



UNSW
SYDNEY

Program Guide 2024

Master of Psychology (Forensic)

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Students! READ THIS before starting this program!

This is a lengthy and detailed document. Everything included here has been included for a reason. *Please read this document from cover-to-cover (more than once) to ensure familiarity with everything about the Master of Psychology (Forensic) program at UNSW. Any information in this document supersedes any previous handbook. The APAC (Australian Psychology Accreditation Council) regulations supersede this handbook.*

1. The Program Guide will generally change from year to year; students will generally complete the version of the program of the year they entered. This may not always be possible for those students on an extended progression when a major change in the program occurs. Please discuss with the program staff if you are uncertain of your progression. It is exceedingly important if you are intending to complete the program in an extended progression that you discuss your course progression often.
2. Students will need to read this guide from cover-to-cover more than once to familiarise themselves with this program guide. It is prudent to keep a digital copy of this handbook for reference, both within the program and beyond (we get a few requests a year from graduates who are trying to get registered overseas, etc. for information about a program within a certain year). There are a number of policy guides and handbooks that overview the program:
 - MPsychol (Forensic) Placement policy
 - MPsychol (Forensic) Fitness to Practice/Inherent Requirements policy
 - MPsychol (Forensic) UFPC Handbook
 - MPsychol (Forensic) External Placement Supervisor Guide
 - MPsychol (Forensic) UFPC Clinical Supervisor Team Guide
 - MPsychol (Forensic) External Placement Student Guide
3. If you have followed step 2 above but still have a question, please contact the relevant person on the Program Team:
 - a. Program Director: Anita McGregor amcgregor@unsw.edu.au
 - b. Clinic Director: a/clinic director Leah Vircoe l.vircoe@unsw.edu.au
 - c. Placement Coordinator: TBA
 - d. Program Administrator: Samuel Chu Samuel.chu@unsw.edu.au
 - e. Course Convenors: <http://timetable.unsw.edu.au/current/PSYCKENS.html#PGRD>.
4. The overarching value of this Program is Humility. In line with this Program value, we expect students to value all the opportunities to learn that the Program offers (e.g., lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, meetings, supervision etc.). Absences should be treated in the same manner as any scheduled appointment.
5. The timetable for the program may look as though students might only have classes on Mondays and Tuesdays. This is done so that students who are completing their placements are able to do so three (or more) days a week, throughout the year (i.e., even through term breaks). There are also additional workshops that are run throughout the year. This means that standard or extended students who are completing their PEP classes, are committed five days a week to classes and/or placements. Any work that a student might need to do for financial reasons, needs to occur in the evenings and weekends (remembering of course, that time is still needed to complete assignments, thesis, etc.). Some students in the past have been sought 'work in addition to placement' – this means that students are utilising their provisional psychologist status to work in a position where they are acting as a professional psychologist. Please consider students must only perform duties where they are competent to do so, as per our Code of Conduct.

6. When a student joins the Master of Psychology (Forensic) program they begin their professional training. We expect that students will conduct themselves in a professional manner for the duration of their enrolment. This is a demanding program that has a professional development focus, which means that students are beholden not only to UNSW's rules and regulations, but also to AHPRA's rules and regulations. Students need to be aware and compliant with the program's Fitness to Practice/Inherent Requirements policies, as well as the competency framework that AHPRA expects that students attain in order to become registered as a psychologist in Australia. We will enforce these regulations so please act accordingly. If a student experiences something that they think may affect their progression through the Program (e.g., physical or mental health challenges, family or financial circumstances), or if there is something a student needs to support their learning (e.g., learning adjustments), please raise it with us so we can help. Generally, we do not need to hear the specifics of any personal issues, but we do need to understand when additional support is required. More information that may be relevant to students' needs can be found on the [Special Consideration](#) and [Equitable Learning Services](#) pages. Students within this program will be exposed to difficult and potentially distressing information and situations. A student's ability to manage these situations is their responsibility – we provide with training, supervision, support and resources, but the program staff may well be unaware of a student's personal triggers or circumstances – students need to communicate on a regular basis as to their own well being, this is part of learning to be a forensic psychologist.
7. Prior to starting the program, students must ensure they have status as a provisional psychologist (or are in the process of attaining it), and their Working with Children Check and maintain currency throughout their studies. Student who have placements within NSW Health will have to meet conditions of ClinConnect which requires up to date vaccinations and potentially may need to complete a mask fitting or other health and safety requirements.
8. To successfully complete the MPsychol (Forensic) program students need to satisfactorily complete **at least** 1000 hours of Placement with a minimum of three placements. Within those 1000+ hours, 400 hours of Direct Client activity must be attained (only 40 hours of which can be simulated learning tasks). Students need to work closely with their placement supervisor meet the supervision ratio required by **APAC = one hour of supervision for every 7.5 hours of professional practice at UFPC and 1 hour of supervision for every 10 hours of professional practice in other placements.** Students are responsible for ensuring that they achieve the required ratio. Please see the UNSW MPsychol (Forensic) Placement policy (and related handbooks) for additional details on placements.
9. To successfully complete this program students need to demonstrate competence in various clinical skills and professional tasks. Many of these skills will be new, and students may not reach competence (i.e., pass a course or a Placement) on their first attempt. Students will maintain a 'Competency Review Form' across their program to identify their steady acquisition (and/or barriers) of competencies across their program and placements. Students who don't achieve competence the first time will generally have one additional opportunity to enrol in and pass the course/achieve competence.

Cultural Commitment for the MPsycho (Forensic) Program

- *We commit to creating safe spaces for students, clients and colleagues to give voice to their experiences of culture and to approaching client care through the lens of cultural reflexivity.*
- *We commit to challenging our own implicit biases and confront discriminatory speech and acts in our students and colleagues.*
- *We commit to identifying structural inequity in hiring, disciplinary and promotion practices within our program and profession, to speaking out against them, and to improving equity in these areas.*
- *We commit to educating ourselves on laws and policies both local and national that sustain poor cultural practices in our society, and to engaging with our communities to resolve and improve cultural issues.*

PART 1: The Master of Psychology (Forensic) Program

1.1 Introduction to the MPsych (Forensic) program

The Master of Psychology (Forensic) program was first offered in 1998. It is the only 2-year Program with (provisional) accreditation from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) providing fifth and sixth years of study leading to registration as a psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) via AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency); eligibility for full membership of the Australian Psychological Society (APS); eligibility for Associate Membership of the APS Forensic College; and endorsement as a Forensic Psychologist by PsyBA (on application and meeting all requirements). The School of Psychology is typically ranked in the top 20 in various world quality rankings, and the MPsych (Forensic) Program is taught by high quality academics and leading professionals from the Faculty of Law, School of Psychology, and from forensic and clinical psychology practice.

Please review the registration requirements for provisional, general and endorsement registration [here](#).

A combined Doctor of Philosophy/Master of Psychology (Forensic) program is also available over approximately four years of full-time study. Students in the 'Combined' program complete the coursework and professional practice components of the Master's degree while simultaneously undertaking a PhD in psychology. This is a very demanding program. Please discuss with the academic team if considering this program.

In order to be admitted to the Combined program as a Master of Psychology (Forensic) student, the following conditions must be met:

1. be approved by the Forensic Program Team to apply for the Combined program (1405), and
2. successfully apply for an RTP scholarship.

1.2 Considerations Prior to Acceptance of Program Offer


Our program is a professional training leading to registration as a psychologist. This means that in addition to UNSW's expectations around completion of courses and thesis, specific competencies must be attained that have been outlined by AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency), including professional and ethical practice.

Some considerations prior to starting the program include (but certainly are not limited to):


- Our focus is on learning vs. performance. We recognise the dialectic between students needing to show us their competency development, and some of the worries around developing and showing new skills. The shift in having to respond to what may feel like very personal feedback can be daunting. Additionally, a shift from being in competition for scarce graduate spots to being colleagues who support each other through the learning process can take some time to accommodate to.
- How hard it is to be a psychologist, perhaps even moreso to be a forensic psychologist. This is not a profession for everyone and while students may have a great interest and a great intellect, other qualities are also required. Our program has a Fitness to Practice/Inherent Requirements policy. It identifies the qualities and expectations for becoming a psychologist. Students who feel they may not meet *all* the requirements should discuss their concerns with program staff. Having adequate financial and emotional support for this demanding program is something to consider.
- Students "must maintain provisional registration from the start of enrolment and for the duration of enrolment in any component of an accredited qualification" (see [the Higher Degree pathway](#) and the [Provisional Registration Standard](#)). This involves accurate and honest completion of

information, as well as costs that are not covered by the university or placement sites. The application for Provisional Registration requires students to answer the following questions accurately and to advise PsyBA if answers to any of these questions change during provisional registration:


15. Do you have any criminal history in Australia?

 It is important that you have a clear understanding of the definition of criminal history. For more information, see *Criminal history* in the *Information and definitions* section of this form.

YES NO

 You **must** attach a signed and dated written statement with details of your criminal history in Australia and an explanation of the circumstances.

16. Do you have any criminal history in one or more countries other than Australia?

 For more information, see *Criminal history* in the *Information and definitions*


NO **Go to the next question**

YES You are required to:


- obtain an international criminal history check from an approved vendor for each country and provide details below, and
- provide details of your criminal history in a signed and dated written statement.

- If a student has previous, current or upcoming charges or convictions, it would be prudent to discuss this with the program director prior to application within the program as the ability to be on placement (i.e., see protected file information or to be on site at particular placements) will likely be compromised. While on the program, students who incur any criminal charges must inform the program director within one week of receiving the charge.

