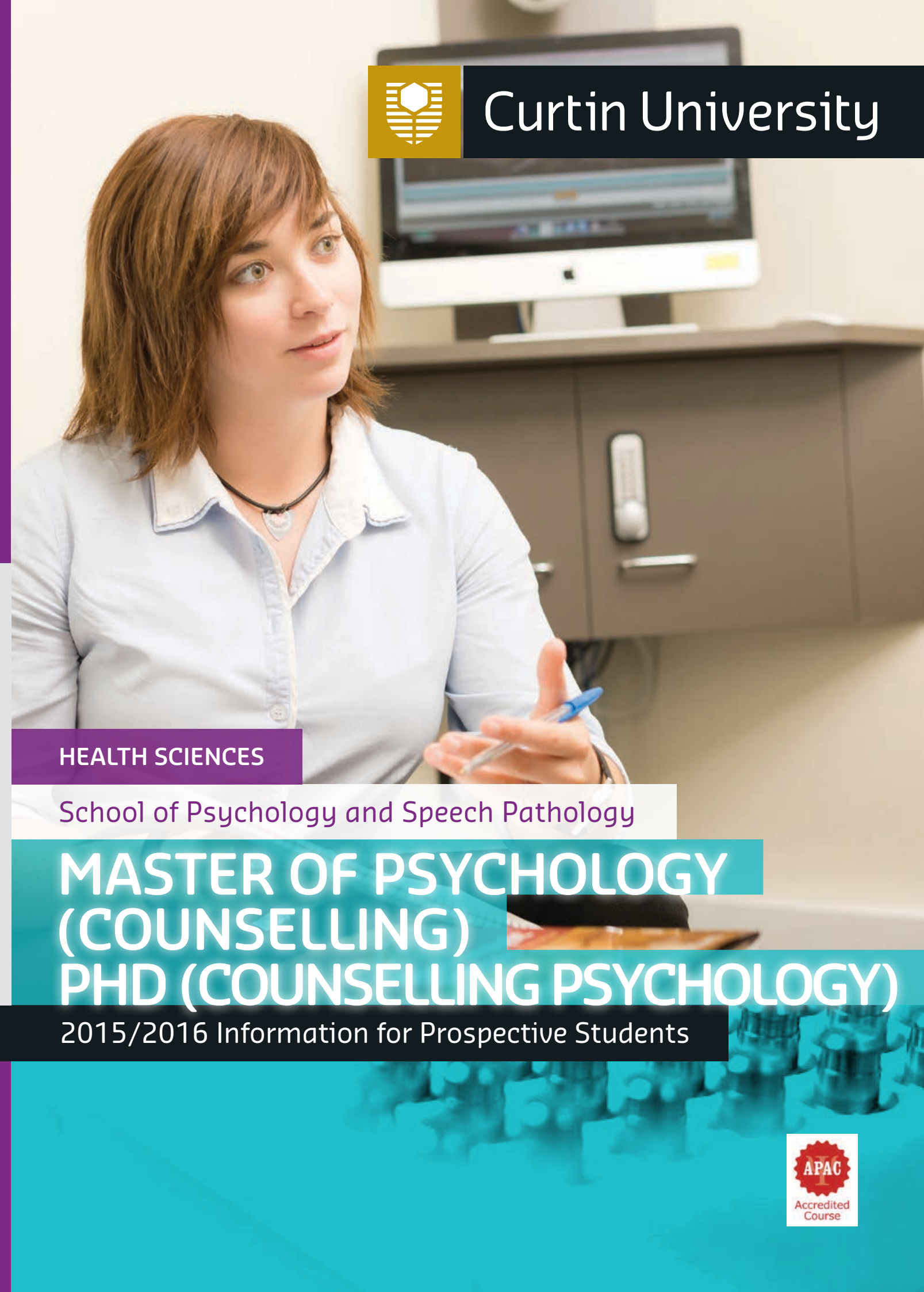




# Curtin University



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## HEALTH SCIENCES

### School of Psychology and Speech Pathology

# MASTER OF PSYCHOLOGY (COUNSELLING) PHD (COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY)

2015/2016 Information for Prospective Students



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# ABOUT THE MASTER AND PHD IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

