentation. Professional and engaging.	6
GENERIC SKILLS:			

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
Recommended	Alan Carr,Muireann McNulty	2016	The Handbook of Adult Clinical Psychology	n/a	Routledge
Recommended	Jill Dorrian,Einar Thorsteinsson,Mirella Di Benedetto,Katrina Lane-Krebs,Melissa Day,Amanda Hutchinson,Kerry Sherman	2017	Health Psychology in Australia	n/a	Cambridge University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Information regarding prescribed texts or other associated resources will be made available on Canvas prior to commencement of study.

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.

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