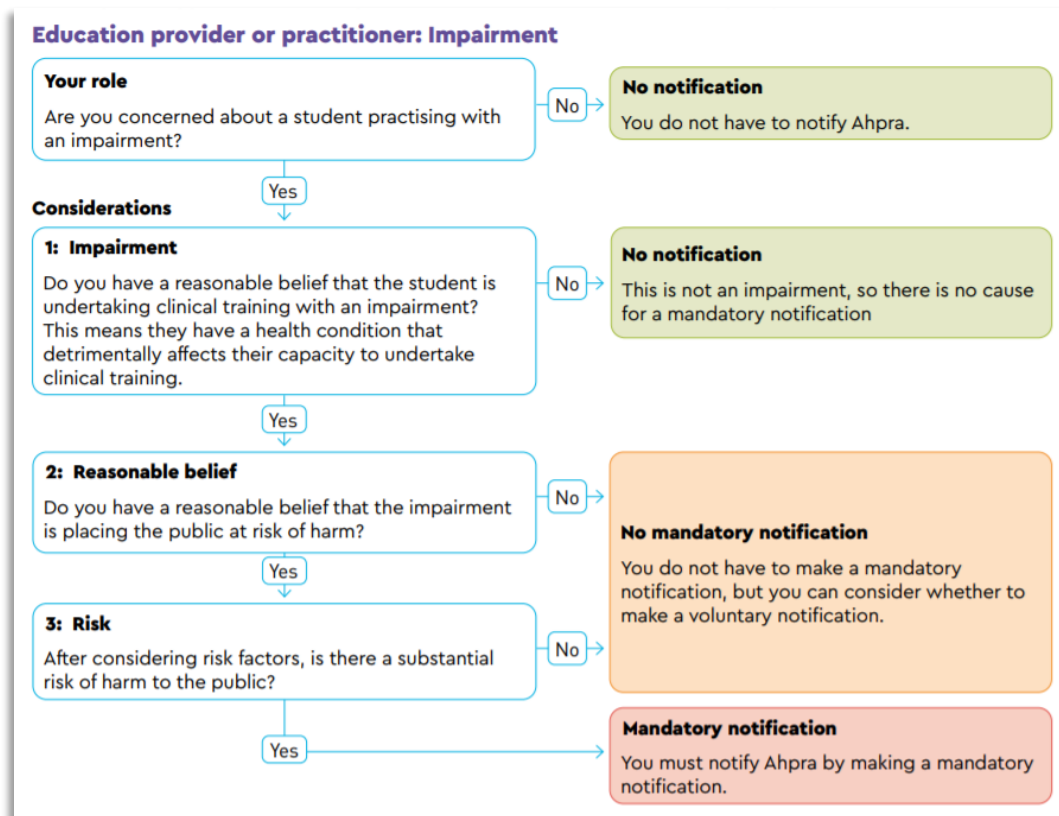
24. Do you have an impairment that detrimentally affects, or is likely to detrimentally affect, your capacity to practise the profession?

 For more information, see *Impairment* in the *Information and definitions* section of this form.

YES NO

 You **must** attach to this application details of any impairments and how they are managed.

- The National Law defines impairment as a ‘physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder (including substance abuse or dependence) that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect’ their capacity to practise. For students, the impairment would, or be likely to, affect their capacity to undertake clinical training.” (see [here](#)). Similarly, the Program Team – i.e., Health Practitioners registered under National Law – must comply with AHPRA guidelines for mandatory notifications regarding impaired students (see [here](#)). If students have any questions about impairment, provisional registration or mandatory notifications they should contact the Program Director or AHPRA



- Personal/financial situation. This program needs a student's full attention. If a student needs to work for financial reasons, then this work **must** be outside placement and coursework hours. A demanding personal life (e.g., care commitments) is also generally worthy of a discussion with the program team. If a student requires adjustments to their coursework through equitable learning services (ELS), be aware of the limitations of adjustments for placement
- Other possible issues. With the potential for disruptions to learning and placements due to health or other situations; at this point some, if not all, placements may be limited by vaccination status. If a student is unwilling or unable to gain full vaccination status (not just to COVID), they may not be able to complete the placement requirement of the program. Other issues may arise that may affect a student's ability to complete the program. The program team will strive to accommodate reasonable requirements, however students need to be aware of the university and placement health regulatory limitations that are in place.

1.3 Program Staff

Core Program Team

[Professor Richard I. Kemp](#), BSc Durham, PhD London

[Anita McGregor](#), EF Senior Lecturer, M Psych (Forensic), Program Director

[Professor Kristy Martire](#), BA Syd., MPsych (Forensic) PhD UNSW

[Associate Professor Adrienne Withall](#)

UNSW Forensic Psychology Clinic Team

Leah Vircoe, a/Clinic Director, Supervising Psychologist

Sarah Parkin, Supervising Psychologist

Anita McGregor, Supervising Psychologist

School of Psychology Contributors

Dr. Amanda White, PhD, UNSW

[Professor Eva Kimonis](#), PhD, University of New Orleans
[Professor Ben Newell](#), BSc, PhD UNSW, ARC Future Fellow
[Scientia Professor Richard A. Bryant](#), BA Syd., MClInPsych PhD Macq.
[Professor Skye McDonald](#), BSc Monash, MSc Melb., PhD Macq.
[Professor Tom Denson](#), BA, MA Research Psychology, MA Social Psychology, PhD
[Professor Jessica Grisham](#), BA PhD
[Professor Angela Nickerson](#), Ph.D./MPsych (Clin), UNSW, 2009, B.A. (Hons), UQ, 2004
[Professor Simon Killcross](#) (Head of School), BA, MA, PhD

Faculty of Law Contributors

Professor Jill B. Hunter, BA LLB UNSW, PhD Lond.
Professor Prudence E. Vines, MA Syd., DipEd Syd. Teachers' Coll., LLB UNSW
Associate Professor Mehera San Roque, BA LLB (Hons) Syd, LLM BC
EF Lecturer, Leah Williams

Honorary Associates

In addition to the University staff listed above, a number of psychologists and other professionals holding senior positions within the Forensic Psychology community in New South Wales act as Honorary Associates to the program, both in the capacity of placement supervisors and/or workshop/teaching providers.

1.4 Aims of the program

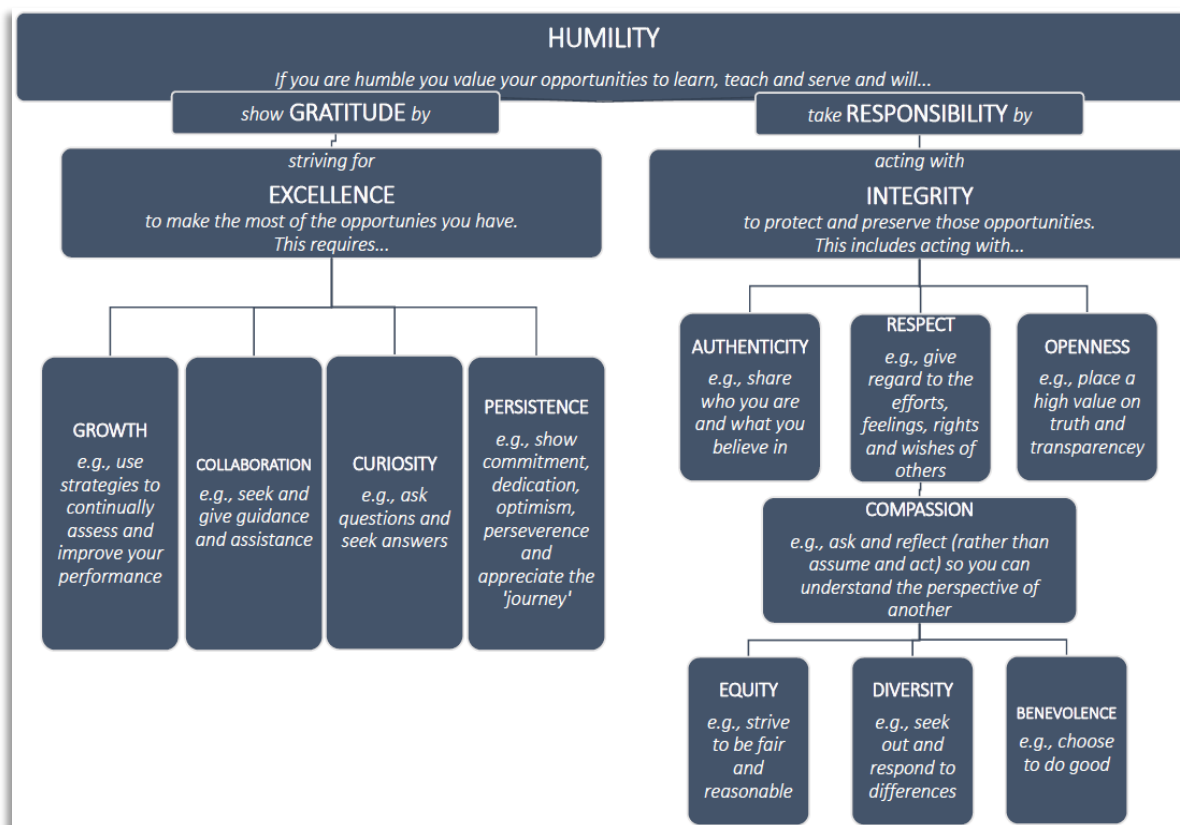
The Master of Psychology (Forensic) provides graduate training for individuals who intend to pursue a career in forensic settings. Students (also referred to as Interns) graduating from the MPsych (Forensic) Program are qualified by UNSW as being competent to practice psychology (and seek endorsement as Forensic Psychologists) in accordance with APAC (2019) Standards. Forensic Psychologists can be involved with professional aspects of the interface between psychology and the law.

There is an increasing demand from legal, investigative, corrective, and policy agencies across Australia to obtain psychological expertise to aid understanding and management of forensic issues. Forensic psychologists work in a wide range of settings, including prisons, courts, police, probation and parole, child protection, juvenile justice, insurance, mediation, private practice, public policy and legislative review. It is a hallmark of Forensic Psychology practice that we *provide service to marginalised and disadvantaged populations*. Protection of the public is a guiding principle of the MPsych (Forensic) Program of study (per APAC 2019 1.1).

The MPsych (Forensic) program aims to train students in generalisable skills across a wide range of competencies. Students on the Program will develop these skills in the context of criminal and civil domains. There is a strong emphasis on the integration of clinical, research, and legal skills.

The MPsych (Forensic) Program Team and Students developed a set of core values in 2018 and updated in 2020. These values guide the Program Team and students in our approach to Learning, Teaching, and Service (to clients and our profession). Our overarching value is Humility (see below).

Both the Program Team and Program Trainees endeavour to demonstrate Humility by acting with Gratitude (by striving for Excellence, Growth, Collaboration, Curiosity, Persistence) and Responsibility (by acting with Integrity, Authenticity, Respect, Openness, Compassion, Equity, Diversity & Benevolence) in all aspects of their Learning, Teaching and Service.



1.5 Program Components & Structure

The Program has three components: Coursework, Research Thesis, and Professional Practice (including associated Placements).

The University year extends from early-February to mid-December, and is divided into three ten-week terms (refer to the [Academic Calendar](#)) with a short break between each term. There is a full Orientation Week (O-week) prior to the beginning of Term 1, and a shorter O-week prior to Term 3 (there is no O-week for Term 2). Program teaching generally falls within the teaching periods, but can also occur during O-weeks and between teaching periods. Placement and thesis activities take place throughout the year, irrespective of teaching periods. In practice, students completing a 'Standard' progression should expect to have program-related commitments on most weekdays at most times during their two years of full-time enrolment (i.e., coursework, placements, workshops and thesis research).

The degree is designed to be completed in full-time mode over two years (i.e., 'Standard' Progression), however an 'Extended' progression is also available. **Please be aware that in an extended progression program, students will likely not have the same experience in scaffolded learning (i.e., that the T1 courses in year 1 of a standard progression program are meant to align with the foundational placement. Extended progression means that students are taking courses in year 1, with clinical placements not beginning until year 2).** Proposed Standard and Extended Program Progressions are outlined below (please see previous handbooks for older versions of the program).