Counselling Psychology is one of a number of endorsed areas of practice in professional psychology. Similar to psychologists who practice in other specialist areas such as organisational psychology, clinical psychology and forensic psychology, counselling psychologists hold a Masters or PhD degree from a program accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). At Curtin University, Counselling Psychology is offered as a specific major stream within the Master of Psychology program, and as a full PhD program. Graduates will be eligible to register with the Psychology Board of Australia and commence supervision for the purpose of gaining endorsement as a Counselling Psychologist.

### What is a Counselling Psychologist?

Counselling Psychologists are experts in the provision of psychological therapy. They provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families and groups, and treat a wide range of psychological problems and mental health disorders. Counselling Psychologists use a variety of evidence-based therapeutic strategies and have particular expertise in tailoring these to meet the specific and varying needs of clients (APS Brochure on Counselling Psychology).

Counselling Psychologists work with complex psychological problems and disorders such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress and personality disorders. Identification and treatment of psychopathology is a significant aspect of the training and the professional work. Counselling Psychologists also assist clients with adjustment to adverse circumstances or life events such as bereavement, intimacy issues, relationship breakdown, transition to parenthood, attachment issues, adjustment to step-parenting, involuntary redundancy, sexual assault or abuse, or release from prison.

The central focus is the specialised applied training in psychotherapy process and interventions relevant to individuals, couples, families, parent-infant relationships, children and groups.

Counselling Psychologists enjoy a wide range of employment opportunities. Some are to be found in academic and research settings, although most are employed as practitioners in community and government agencies. A growing number are involved in private practice. Private practitioners who have met registration requirements may offer rebates from Medicare and most health insurers.

### Accreditation and Registration

The Master of Psychology (Counselling) provides advanced professional training to the sixth year level. The program is accredited with the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council. The course is a two-year full-time program (or equivalent part-time) consisting of course work, practicums and a dissertation. Graduates of the program will be entitled to an endorsement on General registration as a Counselling Psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia, once they complete two years of supervision as a counselling psychologist registrar.

The PhD (Counselling Psychology) consists of the units in the Master program plus a traditional PhD dissertation. The program meets all of the criteria listed above for APAC and the Psychology Board of Australia. The PhD is a four-year full-time (or eight-year part-time) program. A normal PhD is three years full-time and the Master is two years full-time, so the PhD (Counselling Psychology) reduces the amount of time involved in study, for those pursuing a combined program. Another advantage of the PhD (Counselling Psychology) is that all program fees are covered through automatic university scholarships, meaning that students pay **no fees** for all of their Master units. The PhD prepares graduates for the professional practice of counselling psychology, for research in psychology, and for an academic career.

### Graduate Destinations

Graduates of the course are well-regarded and highly successful at competing for jobs within the counselling/ psychotherapy sector. Indeed, many students obtain employment in the field prior to course completion. Many graduates have attained management or senior roles in agencies and government departments. Specific employment settings in which graduates are to be found include:

- Government departments such as Child Protection, Corrective Services, Centrelink, Education, and Commonwealth Department of Veteran Affairs;
- Non-government agencies such as Relationships Australia, Centrecare, Women’s Health Care Associations, Communicare, Breathing Space;
- Private hospitals, such as Hollywood, St John of God, Perth Clinic, Abbotsford and a small number of public hospitals, such as King Edward and Albany Mental Health;
- Private providers such as employee assistance program providers (e.g. Prime. PPCN Worldwide, personnel recruitment agencies, and private institutes;
- Medicare Locals;
- Private practice;
- University counselling services;
- Research Institutes such as the National Drug Research Institute;
- University teaching departments.