Standard Program Progression			
Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
1	PSYC7409 PSYC7423 PSYC7424	PSYC7410 LAWS9800/9810 PSYC7425	PSYC7419 PSYC7402
2	PSYC7420 PSYC7426	PSYC7421 LAWS9800/9801	PSYC7422 PSYC7403

		PSYC7427	PSYC7428
Extended Program Progression (sample only)			
1	PSYC7423 PSYC7424	LAWS9800/9810 PSYC7425	PSYC7402
2	PSYC7409	LAWS9800/9810 PSYC7410	PSYC7419 PSYC7403
3	PSYC7420 PSYC7426	PSYC7421 PSYC7427	PSYC7422 PSYC7428

The schedule below shows regular classes only. Workshops associated with the Professional & Ethical Practice courses and other Program activities not associated with a specific course do not appear.

Tentative Schedule (Jan 2024)			
T1			
	Monday		Tuesday
9am			
10	PSYC7409		PSYC7423
11			
12			
1			
2	PSYC7420		PSYC7424
3			
4			
5			
6			
T2			
	Monday		Tuesday
9am			
10	PSYC7425		
11			
12			
1	LAWS9800	9810	
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
While PSYC7410 & 7421 run in T2, it is run through workshops with no regular class time			
T3			
	Monday		Tuesday
9am			
10	PSYC7419		PSYC7403
11			
12			
1			
2	PSYC7422		
3			
4			
5			PSYC7402
6			

1.6 'Standard' vs 'Extended' Program Progression

This program is generally completed in two ('standard') or three ('extended') years. In the standard progression, students complete their coursework and Orientation placement within the UFCP in their first year and completing coursework, external placements and thesis during their second years. If on an extended progression, the first year of the 'Extended' Progression generally requires students to attend classes on Mondays and Tuesdays. This means part-time work can theoretically be accommodated in that year. Once an extended student commences their Professional & Ethical Practice (PEP) courses (in Year 2), they will be required on-campus and/or within the clinic or placement site every week day (for Years 2 and 3). Students who undertake paid work while enrolled in PEP courses are only able to maintain a weekend position or a job with a very flexible work schedule (i.e., that permits working outside of business hours). There is a possibility for a four year extended program, but significant planning needs to occur to ensure that the student is enrolled in each term over the four years to maintain their status within the program.

Students contemplating an extended progression need to plan their program carefully in consultation with the Program Director. Progression plans should be raised for review with the Program Team at regular intervals to ensure that it remains on-track.

1.7 Award of Degree

To successfully complete the MPsych (Forensic) program, a student must pass all coursework, research thesis, and professional practice components of the program by the due dates, attained all required competencies, and have complied with the regulations associated with Provisional Registration by AHPRA and the Code of Ethics. The criteria for successful completion of each component of the Program are described in this document and in the relevant course outlines. If a student is ever in doubt about what is expected, refer to these documents or check with the program team.

If a student completes all program courses with a weighted average mark ([WAM](#)) of 80 or more they will be awarded their degree 'with Excellence'. Allocation to a graduation ceremony will be determined by the completion of program requirements (i.e., courses or associated placements); students who complete the requirements later may not be in the same graduation ceremony as students who complete the requirements earlier.

1.8 Attendance Expectations

In line with the program values, we expect students will value the learning opportunities offered (e.g., lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, meetings, supervision et al.). Accordingly, students are expected to attend all program related activities and that any absences will be managed in a professional manner. As with any other scheduled meeting or appointment, it is a professional courtesy to notify staff in advance of any absence (via email) or as soon as possible after an absence. In the case of illness, a student is expected to provide a medical certificate.

We understand that every student will at times be confronted with competing demands on their time and that some absences will be unavoidable; it is important that students handle these situations professionally and in accordance with the program values.

If an examinations or other form of assessment is missed, or if a student finds that life circumstances are affecting their course performance, [Special Consideration](#) can be applied for (or discuss taking Program Leave, where appropriate (see next section)).

1.9 Program Leave

If a student has not enrolled by the relevant term census date and has not applied for and been granted approved Program Leave for that term, they will be automatically discontinued from the program and must formally apply for re-admission.

Students can choose to apply for Program Leave if they feel it will benefit their program progression (e.g., Program Leave may provide an opportunity to address personal challenges or to develop competencies required to successfully complete a course). Program Leave may be granted subject to the restrictions outlined [here](#). It is recommended that a student discuss Program Leave with the Program Director prior to application.

1.10 Assistance and Support

UNSW can provide additional assistance and support in the form of:

- The Current Students Gateway: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/>
- Academic Skills Support: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/skills>
- Student Wellbeing & Health: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/wellbeing>
- Equitable Learning Services: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/els>
- UNSW IT: <https://www.myit.unsw.edu.au/>
- Special Consideration: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>
- Student Complaints and Appeals: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/complaint>
- Review of Results: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/results>

1.11 Fees and Charges

A number of [Commonwealth Supported Places](#) are available to eligible students enrolled in the Program. A Commonwealth Supported Place is a higher education place for which the Government makes a contribution towards the cost of the student's education, and the student pays a [Student Contribution](#) amount.

Full information on fees and charges may be found [here](#).

PART 2: Coursework

2.1 Program Courses

Program courses are listed below and run on Mondays and Tuesdays during teaching periods. Different courses have different timetables and combinations of lectures, seminars and workshops. Please refer to relevant course outlines for more information regarding specific timetable information, expectations and assessments for each course. These outlines may vary from year to year.

We expect that students on the program will value Excellence (as per our Program Values). As such, students should seek to and maintain a Distinction average (mark of at least 75 or equivalent) across courses. Students who do not successfully complete a course (i.e., do not achieve a pass grade) on the first attempt can attempt the same course again on one additional occasion). However, any further attempts to complete the same course are at the discretion of the Program Director and are generally not permitted. Students can request a meeting with the Program Director at any time if they would like to review coursework or program progression.

Students can find more information about each course by following the link to the UNSW Handbook. Detailed course outlines will also be available on [Moodle](#), UNSW's Learning Management System, just prior to the start of each term.

[LAWS9800 Law for Psychologists 1](#),
[LAWS9810 Law for Psychologists 2](#) *

* The LAWS courses are offered in alternating years so should be taken at the first available opportunity.

Year 1

[PSYC7423 Assessment in Forensic Psychology](#)
[PSYC7424 Forensic Interventions 1](#)
[PSYC7425 Forensic Interventions 2](#)
[PSYC7402 Applications of Forensic Psychology.](#)
[PSYC7409 Professional & Ethical Practice \(PEP\) 1](#)
[PSYC7410 PEP 2](#)
[PSYC7419 PEP 3](#)

Year 2

[PSYC7403 Experimental Psychology & Law](#)
[PSYC7420 PEP 4](#)
[PSYC7421 PEP 5](#)
[PSYC7422 PEP 6](#)
[PSYC7426 Research Thesis \(Forensic\) 1](#), [PSYC7427 Thesis 2](#), [PSYC7428 Thesis 3](#) **

** Refer to PART 3: Research Thesis

PART 3: Research Thesis

3.1 Nature of Research

General Information

The information here is a guide to get a student thinking, to lay out procedures, and to provide some background information. The Course Convenor for PSYC7426, 7427 and 7428 acts as the chair of the Masters Thesis Committee (MTC). Members of the Masters Thesis Committee will advise the chair as necessary and provide more information to students about thesis projects and procedures. Please contact one of the members of the MTC (either Richard Kemp or Kristy Martire) with thesis-related queries in the first instance. Seeking guidance early in the process is necessary to complete a project that involves using existing data or external supervision.

In terms of enrolment progression for Research Thesis, PSYC7426 is during T1, PSYC7427 in T2 and PSYC7428 in T3.

Topic Area

An empirical project can be carried out in any area relevant to forensic psychology. The data may be collected in a forensic setting or be concerned with how people within the general population respond to issues of a forensic nature. Research into basic psychological processes (e.g., conceptual development, attitude change, social decision-making) is appropriate, provided the forensic significance of the research is clearly indicated. Other thesis topics may address forensic program evaluation, innovative approaches to forensic investigation, individual assessment, strategies for interviewing and counselling, and policy formulation.

Study Design

A student can employ a wide variety of research strategies to meet the specific scientific aims of a project. Common strategies include experimental, quasi-experimental and correlational designs. The research may be theory-driven or exploratory, but in the latter case, it is still necessary for a student to spell out the theoretical context and indicate the significance of various potential outcomes. The primary approach must be quantitative, but qualitative approaches may be used to supplement this. Often quantitative measures may be extracted from qualitative data (e.g., ratings by judges), which facilitate analysis. We require that the primary analyses be quantitative rather than qualitative.

Single case designs and case series would only normally be presented as part of a larger study in order to illustrate a particular issue. Theoretical or historical analyses are generally not appropriate since the intention of the project is to provide experience in the practicalities of carrying out a research or evaluation project in an applied area of psychology. Research based on existing data sets may be permitted where a case can be made that: 1) the question of interest is best addressed by existing data; and 2) other aspects of the research process (e.g., theoretical analysis, data analysis) can be expanded to compensate for the absence of any contribution to the procedure and data collection. In all cases, care should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient scope in the project to satisfy thesis requirements. For example, mere norming of a psychological test would not constitute a thesis. Projects of this kind should be discussed with the MTC early on (ideally, prior to supervisor allocation) to explore the project feasibility.

Participants

Students can recruit participants from a variety of forensic settings, other special populations (e.g., schools), the general community, from the Psychology undergraduate participant pool, or through online services such as Prolific or Mechanical Turk (if a supervisor is able to fund the recruitment). Access to sufficient participants from the desired population within the time frame of the project is crucial to its viability. The School cannot guarantee access to the targeted population.

Supervision

Students will have a primary supervisor for their project who liaises with the MTC. The primary supervisor is generally a member of the academic staff of the UNSW School of Psychology.

Primary supervision can also be provided by a person with an academic, research or clinical position in another University unit (e.g., Faculty of Law) or community/Government forensic agency (e.g., Corrective Services NSW). In cases where one supervisor is external to the School of Psychology, the student will be appointed a co-supervisor from within the School of Psychology (usually from the Program Team) to liaise with the MTC. In this case, a student would need to make sure that both the external and internal supervisors meet initially to discuss their respective roles and to ensure both are fully informed of progress with the project. The internal/co-supervisor will have a particular role in ensuring that the project meets the requirements of the Research Thesis and the MPsych (Forensic) degree.

It is expected that students will comply with the supervision arrangements preferred by their supervisor. These may include weekly meetings, attendance at lab meetings, or other types of engagement. These arrangements can be negotiated between the supervisor and the student, however ultimately a student's supervisor is best placed to determine what involvement is required in order to ensure appropriate progress and quality of the research project. If progress or contributions are not considered by the supervisor to be of suitable quality, they should advise the MTC and a student's progress in PSYC7426 or PSYC7427 may be reviewed.