### Course Structure

Both courses are offered on either a full-time or part-time basis. There are three main parts to the courses:

1. Units which develop theoretical understanding, self-awareness, and skills in assessment, diagnosis, and interventions in counselling psychotherapy;
2. Practicums which offer the opportunity to apply skills in an agency setting under the supervision of a counselling psychologist;
3. A dissertation which develops the capacity to do applied research in an area relevant to counselling psychology.

Units are taught on the Curtin University campus, while practicums are organised in a wide variety of therapy settings. The practicums involve placements in three different agency settings. Placements generally consist of two days per week over 22 weeks. Students who are working in a counselling setting may apply to use their work setting as a practicum setting for one of the three placements. The Master dissertation is completed in the second year of the course and consists of a small, but substantial research study which is presented in the form of a publishable journal article. Advisors assist students to select topics that make use of their existing expertise and or work settings. The PhD dissertation is completed at the end of the four years. There is no provision for external study. Several of our students have won national prizes from the APS for their dissertations.

### Essential Course Requirements

An essential requirement of the course is the capacity to listen empathically and to provide counselling for individuals from diverse backgrounds without imposing the therapist’s value system. This includes individuals from diverse religious orientations, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, value systems, and those with disabilities. A further requirement is the willingness and demonstrated capacity to work in a variety of clinical agency settings.

### Training Philosophy and Teaching Methods

The two programs aim to develop the capacity to make effective interventions in a wide range of life difficulties and psychological disorders. Students are taught to respond empathically to clients’ predicaments and to develop intervention plans in collaboration with them. There is an underlying philosophy that emphasises the autonomy of clients, respect for them as individuals, and the meanings they make out of their life stories. Thus, a significant component of the training is how to establish and maintain a strong therapeutic alliance and how to manage the ruptures that can occur in that relationship.

The capacity to make accurate assessments of client functioning and psychopathology are a substantial part of the course; however the course aims to develop a stance toward client difficulties and mental health disorders which also takes into full account the health, resources, and uniqueness of clients. There is also a strong emphasis on understanding the impact of developmental processes, including the impact of early life experience on functioning.



There are four essential components to the course, which aim to develop the capacity to:

1. critically evaluate and utilise research and theory to inform practice;
2. understand, assess and intervene therapeutically with clients;
3. reflect upon and use life experience, depth of self-understanding, and therapeutic experience in the service of the client;
4. undertake research in counselling psychology.

To these ends, the courses balance theoretical learning, research skills, psychotherapy skill development and personal development. This means, that while some of the units are primarily theoretical, in many units there is a strong emphasis on experiential methods of teaching. This may involve such methods as role-plays, experiential exercises, action methods, live supervision, video, and exercises that aim to develop a high level of reflexivity. The course aims to produce a reflective practitioner who is able to intervene effectively with appropriate techniques, but who is also able to understand the moment-to-moment process of therapeutic work and their own role in that process. Class sizes are kept small, so there is plenty of opportunity for discussion and organised learning. Some of the skills-based units have two staff members who are then able to give detailed and extensive feedback regarding the development of therapeutic skills.

The course is not based exclusively on any one theoretical orientation, since we believe that students should have a basic familiarity with the major approaches, including cognitive-behavioural, existential-humanistic and psychodynamic. Although several specific models are taught, the program is underpinned by a focus on the interpersonal processes in psychotherapy including the therapeutic alliance, because there is strong research evidence that these are central to all therapeutic work. The evidence base for psychotherapy, specific models, specific interventions, and the therapeutic relationship are comprehensively addressed. In addition to individual psychotherapy, there is also a focus on developing understanding and skills in the specific modalities of couple, family, and group therapy.

Assessment

Assessment depends on the nature of the unit. Most units involve two to three pieces of written work. Assessment may involve essays, case formulations, case studies, program and treatment plans, and videos. All assessment is geared toward the objectives of the course – to produce reflective, thoughtful practitioners who can assess, diagnose and intervene effectively with a wide range of client issues and mental health disorders.