The MTC will undertake a formal review of progress for each student at the end of PSYC7426 in T1 and PSYC7427 in T2. Satisfactory completion of each course is required prior to enrolment in subsequent thesis courses and eventual completion of the thesis. If satisfactory progress has not been made, an action or remediation plan may be required.

Whether following a Standard or Extended plan, students are normally required to enrol in PSYC7426 Research Thesis (Forensic) 1 in Term 1, and enrol in PSYC7427 in Term 2, and PSYC7428 in Term 3. The Thesis is submitted during in Term 3. It is mandatory that the thesis be completed over three consecutive Terms.

The timetable for Research Thesis projects is outlined below. Note that extensions to the submission deadline are not normally allowed and the standard penalty will apply for late submissions. The MTC will only consider waiving a late penalty when the University guidelines for [Special Consideration](#) are followed and a formal application is submitted.

It is in student's interest to control the scope of the project to be able to meet the research deadlines as well as other commitments (e.g., Coursework and Placements).

Resources

Computing facilities: These are available in [several areas of the School of Psychology](#). Students are given a Psychology account and printing quota upon enrolment in the Program. Students generally have access 24 hours a day/7days a week to these facilities. However, this access may be reduced when/if health restrictions are required.

If testing space or facilities are required, students should consult with their supervisor. There are some bookable spaces available through the School Office (level 15 Mathews), and some equipment available through the Technical Support Unit.

Consumables: There is no budget available from the School to support projects. Students will need to pay for photocopying and other consumables if their supervisor is not able to provide resources.

Ethical issues

All research must comply with the most current version of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and University ethical standards, regardless of the source of participants. Supervisors can provide guidance on relevant ethics requirements and procedures.

In addition to School (HREAP-C) or University approval (HREC), students may also need approval from other bodies (e.g., to access health or court data, or to test offenders or other special populations). Supervisors can help students to identify the Committees relevant for their project.

In the case of collaborative research – particularly with external forensic agencies – it is important to clarify in advance the nature of the research relationship (for example, the issue of “ownership” of the project and of the data). In some cases, it may be appropriate to spell out these issues in writing. In the case where supervision is being provided by external agencies, an internal/co-supervisor can assist a student in formalising an “ownership” agreement. Please also note that projects can be significantly delayed while waiting to obtain ethical approvals. It is important to be mindful of this when planning a project.

Publications

The Research Thesis is to be prepared as a journal article suitable for publication in a specified journal. The document itself is to be consistent with the publication recommendations and requirements except where they conflict with explicit requirements stated in this document. Students are encouraged to submit their research for publication in the chosen journal and to present their research at relevant conferences. Order of authorship on any resultant publications should be negotiated with between students and their supervisors. See [here](#) for relevant resources.

Research Conference

Research Thesis are presented at the Annual Forensic and Clinical Psychology Research Conference, which is usually held on Week 6 or 7 of Term 3 (mid- to late October). Current Program Trainees, Staff, program graduates, internal and external supervisors and members of the Forensic and Clinical Psychology community are invited to attend. This conference provides a showcase for a student’s work and is an opportunity for students to impress potential future employers.

3.2 PSYC7426 Course Schedule & Assessments

Week	Topic	Activity
Week 0	Thesis	Begin if you haven’t already started working with your supervisor to develop and finalise your thesis research proposal. Attend supervision and lab meetings as agreed with your supervisor (until final thesis submission).
Week 1 - 3	Thesis	Continue working with your supervisor to develop and finalise your thesis research proposal. Attend supervision and lab meetings as agreed with your supervisor.
Week 4	Thesis	Submit Brief Research Proposal either Week 4 or 5. You will be advised of your submission week by the Masters Thesis Committee (MTC)
Week 5	Thesis	Submit Brief Research Proposal either Week 4 or 5. You will be advised of your submission week by the Masters Thesis Committee.

		Present your Research Proposal at workshops in either Week 5 or 6. Your presentation will be one week after you submit your Brief Research Proposal. You will be advised of the presentation time and location by the Masters Thesis Committee.
Week 6	Thesis	Present your Research Proposal at workshops in either Week 5 or 6. Your presentation will be one week after you submit your Brief Research Proposal. You will be advised of the presentation time and location by the Masters Thesis Committee.
Week 7-10	Thesis	Continue working on your MTC approved thesis project and write-up with your supervisor (until final thesis submission).
Week 11	Thesis	Submit your signed Thesis Progress Report to the MTC for review and approval.

Assignment 1 Brief Research Proposal: This assessment is a hurdle task, and failure to complete it will lead to failure of the course.

During Week 2 T1 students will be allocated to a BRP submission week by the Masters Thesis Committee (MTC). During Week 4 or 5 students will submit their BRP to the MTC for review.

Details for preparing a Brief Research Proposal are as follows:

Following the example given in PSYC7402 – Applications in Forensic Psychology – students will write a Brief Research Proposal (BRP) describing their proposed research project. As with the BRPs completed in PSYC7402, the purpose of this document is to convince the reader (ultimately the MTC) that a student has formulated an interesting and achievable research plan, which will address explicit and refined research questions.

The proposal should be clear, concise, fully referenced, and easy to read. A compelling case is required for the MTC to approve any proposal. The BRP should include the following sections:

- **Aims** – these should be clear, appropriate and match with method.
- **Background** – this should demonstrate knowledge of the field of research, critically analyse previous research and clearly identify gaps in literature, and have a good smooth and logical progression towards the identification of the specific research questions. It should have a narrowing or funnelling structure that leaves the reader in no doubt that what a student proposes is the best and most obvious next step in the field of research.
- **Proposed Research (method)** – detail an appropriate, clear method matching with the aims, describe the population of interest, the recruitment procedure, identify appropriate ethics bodies, operationalise key variables, and convince the reader of the achievability of the project.
- **Significance & Innovation** – brief statement of the applications and benefits of the research contextualised appropriately.
- **Effort/Independence** – in order for a thesis project to be approved, the MTC must be convinced that the work a student will be doing will be sufficient to meet program requirements. This is particularly important where a student is joining an existing project or accessing existing data. In all instances, a student must demonstrate sufficient intellectual and “hands on” contributions in the design and execution of the project such that efforts are

commensurate with those constituting an 8-month research project. These contributions should be described in this section of the proposal. Please consider and include in the submission a version of the table below describing the effort/independence dimensions of the project to assist the MTC to understand the project and the student's role.

	Effort/Independence	
	Lower	Higher
Research idea	Supervisor's	Own
Ethics approval	Already existing	To be sought
	School	University
	School/University	External agency
Measures	Already determined	To be determined
	Already developed	To be developed
	Brief	Lengthy
	Easy to administer (no specific training required)	Technical/complex to administer (training required)
Data set	Pre-existing	To be collected
	Entered into database	Not entered into database
	Cleaned/transformed/coded	Un-cleaned/transformed/coded
	Few variables	Many variables
	Few cases	Many cases
	Independent/whole	To be linked
	Linked data available	Linked data to be requested
	Remote/online testing	Face-to-face testing
	General/undergrad sample	Limited/forensic sample
	Community testing site	Corrective/closed testing site
Analysis	t-test, chi-square, ANOVA, ANCOVA	Structural equation modelling, interrupted time series, factor analysis, multinomial regression, survival analysis

- **Timelines and goals** – students will be held accountable for progress as compared to the goals and timelines described in their BRP. In this section students need to document what they intend to achieve by the time T2 begins (i.e., by the start of June). Progress with regard to goals is particularly important during T1 and progress will be assessed at the end of PSYC7426 to determine whether a student can continue their enrolment (EC) and can progress to PSYC7427 in T2 and PSYC7428 in T3. The stated goals may relate to: submitting ethics applications; obtaining ethical approvals; developing measures; survey distribution; data access; data collection; data entry; data analysis; completion of a literature review; producing drafts of thesis sections etc. It is important for a student to propose realistic/achievable (rather than aspirational/ambitious) goals and timelines. It may be valuable to include some proposals for what steps may be taken at certain times if the project appears to be going off-track. When the MTC reviews a student's progress at the end of T1 they will be aiming to convince them that they: a) have a viable project, b) of sufficient scope, c) that is progressing well.
- **References** – must be included in the document but are not included in character count.

The BRP should be no more than 20,000 characters (roughly five pages single-spaced), *excluding* references. A student should consider readability when formatting their document. References may be endnoted in this document but the full reference included at the end should comply with APA referencing standards. The amount of content presented under each heading should be distributed as is appropriate for the project. For example, if a student is using a complex experimental design or

sampling procedure be sure to take the space to convince the reader that they know what they are doing, have thought through the details, and have proposed something achievable. If a student's study is relatively straightforward, characters may be better used in the background and significance sections. Irrespective of the nature of the project, a student must present sufficient background information to explain why their project is necessary and appropriate. A student will be given feedback on their Brief Research Proposal and, ultimately project approval, once the BRP is presented to the MTC and their Supervisor. The feedback a student receives on their BRP will be verbal and via email at, and after the presentation.

Assignment 2 Thesis Proposal Presentation. This assessment is a hurdle task, and failure to complete it will lead to failure of the course.

The Thesis Proposal Presentation is due 7 days after a student submits their BRP to the MTC for review. Ideally, a student will arrange for both their internal (and external supervisors) to attend this presentation. Where that is possible, this presentation will serve as the formal review of the thesis proposal. All going well, after the presentation the MTC will provide formal (written) approval for the student to proceed with their project. Based on the feedback received in the Presentation, a student might be asked to revise and re-submit their BRP or to amend goals/timelines before the project is approved by the MTC. **Data collection should not begin until the MTC has given formal approval.**

In the event that the student's supervisor is unable to attend the Thesis Panel Presentation, a formal panel meeting including all supervisors must be scheduled before MTC will approve their proposal. If a student feels ready to begin collecting data **before** their scheduled Thesis Panel Presentation, they can consult with the MTC to submit their BRP for early approval. Having done so does not free a student from the obligation to make a Thesis Panel Presentation during Weeks 5 or 6, but it does mean that a student can start data collection as soon as the project is approved. We are very happy to support requests to start data collection early, students should consider this if possible.

Details for preparing a student Thesis Proposal Presentation are as follows:

A student's Thesis Panel Presentation is a brief presentation outlining the rationale and method of the proposed research. This presentation (for the MTC, supervisors and colleagues) is an excellent opportunity to receive feedback and answer any questions the MTC might have about the proposal. Student will also provide feedback to peers on their presentations. These presentations often raise issues that have been missed during the planning stages, or helps to troubleshoot methodological challenges. Students must both project timelines and to the effort/independence dimensions suggested above in their presentation so that the MTC has a thorough understanding of the project being proposed and their role in it.