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## Master of Psychology (Counselling)

The program for a full-time student is outlined below.  
Master of Psychology – Study Package MC-PSYCH  
Counselling Psychology Major – MJRP-CNPSY

Year	Units Required	Unit Name	Contact Hours	Credit Points
Year 1, Semester 1	COUN7000	Preparation for Professional Practise Counselling Psychology	2	25
	PSYC7018	Psychotherapy Skills	4	25
	PSYC7006	Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice	3	25
	PSYC7014	Psychology Interventions Over the Lifespan	4	25
				100
Year 1, Semester 2	PSYC6002	Psychology Masters Dissertation 1	1	25
	PSYC7013	Individual Psychotherapy	4	25
	PSYC7009	Psychology Research Methods	4	25
	PSYC6005	Psychology Masters Practicum 1	16	25
				100
Year 2, Semester 1	PSYC7016	Psychological Interventions for Couples and Families	4	25
	PSYC7017	Psychopathology and Advanced Psychotherapy Process	4	25
	PSYC6003	Psychology Masters Dissertation 2	5	25
	PSYC6006	Psychology Masters Practicum 2	15	25
				100
Year 2, Semester 2	PSYC7015	Group Psychotherapy	4	25
	PSYC6007	Psychology Masters Practicum 3	15	25
	PSYC6004	Psychology Masters Dissertation 3	1	50
				100

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## PhD (Counselling Psychology)

The program for a full-time student is outlined below.  
PhD (Counselling Psychology) – Study Package DR-COPSYC  
PSYC7000 v. 1 Doctoral Thesis – Psychology

Year	Units Required	Unit Name	Contact Hours	Credit Points
Year 1, Semester 1	COUN7000	Preparation for Professional Practice Counselling Psychology	2	25
	PSYC7018	Psychotherapy Skills	4	25
				50
Year 1, Semester 2	PSYC7009	Psychology Research Methods	3	25
	PSYC7013	Individual Psychotherapy Psychology	4	25
				50
Year 2, Semester 1	PSYC7006	Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice	3	25
	PSYC7014	Psychological Interventions Over The Lifespan	3	25
				50
Year 2, Semester 2	PSYC7015	Group Psychotherapy	3	25
	PSYC7001	Psychology Doctoral Practicum 1	16	12.5
				37.5
Year 3, Semester 1	PSYC7016	Psychological Interventions for Couples and Families	4	25
	PSYC7002	Psychology Doctoral Practicum 2	15	12.5
				37.5
Year 3, Semester 2	PSYC7003	Psychology Doctoral Practicum 3	15	12.5
				12.5
				12.5
Year 4, Semester 1	PSYC7017	Psychopathology and Advanced Psychotherapy Process	4	25
				25

# UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

### Psychotherapy Skills

This unit provides an introduction to basic counselling and individual psychotherapy skills. The unit also develops skills in multimodal assessment, mental status examination, risk assessment and DSM-V/ICD-10 diagnoses.

### Individual Psychotherapy

This course focuses on students’ theoretical understanding and clinical skills at an advanced and applied level. Students are exposed to some of the major theoretical systems, including existential therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, and psychodynamic psychotherapy. The class work will involve role-playing and working with clients, video-taping, viewing of films and tapes, and didactic input.

### Psychology Interventions Over the Lifespan

This unit provides theoretical knowledge in counselling psychology and psychotherapy. It integrates knowledge of developmental psychology across the lifespan with key theoretical perspectives. The unit develops knowledge and skills in planning interventions for a number of specific developmental issues that are addressed as exemplars of each stage of the lifespan.

### Group Psychotherapy

This unit builds on student knowledge and skills developed in Individual Psychotherapy and extends these to working with common theme groups. Key models for understanding group processes are examined and practical skills in group leadership are developed. Students are encouraged to participate in group experiences and are involved in the planning of a common theme group in the community.