It is intended that this presentation – together with the review of the written BRP – constitute the formal review process, which results in the final approval of a student's research idea as something achievable and appropriate. If, however, all a student's supervisors are unable to attend this presentation an additional panel meeting with the MTC and supervisor(s) present to facilitate the final approval of the project must be arranged.

Assignment 3 Thesis Progress Report. This assessment is a hurdle task, and failure to complete it will lead to failure of the course.

The thesis report template can be downloaded here: https://unsw-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/z3121448_ad_unsw_edu_au/ER6qDmzkoHNPoZ0IE8y1R9wBI6g9LUc3jkf7Wf_ueZs3uA?e=TwstIQ

Students will submit their signed Progress Report to the MTC by 5pm Friday of Week 11, T1. The form needs to be signed by their supervisor and is to include a copy of the Timelines & Goals that were approved by the MTC during the Thesis panel Presentation. The form will ask whether there have been any significant changes to the objectives, methodology or timeline of the project. A student's supervisor will review the completed form and sign-off on progress.

Once submitted, the MTC will review a student's Research Thesis Progress Report and advise them of the PSYC7426 course outcome. Students whose progress is considered satisfactory at Week 11 will continue enrolment (EC) and progress to PSYC7427 in T2 and, ultimately, PSYC7428 in T3. The MTC will liaise with students (and supervisor(s)) if a project or progress is not satisfactory as described at Week 11. In this situation students will have until Friday Week 3 of Term 2 to demonstrate satisfactory progress as negotiated between the student, their Supervisor and the MTC.

3.3 PSYC7427 Course Schedule & Assessments

Week	Topic	Activity
Week 0-10	Thesis	- Attend supervision and lab meetings as agreed with your supervisor (until final thesis submission). Continue working on an MTC approved thesis project and write-up with your supervisor (until final thesis submission).

Assignment 1 Satisfactory Progress Report (#2). This assessment is a hurdle task, and failure to complete it will lead to failure of the course.

The template for the Thesis Progress Report (#2) can be found here: https://unsw-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/z3121448_ad_unsw_edu_au/EXIPT8lkpa1EIVGMwZiYYD0BL3kljO7T_KwQeal2ocKvfA?e=e5NGyW

Students are required to demonstrate satisfactory progress with their thesis project and write-up. Supervisors will need to complete the Progress Report (#2) and submit in the form of an email to the MTC by 5pm Friday of Week 11, T2. The report asks supervisors to confirm student progress with their thesis is satisfactory and that they are on track to submit by the due date. Satisfactory progress may be demonstrated in a number of ways, including but not limited to: submitting for feedback a draft of one or more sections of the thesis (e.g., Introduction, Method); proof of having met each goal and timeline to date. Supervisors will use their experience and informed judgment to evaluate progress.

Once submitted, the MTC will review the supervisors report and advise students of the PSYC7427 course outcome. Students whose progress is considered satisfactory at Week 11 will continue enrolment (EC) and progress to PSYC7428 in T3. The MTC will liaise with students (and supervisor(s)) if the project or progress is not considered satisfactory as described at Week 11. In this situation students will have until Monday Week 1 of Term 3 to demonstrate satisfactory progress as negotiated between the student, their Supervisor and the MTC. Failure to show satisfactory performance by this deadline will result in failure of the course.

3.4 PSYC7428 Course Schedule & Assessments

Week	Topic	Activity
Week 0	Thesis Presentation Skills #1 Workshop (TBC)	Learn skills for presenting thesis research at the annual conference

Week 0-6	Thesis	- Attend supervision and lab meetings as agreed with your supervisor (weekly until final thesis submission). Continue working on your MTC approved thesis project and write-up with your supervisor (weekly until final thesis submission).
Week 3	Thesis Presentation Skills #2 Workshop (TBC)	Practice thesis presentation and give feedback to peers
Week 5		THESIS DUE Friday Week 5
Week 6		Present at Annual Forensic and Clinical Psychology Research Conference (TBC)
Week 7-10	-	No formal activities. Thesis activities are concluded.

Assignment 1: Students must submit and pass a research thesis which constitutes 100% of the mark for PSYC7428. Once PSYC7428 is complete the mark will also be back filled against the 'EC' for the successfully continued courses PSYC7426 and PSYC7427.

A student's thesis will take the form of a manuscript prepared for publication in a named psychology journal and will include: 1) An Introduction reviewing published research relevant to a student's topic and identify the aims of the project. 2) A Method section which clearly and succinctly describes the methodology employed. 3) A Results section which describes the treatment and analysis of the data collected. 4) A discussion section which considers the implications of the results in the context of previous research and considers applications to forensic practice or research.

The Research Thesis will be marked by two members of the academic staff of the School of Psychology. A student's supervisor is not involved in the marking of the Research Thesis but does provide the markers with an assessment of *student contribution and competence throughout the project*. Students will receive an overall numerical mark and corresponding grade for their Research Thesis, which contributes 25 percent to the overall WAM for the Master of Psychology (Forensic) degree. Feedback on the Research Thesis can be obtained directly from supervisors after the official release of results date for the term.

When preparing to submit their thesis, students are permitted to receive feedback from their supervisor/s on written drafts of their thesis Introduction, Method and Results sections only. Students may receive supervisor feedback on each of these sections twice in total prior to submission. Supervisors are not permitted to review or provide feedback on written drafts of the Discussion section. Students can talk about their plans for the Discussion section with their supervisors, but they may not request or receive feedback on a written draft of this section.

Once the thesis mark is finalised it will be added to the Term 3 course (PSYC7428) and backfilled against the previous two thesis courses, replacing the EC grades.

Thesis Preparation instructions are as follows:

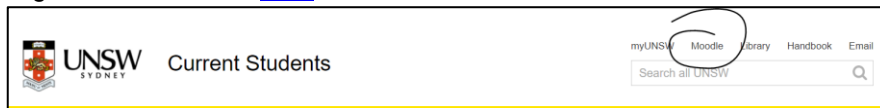
1. Students are permitted to receive feedback from their supervisor/s on written drafts of their thesis Introduction, Method and Results sections only. Students may receive supervisor feedback on each of these sections twice prior to submission. Supervisors are not permitted to review or provide feedback on written drafts of the Discussion section. Students can talk about their plans for the Discussion section with their supervisors, but they may not request or receive feedback on a written draft of this section.
2. Students' thesis should be prepared as though it is a submission for a named journal, following the recommendations of the intended journal, except where they conflict with these guidelines.
 - Identify an appropriate journal for the project (target journal). In most cases, there are several journals that would be suitable – it does not matter which is selected provided it is appropriate for the subject material.
 - Read the “guidelines for authors” provided by the target journal. For many journals, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.) will be the bible in the preparation of the manuscript.
 - Include with the thesis a mock letter of submission to the editor of the target journal (the APA publication guidelines may help with this letter). This letter does not form part of the thesis mark.
3. The thesis should be approximately 7,500 words in length at most (including abstract but excluding tables, figures, references and appendices). In practice, we recommend aiming for less than 7,500 words so long as relevant content is covered. Ignore any word limit imposed by the target journal. Examiners are told to reward clear and concise writing and are never upset if something is shorter than anticipated if all the necessary information is there.
 - Include all figures and tables in the text of the document (ignore instructions by the journal to submit these separately)
 - The thesis should be either double-spaced or 1.5-spaced and all referencing should be in APA format
 - Students do not need to include a table of contents for the thesis.
 - Students should include a title page indicating that what follows is a thesis submitted for their degree and giving the name of supervisor(s) and their affiliation
 - Students should include the Certificate of Originality (see below)
 - It isn't necessary to provide the examiner with all SPSS data files, output etc. but these do need to be provided to supervisors (see below)
 - Students may also include a separate Acknowledgments page if desired. Long and sentimental tributes should be avoided, but students can include acknowledgments which are slightly longer than those normally given within the manuscript.
4. Students are required to provide supervisors with an electronic copy of their thesis. In addition, students must provide supervisors with a copy of all materials, data files and analyses.
 - Submit an electronic copy of the thesis (Abstract to Discussion only, no references or appendices) to Turnitin, via the Moodle module for the program.
 - Submit an electronic copy of the full thesis, including signature on the Certificate of Originality, to the Masters Thesis Committee.
 - The thesis must be submitted before **4.00pm** on the due date (Friday of Week 5 Term 3). Note that extensions to the submission deadline are not normally allowed and the standard penalty (described in detail below) will apply for late submissions (unless Special Consideration applies).

Example Turnitin submission instructions (there may be slight variations from year to year)

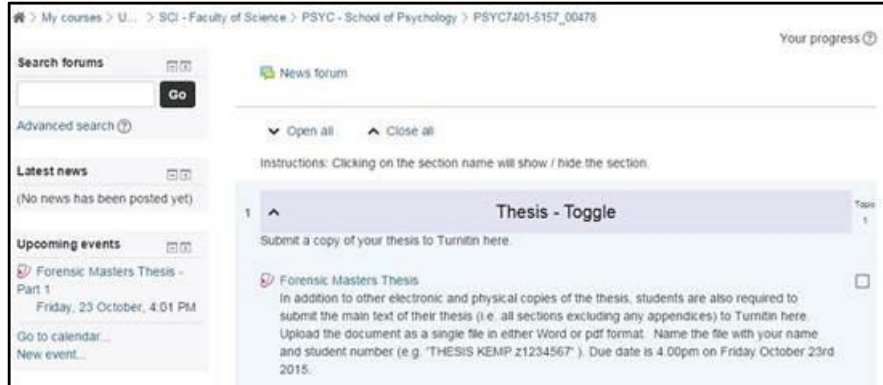
Students can check access to Moodle and the Research Thesis Turnitin link by following the steps below. Contact the Program Administrator immediately if unable to access the Research Thesis Turnitin.

Moodle / Turnitin help: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-use-turnitin-within-moodle>

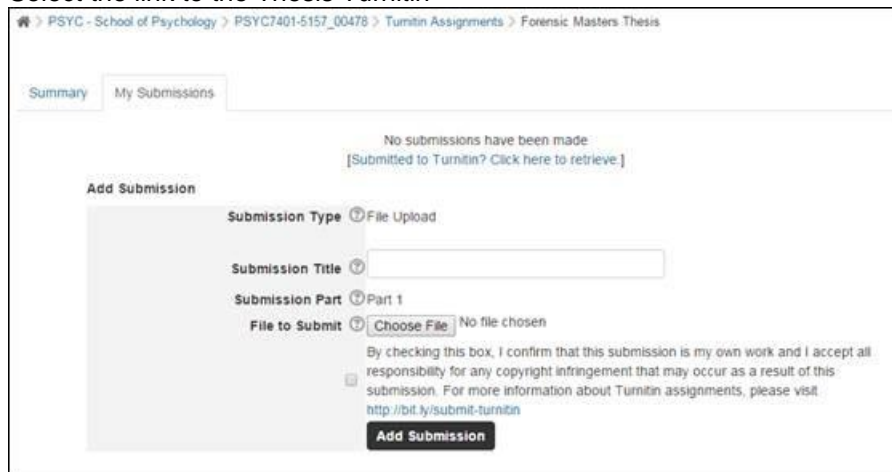
1. Log into Moodle from [here](#)



2. Select the general Moodle page for the Forensic Masters Program (e.g., **PSYC7401- PSYC7410-PSYC7412-PSYC7414-Forensic Master – T3 2023**)



3. Select the link to the Thesis Turnitin



4. Upload the document as a single PDF file. Name the file with your name and student number (e.g., 'THESIS MARTIRE z1234567').

Certificate of originality

The following statement, signed by the student, should be included on a separate page between the title and acknowledgment pages:

I declare that:

This assessment item is entirely my own original work, except where I have acknowledged use of source material such as books, journal articles, other published material, the Internet, and the work of other student/s or any other person/s. This assessment item has not been submitted for assessment for academic credit in this, or any other course, at UNSW or elsewhere.

I understand that:

The assessor of this assessment item may, for the purpose of assessing this item, reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University. The assessor may

communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).

Signature _____ Student's Name _____

PART 4: Professional Practice

4.1 Placements

It is important that this section of the Handbook be read in conjunction with the UNSW MPsychol (Forensic) Placement policy, UFPC Clinic Handbook and the Placement Guide for students.

Broad Aims of Placements

The primary aim of Professional Practice Placements is to ensure that students gain experience, develop and demonstrate competence in a wide range of work undertaken by forensic psychologists. This involves exposure to a variety of psychological models, and exploring their application in a range of clinical and forensic problems, with a variety of clients, and in a variety of settings. To successfully complete the program, students need to *satisfactorily* complete at least 1,000 hours of supervised professional practice and within those hours, 400 hours must be Direct Client Activities hours (DCA). Placements can only be completed while students are enrolled in an appropriate PEP course (unless alternate arrangements have been approved by the Placement Coordinator and Program Director). Placement activities take place *across* and *between* teaching periods – potentially including the summer break. ALL placement plans need to be discussed with and approved by the Placement. In general, it is good practice to check placement plans with the Placement Coordinator early and often.

The Competency Review Form

We have developed a method for identifying and evaluating student progression – the Competency Review Form (CRF). The CRF identifies the eight competencies AHPRA recognises for the development of a psychologist; and the commensurate skills and attitudes within each competency. The CRF is utilised to provide an ongoing review of a student's development across the program and is intended to cover the synthesis of coursework, theory and practice (students must provide consent for their CRF forms to be utilized by program staff and External Placement site supervisors). Students themselves as well as supervisors will complete the CRF at various points throughout the program; at the end of the program, students will need to show their attainment of essential competencies. Training in the use of the CRF will be provided within the Readiness Module associated with PEP1 (PSYC7409).

4.2 Relationship between Placements and PEP Courses

Placements are linked to the Professional and Ethical Practice (PEP) Courses. Students must be enrolled in the relevant PEP course while completing placement activities and satisfactorily attain placement expectations to pass the associated PEP course (placements are considered a hurdle task). The PEP courses involve classes and/or workshops that will develop knowledge and skills relating to professional and ethical practice.

Placements are completed across various settings both internally – at the UNSW Forensic Psychology Clinic (UFPC) – and externally – in forensic agencies and organisations. Over the course of the Program students will need to satisfactorily complete at least three Placements. In the first year, students completing a Standard Progression will complete a Readiness module and Orientation placement at UFPC. During the second year of a standard progression students work with increasing autonomy and broaden their skills by completing two external placements.

The outcome of placements (satisfactory or not satisfactory) is determined by the Clinic Team (in the case of the Readiness module and Orientation placement), Placement Coordinator and/or Program Director (in the case of external placements). The external placement supervisor will provide the student and the Placement Coordinator detailed feedback regarding skill development and clinical/professional competence during and at the end of placement. The Placement Coordinator and Program Director will use this feedback to determine the outcome of external placements (see section 4.8 for placement outcome processes).

Professional & Ethical Practice (PEP) courses and Placements are linked in the following manner:

PEP 1 (PSYC7409)

PSYC7409 (Term 1 – T1). To successfully complete this course students will need to have passed all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed the Readiness module at the UFPC.

PEP 2 (PSYC7410)

PSYC7410 (T2) is taught through workshops. To successfully complete this course students will need to pass all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed the midplacement review for the Orientation placement at the UNSW Forensic Psychology Clinic (UFPC).

PEP 3 (PSYC7419)

PSYC7419 (T3). To successfully complete this course students will need to pass all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed their Orientation placement by UFPC Christmas shutdown (November 30).

PEP 4 (PSYC7420)

PSYC7420 (T1). To successfully complete this course students will need to pass all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed the midplacement (or final) review of the first external placement.

PEP 5 (PSYC7421)

PSYC7421 (T2) is taught through workshops. To successfully complete this course students will need to pass all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed the first external placement (and organized or started their second external placement).

PEP 6 (PSYC7422)

PSYC7422 (T3). To successfully complete this course students will need to pass all course requirements as described in the course outline and have satisfactorily completed the second external placement, indicating completion of 1000 hours of placement including 400 hours of Direct Client Activities, and met all essential competencies as indicated within the Competency Review Form.

4.3 Placement Procedures

Supervision Requirement

Supervision is the foundation of developing clinical and professional competence. In order for students to satisfactorily complete 1,000 hours of professional practice (including 400 hours of Direct Client Activities), the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council requires that students obtain sufficient amounts and types of supervision during Placements. Consistent with APAC guidance, we define sufficient supervision in the following way:

- When completing the UNSW Forensic Psychology Clinic Placement students must obtain one hour of Supervision for every 7.5 hours of professional practice (ratio 1:7.5)
- When completing external Placements students must obtain one hour of supervision for every 10 hours of professional practice (ratio 1:10)
- At least 50% of supervision on any placement must be individual (i.e., no more than 50% can be group supervision)

If a supervisor agrees, students may also include preparation time spent by supervisors as part of supervision hours. This includes time supervisors spend reviewing videos, reports or other documentation, gaining collateral information as part of supervision preparation, etc. These activities must be logged by the Supervisor for their time to be added to the supervision time. For example, if an intern has 100 hours of professional practice placement and 6 hours of supervision (ratio 1:6), and the Supervisor has spent **and documented** 4 hours preparing for supervision sessions, then the placement hours remain the same (100) but the number of supervision hours becomes 10 hours with a final ratio of 1:10 (which is within the 1:10 requirement). A supervisor can only add a maximum of 10 hours of their preparation time as supervision within a placement.

A supervisor is responsible for:

- Meeting and working with students to formalise a Basic Contract and reviewing prepared Learning Plans, and Competency Review Forms. A new placement platform for recording documents, In Place, will be implemented in 2022.
- Making their CV available so students can forward it to the Placement Coordinator
- Overseeing a student's clinical, professional and administrative work while on placement – including direct observation of professional practice.
- Attending and appropriately documenting Mid- and Final Placement review meetings, and for reviewing and signing Placement logbooks at regular intervals (though it is a student's responsibility to ensure the Placement Coordinator is provided a copy of the signed documents in a timely manner).
- Raising any issues or concerns regarding professional practice with a student in a timely manner.
- Raising any serious or significant concerns with the Placement Coordinator or Program Director at the earliest opportunity.
- Being available so that students can obtain the required supervision ratio (however, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their ratio and schedule supervision meetings as necessary to ensure their ratio is in line with requirements).

Supervisor Qualification Requirement

In order for students to satisfactorily complete supervised professional practice, the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council requires that students are supervised by someone with appropriate qualifications and experience (i.e., Criterion 1.8: “placement supervisors have the professional and supervisory skills to supervise students in psychological work and are approved as a supervisor by the PsyBA ...”). Consistent with APAC guidance this means that Supervisors must:

- Be a Psychologist registered with PsyBA (must preferably be forensically endorsed, any deviation from forensic endorsement must be approved by the Placement Coordinator)
- Be an AHPRA Accredited Supervisor

If a supervisor does not meet the endorsement requirements (the accredited supervisor requirement is non-negotiable) students will need to discuss this with the Placement Coordinator before the placement can begin. The Placement Coordinator may be able to help identify an appropriate additional primary supervisor, for example from within the Program Team or School of Psychology (most often the Placement Coordinator). Additional expectations are placed on these placements to ensure that the student is gaining forensic competencies.

4.4 Client Related Activities and Direct Client Activities

APAC guidelines suggest Program graduates should be “competent to practise across a range of settings” and that “the 1000 placement hours comprise direct client and client-related activities” (APAC Accreditation Standards, 2018).

Client-related activities (CRA) are defined by APAC as: “client-related activities support students to acquire graduate competencies as relevant to the level of graduate competency and/or the area or areas of practice undertaken, and are distinct from direct client activities (though supportive of it). Client-related activities may include the following activities: phone calls, focus groups, and meetings in the service of data-gathering or case management in support of service provision to clients; file review; report writing; team reporting and meetings where the student reports to the team to advise of client progress; delivery of psychoeducational content to service providers/organisation; completing log books and assessment tasks for the placement; supervision; professional development activities (e.g. simulated activities, role plays, workshops); travel with regard to client sessions. Travel, in regard to client care, should be limited to a maximum of 20% of client-related activity hours; this is particularly relevant for regional and remote interns” (APAC Accreditation Standards: Glossary, 2018).

APAC defines **Direct Client Activities (DCA)** as those activities that “provide opportunities for students to acquire graduate competencies as relevant to the level of graduate competency and/or the area or areas of practice undertaken, and may include the following activities directly in support of client-focused assessment or intervention: phone calls with clients; face-to-face contact with clients (including e-health modes of delivery); and meetings where the student reports to the team/ organisation (e.g. in the context of a nursing home, an employee assistance program), if the team/organisation will enact interventions to the client or is in fact the focus of interventions; work with clients, their families, employers, supervisors, teachers, health providers or legal guardians with regard to client care” (APAC Accreditation Standards: Glossary, 2018).

Given that APAC identifies that the activities may be site and practice dependent, we have identified a listing of activities that can be identified as CRA or DCA within UFPC (with some time limits). External placement sites are required to identify activities that would be considered DCA prior to the student beginning placement, dependent on available work duties. UFPC maintains a UFPC Clinic handbook that outlines the duties and activities students can expect to undertake while on placement at the Clinic.

Students are expected to gain 400 hours of Direct Client Activities. Up to 40 hours of simulated learning may be counted as DCA in the Orientation Placement (as outlined in the UFPC Handbook). Simulated hours and observation of supervisors in their work are not counted in external placements (other than up to five hours of observation in external placements as part of placement induction). In external placements where a student is partially observing an intervention or assessment, they must negotiate with the supervisor how much DCA can be counted (e.g., if a student participates in half of a therapy session, observing the supervisor or other in the other half, then it would be expected the student only count .5 hours of DCA).