### Psychological Interventions for Couples and Families

This unit builds on student knowledge and skills in individual therapy (Psychotherapy Skills and Individual Psychotherapy) and interventions across the life-span (Psychological Interventions Over The Lifespan) and extends these to the areas of family therapy and couples therapy. Key frames for examining interactional patterns and strategies for bringing about change are considered. It focuses particularly on developmental and attachment based approaches to couple and family therapy. Family life-cycles, the influences of parental style, history and distress on couple and family relationships and the bi-directional co-constructive nature of parent child interactions are focal points of the unit. The unit develops knowledge and skills in couple, parent-child relationship and family assessment and interventions.



### Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice

This unit provides students with the practical skills to complete comprehensive psychological assessments within adult and child clinical contexts. Students will learn skills required to select, administer, score and interpret the results of commonly used psychological tests, and to integrate assessment results and present findings in client-focused reports.

### Preparation for Professional Practice Counselling Psychology

This unit addresses issues related to the profession of Counselling Psychology, as distinct from other disciplines within the helping profession. It involves the study of factors that impact upon professional practice, such as personal beliefs and biases. In addition, the unit has a strong focus on professional ethics and the processes involved in the resolution of ethical dilemmas in the workplace.





#### Psychology Masters Practicum 1, 2, 3/Psychology Doctoral Practicum 1, 2, 3

The student, on completion of these practicum units, will demonstrate behaviour consistent with a beginning level of independent practice as a Counselling Psychologist. The first practicum of the program will take place in the second semester of the first year and will generally involve two 7.5 days per week over 22 weeks. Attendance at the practicum class is also required. The second and third placements will be in the first and second semesters of the second year (if enrolled full-time) and will also involve two days per week for 22.5 weeks. Over the three practicums a combined total of 133 days should be completed (1,000 total placement hours).

#### Psychology Research Methods

The focus of this online unit is on quantitative, rather than qualitative, research methodologies. It consists of eight core modules and three elective modules. Students are expected to complete all the core modules plus two of the three elective modules. On completion of the unit, students should be able to resolve the common methodological problems that have traditionally compromised research in the behavioural sciences.

#### Psychopathology and Advanced Psychotherapy Process

This unit addresses psychopathology through a thorough review of psychological disorders based on the DSM-V and the ICD-10. It includes consideration of predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors. Psychopharmacology will be addressed in relation to each of the disorders. In addition, the unit addresses some of the more advanced psychotherapy skills and concepts that are required for working with more complex client populations, including ruptures in the therapeutic alliance, defenses, transference, and countertransference. Such psychotherapy processes are linked to understanding the personality structure, developmental processes, and psychopathology of the client, as well as the research on evidence-based practice.

#### Psychology Masters Dissertation 1, 2, 3

Students will complete the planning of a suitable applied research project, relating to advanced coursework. This is presented as a dissertation in the format required under University regulations.

## SELECTION PROCESS

Intake into the courses occurs in February each year and entry is competitive. Applications close the third Wednesday in September each year. For the Masters the minimum entry requirement is a four-year psychology degree with a strong academic record normally with at least a 70% average. This may consist of a Bachelor of Psychology, a three-year degree plus approved psychology postgraduate diploma, or an Honours degree (at Honours IIA level or above). For the PhD the entry requirement is an Honours degree (IIA or higher) or equivalent. The selection process involves the following steps.

- Applicants submit a written application and are short-listed on the basis of their academic record, employment history and references.
- Short-listed applicants are interviewed in November. The interview is approximately 30 minutes and is used to assess interpersonal skills, counselling experience, voluntary and paid work experience, self-awareness, flexibility, reflectivity, and openness to learning.
- Places are offered on the basis of assessment of the applicant's written application and performance in the interview. Offers occur in December, with second-round offers occurring in January.





# FEES

For detailed information on fees, contact the University Fees Centre:  
Tel: +61 8 9266 3500  
Fax: +61 8 9266 4108  
Email: fees@curtin.edu.au  
Web: fees.curtin.edu.au



# ACADEMIC STAFF

As well as being academics with research interests, all the Counselling Psychology staff have experience as practitioners and all continue to be actively involved in psychotherapy with clients.

## Associate Professor Jenny Thornton

MPsych (Counselling), PhD

### Program Director

Jenny is a counselling psychologist who has taught in the Counselling Psychology Master's program at Curtin for the last twenty years. During this time, she has maintained a clinical load via a small private practice, where she focuses on individual psychotherapy and clinical supervision. Jenny's main teaching and research interests are in the areas of counsellor training and supervision, and in particular, individual psychotherapy. She was previously the co-ordinator of the rehabilitation counselling program and maintains an interest in health psychology and chronic pain. Speciality areas include interpersonal process psychotherapy, existential therapy, trauma, and personality disorders. Her previous work history includes TAFE counselling and consultancies to DEET and to medical specialists. She is currently serving as Chair of the Regional Board (NT/SA/WA) of the Psychology Board of Australia and is a Director of APAC (Australia Psychology Accreditation Council). Current obsessions include Latin dancing, theatre, travel, and good wine.

## Lecturers/Clinical Supervisors:

### Dr Catherine Bishop

MPsych/PhD (Counselling Psychology)

### Lecturer/Clinical Supervisor

Catherine has a combined Masters/PhD in Counselling Psychology (Curtin University of Technology). She has worked as a psychologist in both government and non-government mental health settings for 8 years, including over four years full time at a psychiatric hospital. Catherine has extensive experience working with adults treating moderate to severe mental health disorders and complex presentations.

### Greg Chidlow MPsych (Counselling)

### Lecturer/Clinical Supervisor

Greg has extensive experience in couples counselling, grief and loss, cancer and trauma. He lectures in individual and couples psychotherapy skills. He is a practitioner and clinical supervisor within the programme.

### Dr Robert Kane PhD

### Senior Lecturer

Robert's area of expertise is research design and data analysis in applied behavioural research. He is the unit controller for the external unit Research Methods 7009. He is also the School's statistical consultant, and a statistical consultant for the journal First Language and the journal Nursing research. His research interests include metaanalysis, structural equation modelling, mixed effects regression, multilevel modelling, and multivariate analysis.

**Dr Catriona Davis-McCabe** BSc (Hons) PGDip and D.Couns.Psych (Counselling Psychology)

### Senior Lecturer

Catriona is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology; she has a Post Graduate Diploma and Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (Teesside University, UK). Catriona has also trained in EMDR and Clinical Hypnotherapy. She has worked as Psychologist in the UK since 2003; she has extensive experience within clinical health settings, forensic settings, private practice and voluntary agencies. Catriona's research interests include adult mental health, computerised cognitive behavioural therapy, eating disorders, sleep disorders, psychodynamic psychotherapy, abuse issues and trauma.

### Dr Justine Stefanoff

MPsych (Applied Developmental), MPsych (Counselling), DPsych (Counselling Psychology)

### Clinical Supervisor

Justine has a Masters in Applied Developmental Psychology (University of Western Australia), a Masters in Counselling Psychology (Curtin University of Technology) and a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (City University, London). She has worked as a psychologist in mental health, psychiatric, educational and non-government settings for over 15 years. Justine works with children, adolescents and adults.

### Gillian Stevens MPsych (Counselling)

### Lecturer

Gillian has worked at Curtin for twenty years. During that time, she has taught in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Current teaching interests are in the areas of psychotherapy skills, ethics and professional practice. Research interests include; gender issues, ethics, forensic and developmental psychology. Gillian maintains a part-time private practice in which she works with adults and adolescents, and provides supervision to other practitioners. She is now a sessional member of staff in the Counselling Psychology team.

### Dr Monika Wieding-Allison PhD

### Associate Lecturer

Monika is an Associate Lecturer at the School since August 2012. She teaches postgraduates in Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice.

### Dr Matthew Ruggiero PhD

### Lecturer

Matthew is a Lecturer in the School and teaches postgraduates in Psychology Interventions Over the Lifespan. Matthew's research interests are self psychology, attachment theory and reflective function, neurobiologically-informed psychotherapy.