Conduct Requirement

While on Placement, students are expected to abide by the rules of work of each placement site, as well as AHPRA regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines (<https://www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/ethics-and-practice-standards>) of the Australian Psychological Society, including the guidelines for psychological practice in forensic contexts.

4.5 Organisation and Administration of Placements

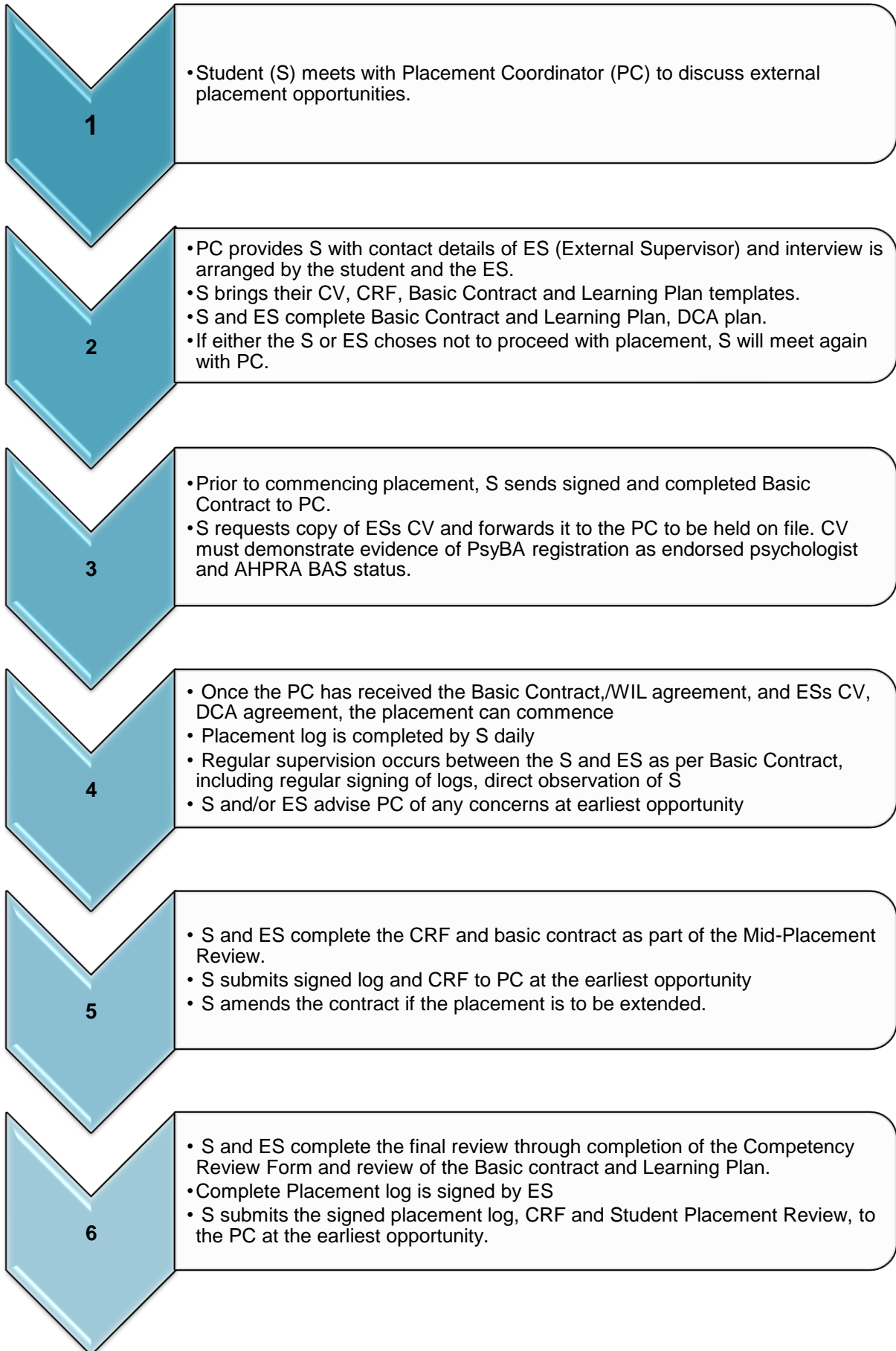
The initial (and ongoing) contact for support or guidance relating to placements is the Placement Coordinator. Taking a broad and flexible approach to placements is recommended, in part because some placements are in higher demand than others and not all requests can be accommodated. A wide variety of placements are available; students should take advantage of the opportunity to explore new and potentially rewarding areas of practice. The Placement Coordinator will consider preferences, prior experience and current professional development needs as well as program considerations when

making placement allocations. The program cannot not guarantee the availability of specific placements for any specific student.

The process of establishing a placement normally involves these important steps:

- Having regular discussions with the Placement Coordinator and other students about different available placements. External placements should be identified and organized by mid-year prior to beginning placement. Students should not contact a placement site prior to discussion with the Placement Coordinator – we value the time and good will of our external supervisors who provide placements for our students.
- Prior to a placement, an interview should take place between the student and the External Placement Supervisor to discuss the goals and expectations for the placement (discussion of DCA, competencies to be gained, etc.). The student is responsible to ensure that the supervisor sends the Placement Coordinator their CV identifying their registration status (i.e., endorsements, if any, and accreditation as a supervisor), and any other documentation required for the placement to begin. The student must be communicating with the external placement coordinator until the placement begins (and of course, during the placement).
- Once the Placement commences, the student should complete relevant workplace inductions to become acquainted with the duties, roles, and casework of the supervising psychologist, be introduced to other agency or unit staff members, and be familiarised with the functions of the unit or agency as a whole. While it is not expected that administrative duties are a significant part of placements, a student should gain a general understanding of how the organisation formally functions. This includes familiarity with relevant administrative duties. Observation of a supervisor or other mental health professional can only be counted in the early (induction) phase of the placement (5-10 hours).
- The student should, as soon as competence and circumstances permit, make a positive contribution to the work of the unit or agency. While on placement, the student should function as if a part-time member of staff. The student is expected to fulfil all duties that a psychologist on site would carry out as consistent with their level of competence. In addition to casework, the student should participate in ancillary activities undertaken by psychologists in the organization such as case conferences, report writing, conferring with referring agents, etc. .
- Any work done as an intern psychologist on placement should be formally supervised by a supervisor via pre- and post-session discussion, observation, or audio or videotaping of sessions. In addition, supervisors are encouraged to make themselves available for informal discussion of matters that arise between formal supervision.
- **The student is responsible for achieving the required supervision ratio.** That means the student is responsible for seeking, obtaining and documenting the requisite supervision has taken place. If a student experiences difficulty getting the amount of supervision needed, it is imperative that the student contact the Placement Coordinator as soon as problems arise to seek assistance in resolving the matter. Waiting to raise the issue with the Placement Coordinator at mid- or end of Placement review is often too late to ensure a successful completion of a placement.

External placement procedures are generally as follows:



If a student begins the placement prior to the completion of tasks without explicit approval from the Placement Coordinator to deviate from the standard procedure, any hours towards completion of the placement will not be counted and the placement may be deemed unsatisfactory. The student must also demonstrate stage-appropriate competence on the tasks/skills as well as ethical/professional conduct for the placement to be deemed satisfactory. If a student is ever unsure about what is required, or if difficulties are anticipated following the standard procedures, seek advice/guidance from the Placement Coordinator before taking action.

4.6 Placement Log

The placement log documents activities on Placement, as well as reflections on learning. A supervisor must sign the placement log at regular intervals for placement hours to count towards the 1,000 hour (400 hour DCA) requirement. The placement log template is provided in Teams, and the process for correctly completing the placement log is offered during the Readiness module..

Placement logs must:

- Be kept up to date so that it can be made available to a supervisor or the program team at any time.
- Be a record of the time, date and accurate hours of placement
- Record activities on the placement (separated into direct and indirect client activities).
- Note any and all supervision (and identifying the name of the supervisor, if more than one), as well as agendas for supervision (group and individual). Note that group supervision ratios must not exceed 50% of total supervision.
- Reflections, including reflections on any feedback received and plans for implementing the feedback.
- Notes on issues of interest or requirement for follow up.
- Any other significant issues.
- Signature of the supervisor at regular intervals.

While this is not an exhaustive list of the information that should appear in a Placement log, it provides some indication of the level of detail that is expected.

While it is noted that discussing issues with peers is an important collegial activity, 'peer supervision' or peer discussion is NOT to be counted as 'supervision' in a log book (i.e., peer consultation does not contribute to the ratio of Supervision to Professional Practice).

4.7 Placement Reviews

The Mid-Placement Review Meeting

In addition to regular supervision meetings, the student and supervisor must meet towards the middle of placement (at or near the time that was negotiated within the basic contract) to review placement progression (i.e., review the Competency Review Form, the Basic Contract and Learning Plan). General feedback about performance, clarification of expectations or uncertainties, and revision (if necessary) of the Basic Contract or Learning Plan should be part of the agenda. Any deficits in performance that have not already been raised should be discussed at this meeting and translated into specific goals added to the Basic Contract or an Action plan. Placement logs should be signed by the supervisor and the student should email the log and CRF to the Placement Coordinator at the earliest opportunity after the review has been completed.

The Final Review Meeting and End of Placement

At the end of the placement, the supervisor will provide feedback on attainment of competencies through the CRF. The supervisor should also review and sign the completed Placement Log at the end of placement. The supervisor is encouraged to provide both the student and the Placement Coordinator

with any additional written or oral reports they consider relevant to the student's professional development and placement progress. The student is required to complete a review of the placement and share their feedback with the supervisor and the Placement Coordinator.

Ad-Hoc Placement Review

Neither the student, nor the supervisor are obligated to wait until the mid- or final placement review to raise any issues that are relevant to professional development or satisfactory placement progress. If either the student or supervisor believes that a serious breach of procedures, protocols (including workplace safety) or professional conduct (including impairment) has occurred in the course of a placement, this matter should be brought to the attention of the Placement Coordinator or the Program Director immediately. The Placement Coordinator and Program Director will assess and appropriately address the situation.

The Placement Coordinator is generally available to attend any Mid-, Final- or Ad Hoc Review as requested.

4.8 Placement Outcomes

For the supervisor, one of the rewards of supervision is to see students develop growing competence and confidence. The supervisor's main function is helping this development process along through observation, training, encouragement and ongoing feedback. There is, however, an important "gate-keeping" function to be performed by the supervisor; they must evaluate whether a student has demonstrated an acceptable level of competence and monitor whether student conduct has been consistent with provisional registration obligations to clients and the profession, and is in keeping with workplace procedures and protocols. In the event that a supervisor has significant and/or serious concerns in any of these areas they have an obligation to inform the Placement Coordinator or the Program Director at the earliest opportunity.

In order to pass a PEP course a student must satisfactorily complete the linked/associated Placement. At a mid placement meeting (at UFPC or an External Placement site, and in the final meeting of the Readiness module), there are generally three outcomes communicated to the student, namely:

1. The placement is progressing (or the Readiness module was completed) in a satisfactory manner; continued performance will generally result in a satisfactory completion of the Orientation/external placement.
2. Some concerns/barriers have been noted. An 'Action Plan' is recommended to be developed by the student outlining their understanding of the concerns, and steps they can take to remediate concerns in a timeframed manner. An Action Plan must be communicated to the clinic team/external supervisor, and be an integral part of each professional development supervision session. The mark from the corresponding PEP class is usually held until the outcome of the placement has been established.
3. A recommendation from the clinic team/external supervisor that the module/placement not progress due to significant breaches of conduct, or significant lack of progress such that successful completion of the module/placement is not anticipated. It is still possible at the UFPC Orientation placement, that a student, with a clear action plan, can continue until the week before census date of T3. Additional feedback will be provided, though the student will be made aware that continuation may result in the failure of both PEP2 and 3.

At the final placement, the outcomes are binary; successful completion or recommendation for an unsuccessful completion.

If the recommendation for termination or unsuccessful completion is made to the Program Director, the decision may be reviewed with the PCAB (Professional Competencies Advisory Board). The PCAB's remit is to review the relevant documentation to ensure all relevant policies and procedures were

followed, and make a non-binding recommendation to the Program Director for the final decision (information on the PCAB process is available in the Fitness for Duty/Inherent Requirements policy).

Conditions for an 'Unsatisfactory' Placement

Some of the conditions for a recommendation for an unsatisfactory completion include that the student:

- Failed to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence, given the stage of training.
- Failed to complete sufficient work as set out in the Basic Contract, for the general level of competence to be assessed. [Where a student has completed insufficient work in a placement due to factors beyond their control (e.g., prolonged absence through illness), assessment may be deferred until a later date rather than being considered 'unsatisfactory'].
- Committed a significant breach of the regulations of the placement provider, University or AHPRA, or has engaged in significant unprofessional or unethical behaviour.

Action Plans and Competence-Based Remediation Plan

Action Plans may be developed by a student to rectify identified learning, skill or professional deficits/barriers during the course of an ongoing placement.

Remediation Plans are developed by a student when a placement has been found to be unsatisfactory. It is highly recommended that a student take time to ensure they are prepared to successfully implement their plan. If a student is not able to meet the goals of the remediation plan, the remediation placement will be deemed unsatisfactory.

There are some rare circumstances where a student has completed a placement with some deficit(s) and the Program Director may choose to have the student proceed to their next placement. In these cases, the student will carry forward an action plan to their next placement(s) and higher scrutiny will be maintained by the Placement Coordinator. Given the nature of these situations, it is highly recommended that the student work closely with the program team to ensure they have a workable plan to resolve the issues prior to proceeding to the next placement to ensure successful completion.

Placement Outcome Determinations

Placements can be deemed as unsatisfactory at any point of the placement if the deficit or behaviour is significant, serious and no progress is being made. The placement can be classified as unsatisfactory whether or not there is an action or remediation plan in place. If an external supervisor is considering terminating the placement or recommending that the placement was unsatisfactory, they should notify the Placement Coordinator. If an external supervisor considers a Placement unsatisfactory, the following procedures will apply.

1. The supervisor (or in some cases, the Program Director) will inform the student that the placement is being terminating or that the recommendation is for an unsuccessful completion. This information is then forwarded to the Placement Coordinator as soon as possible. It should be noted that the supervisors' view is a recommendation for the placement outcome. The final decision will be made by the Program Director with input from the external supervisor, the Placement Coordinator, and sometimes the PCAB.
2. The Placement Coordinator or Program Director will contact the student to discuss the issues. A student can request a support person to attend any meeting, but they must advise the Program Team who will be attending in advance. The support person needs to have appropriate qualifications and experience. Prior to the meeting, the support person would need to be advised that:
 - a. their role is as an observer to the proceedings and a support to the student,
 - b. they are welcome to take notes,
 - c. they must respect and maintain the confidentiality of the meeting (given the potential for discussion of client interaction),

- d. they are not to act as an advocate,
 - e. the Program Team will intercede to clarify the support person's role if their conduct deviates from the stated expectations.
3. The Program Director may convene a PCAB to review the information from all parties, and will review the non binding recommendations to make a final decision regarding outcome.

Implications of an Unsatisfactory Placement

Where the Program Director deems that a placement is unsatisfactory, *no hours can be counted from that Placement towards the 1,000 required hours, nor can any Direct Client Activities be counted towards the required hours*. If the termination of the placement was due to an egregious professional or ethical breach, the student may be terminated from the program. Otherwise, the student would be required to put a remediation plan in place for a second attempt at the placement (Remediation Placement). The content, duration and timing of the remediation placement will be decided based on the deficits identified; the development of the plan is the responsibility of the student. A remediation placement will extend the students program duration. It is the student's responsibility to make the decision that they are ready to begin their remediation placement, though the timing must be in conjunction with the requirements of the placement site.

On an external remediation placement, the supervisor is made aware of the remediation plan (in addition, or as part of the CRF), and the Placement Coordinator is much more closely involved (e.g., requiring the student to forward weekly logs).

We recommend that students who need to complete a remediation placement take time to reflect on their circumstances and take steps to ensure that any barriers to successful placement completion have been resolved before commencing any further Placement activities. Taking time to ensure the relevant issues are managed has been key in past students successfully completing their remediation placements.

4.9 Paid Employment and Placements

We believe our job is to ensure that students gain the most from their training; placements are generally seen by the students to be the part of their program where they developed most of their skills. As most of the placement sites are keen to employ students (most of our graduates attain employment prior to graduation), we feel that part of the Placement Coordinator's duties are to ensure that students engage in placements that are best suited to a particular student's competency needs. Due to the potential for workplace and placement conflicts, **our program does not recommend or support paid placements** (we do have one exception with NZ Corrections).

Students who are already registered as a psychologist and who are employed within a worksite as a psychologist must contact the Placement Coordinator to assess whether a worksite placement is viable (i.e. satisfies *at least* the following criteria):

- has a separate supervisor to their work supervisor/line manager
- the work duties **MUST** be significantly different from their current worksite and focus on the development of competencies associated with program requirements;
- the placement hours are **NOT** part of their paid employment;
- does not exceed 30% of the required 1,000 hours (i.e., one placement).

Students are not permitted to claim any time spent in previous employment or experience towards their 1,000 hours of placement requirement.

4.10 Summary of Placement Responsibilities

Supervisor

1. To be able provide the Placement Coordinator with an up-to-date CV that identifies registration as a psychologist and status as an accredited Supervisor.
2. To be available for an initial meeting with prospective placement students.
3. To be available to complete the WIL agreement, review the CRF, negotiate a Basic Contract and Learning Plan and DCA expectations —OR—to notify the Placement Coordinator if they feel the placement should not proceed. A Basic Contract and Learning Plan must identify goals for the Placement as well as dates for supervision, mid-placement and final review.
4. To inform the student of any necessary or desirable preparation for the placement.
5. To provide adequate opportunities for the student to observe and practice skills in the worksite, and to observe their practice through live observation or review of video.
6. To conduct themselves in line with professional codes of conduct and ethical guidelines. Informed Consent procedures must be followed.
7. To specify formal supervision times for the student to obtain the required Supervision ratio (or more as necessary), and to follow through with formal and informal supervision of the student. While not mandatory, it may be helpful to maintain a supervision log in order to accurately reflect the supervision process, note any performance deficits/goals, and to more fully identify the nature of the ratio of supervision (1:7.5 at UFPC, 1:10 at external Placements – this ratio does not include the preparation, editing, or other time spent by the supervisor *unless a log is kept*).
8. To contact the Placement Coordinator or Program Director if problems arise or to clarify any aspects of placement procedure and to maintain adequate documentation of any arising issues.
9. To sign the Placement Log at regular intervals, complete the Competency Review Form at the mid-point and conclusion of the placement, provide the student with any feedback considered necessary, both formally and informally.

Placement Coordinator

1. To provide students with information regarding placement type and availability.
2. To aid the student in investigating other placement options if either party feels the placement to be inappropriate.
3. To act as a primary supervisor on those occasions where it is required and when time permits.
4. To be reasonably available for meetings or telephone contact with the student or supervisor if problems arise during the placement, or to discuss placement progress, or if procedures require clarification.
5. To manage the Placement documentation, including ensuring that the supervisor has met the appropriate requirements.

Student (also see the *External Placement guide for Students for further information*)

1. To consult with the Placement Coordinator on a regular basis regarding placement preferences and placement progress in a timely manner. Discussions around placements needs to be initiated by the student, it is not the responsibility of the Placement Coordinator to manage student placement discussions.
2. Only negotiating one placement at a time. Not contacting external supervisors without express consent of the Placement Coordinator.
3. Once a potential placement is identified, to arrange an initial meeting with the prospective supervisor. The Placement Coordination should be cc'd into all email contact with potential supervisors, until such time as the placement has commenced.
4. To notify the Placement Coordinator if an allocated placement does not proceed so that an alternative placement can be arranged.

5. To complete the necessary preparation (including any vaccination or other health requirements, and all documentation) before the placement begins. To amend the Basic Contract/WIL agreement if the placement is to be extended or terminated for any reason. To ensure that all placement documentation is scanned and received by the Placement Coordinator prior to the placement commencing (or organised through InPlace).
6. To ensure that WIL is informed of the placement site. Ensure that all clock in/out or other WIL procedures are completed as required and in a timely manner. Failure to do so will be seen as a competency issue, and failure to utilise clock in/out procedures will result in those hours of placement not being part of placement hours.
7. To act in an ethical and professional manner at all times during Placement; to be punctual and attend all scheduled meetings with the Supervisor and/or other placement staff as required.
8. To contact the Placement Coordinator if any problems arise during the placement, or if procedures require clarification.
9. To keep an accurate and complete log of all placement activities, and have that log signed by the supervisor on a regular basis.
10. To ensure that expected ratios of supervision are being met.
11. To keep copies of all documents relevant to the placement, and provide them to supervisors and the Placement Coordinator as requested.
12. To give the supervisor informal and formal feedback on the placement and supervision received.
13. To submit a scanned copy of the CRF and Placement Log to the Placement Coordinator within one week of completion of the mid-placement and final review. Final documentation also includes the Student Placement Review form.

The information contained in this guide is correct as at February 2024. Prospective students should contact UNSW to confirm admission requirements and availability of programs. UNSW reserves the right to change any programs, admission requirement or other information herein without any prior notice. CRICOS Provider No. 000098G.