

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Public Consultation Report 2021

Shape Paper: Psychology A/T/M

- This report has been prepared following public consultation.
- All feedback submitted as part of the consultation process has been recorded and analysed.
- The responses to the feedback have been compiled following the deliberations of the Shape Paper writing team.
- Amendments to the Shape Paper have been made where required, as a result of the consultation process.

**Public Consultation Report 2021
Psychology A/T/M**

Topic	Comment	Course Development Team Response
<p>Q1 Which school are you from?</p>	<p>ten responses from ten schools, five ED, one AIS, one CE, one other (ANU)</p>	
<p>Q2 Shape Paper Background The background provides a clear sense of the disciplinary, systemic and national parameters under which the course will be written.</p>	<p>5 strongly agree 5 agree</p> <p>2.1 Fantastic to see psychology being reframed as a science as this will provide stronger guidance to teach the empirical aspects of the subject</p> <p>2.2 Consultation with only one external expert is a problem, taking into account that there are two universities in the A.C.T. which offer Psych courses, with more A.C.T. students actually going to the other university.</p> <p>2.3 Why has there been a refocus to science, over behavioural science? The placement of this discipline has always been debatable.</p> <p>2.4 Great to see psychology being recognised under the science framework.</p> <p>2.5 In high schools, Psychology is widely considered as a social science. This change to it being in the science framework seems small but it has large implications for our program, assessment, rubrics and potentially scaling. I query why the change is necessary if it could be argued both ways. If having it in the social science framework is not problematic, then why are we creating a large amount of work for teachers unnecessarily?</p>	<p>2.1 Noted.</p> <p>2.2 Consultation with UC did occur when aligning the UC H Course in Psychology about the use of the Science Framework, <i>Understanding People and Behaviour</i>, with the BSSS Psychology course. The expert friend is an expert in the field and a leader in teaching in learning.</p> <p>2.3 The developers agree that there is some debate in the area. Extensive research was undertaken into the debate and that debate was held again in the course development process. The academics from ANU and UC supported the change. The ANU critical friend provided extensive justification to the developers as to why Science was the best place for the course in terms of the epistemology of the discipline and the work of its researchers. Further, students going on to tertiary Psychology will be undertaking an empirically based Science course and need preparation for those studies.</p> <p>2.4 Noted.</p> <p>2.5 While there is some debate, our ANU critical friend provided extensive justification to the developers as to why Science was the best place for the course in terms of the epistemology of the discipline and the work of its researchers. Further, students going on to tertiary Psychology will be undertaking an empirically based Science course and need preparation for those studies.</p>

**Public Consultation Report 2021
Psychology A/T/M**

		<p>Currently, Psychology sits under the Behavioural Sciences Framework. Change to either Framework would require work. Scaling ensures equivalency across subjects.</p>
<p>Q3 COURSE GOALS The "Aims of the Psychology Curriculum" is clear about the intended learning and priorities, yet allows for flexibility.</p>	<p>6 strongly agree 3 agree 1 skipped</p> <p>3.1 Concerns about the reduced number of unit offerings have been a topic of conversation for psych teachers. The idea of designing 'learning programmes' reduces the requirement for the course to maintain currency and authenticity in the resources lists, as well as denying new teachers a rich curriculum resource. Further, there was a greater acknowledgement in the original course that this is a complex discipline, requiring time to unpack and resolve issues and difficulties with content and research/experiment elements of the individual units. Again, this necessity to have four or five units, only, which seems to be driving course writing is greatly diminishing flexibility and certainly, innovation, in the course writing and by extension, in the delivery of subjects.</p> <p>3.2 Agreed. The course goals recognise Indigenous paradigms. It would be wonderful to see resource provided or suggested to help teachers implement this otherwise this might be tokenistic.</p> <p>3.3 I am very pleased about the redevelopment under the science framework. I believe it is authentic and gives a clearer indication about the skills we need to build in our students so that they are ready to study Psychology at university.</p>	<p>3.1 Teachers will be able to develop Programs of Learning to develop and teach the concepts that Shape the course. This gives teachers agency to maintain the currency of resources, research and topics offered to students for study. When the course is fully written the Content Descriptions will provide more support for teachers in developing a Program of Learning.</p> <p>3.2 Professional development will be provided.</p> <p>3.3 Noted. That was the intention of developers.</p> <p>3.4 The notion of electives has not been lost in practice. Teachers will be able to develop Programs of Learning to develop and teach the concepts that Shape the course. This gives teachers agency to maintain the currency of resources, research and topics offered to students for study. When the course is fully written the Content Descriptions will provide more support for teachers in developing a Program of Learning.</p> <p>3.5 Explicitly providing opportunities to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing and traditions is an integral part of achieving social justice in our country. Some professional development will be provided.</p>

**Public Consultation Report 2021
Psychology A/T/M**

	<p>3.4 The loss of electives is a shame. I understand that it's a "still can if the school wants to" deal, but without having the electives there explicitly, I feel like new educators might not be quite aware that they can take those paths in exploring the content.</p> <p>3.5 Very difficult to achieve the Indigenous component of the aims in practical terms as there are few resources available and these are unlikely to be created for a small place like Canberra by big publishers. Is it better to phrase it in terms of cultural bias instead rather than specifically Indigenous?</p>	
<p>Q4 The rationale for the course and unit structure is well-explained and well-justified</p>	<p>7 strongly agree 2 agree 1 disagree no comments</p>	
<p>Q5 The proposed units are conceptually distinct</p>	<p>5 strongly agree 3 agree 2 disagree 5.1 Cognition and Emotion could potentially also be related to Self and Identity. The naming of the units implies that there are two topics, one for each term, which is not the aim of the course. They should be renamed to better reflect that these are integrated units.</p>	<p>5.1 The units describe dualities that are loosely linked and intertwined. They indicate standard and accept concepts in Psychology and established domains of enquiry.</p>
<p>Q6. The unit descriptions are clear and provide for innovative approaches</p>	<p>3 strongly agree 4 agree 1 disagree 2 skipped</p>	<p>6.1 The concepts underlying the units indicate key domains of study in the field. Teachers will design Programs of Learning to suit their students and contexts while also addressing key disciplinary knowledge and understandings.</p>

Public Consultation Report 2021 Psychology A/T/M

	<p>6.1 Some important units are left out and the sub-topics are combined in a way that makes it difficult to spread out topics for the students. For example, there is a unit called Normality and Abnormality which puts mental health and criminal psych together- which doesn't set the best</p> <p>6.2 I think the unit titles are clear but am interested to see the more detail that I imagine will come with the course document</p> <p>6.3 At this stage, I think the unit descriptions would be difficult for a new teacher to fully grasp the content applicable to each area but I assume the course document will have greater detail and thus direction. I think the flexibility for teachers is excellent and as an experienced teacher I am excited.</p> <p>6.4 See above to commentary in 3. <i>Concerns about the reduced number of unit offerings have been a topic of conversation for psych teachers. The idea of designing 'learning programmes' reduces the requirement for the course to maintain currency and authenticity in the resources lists, as well as denying new teachers a rich curriculum resource. Further, there was a greater acknowledgement in the original course that this is a complex discipline, requiring time to unpack and resolve issues and difficulties with content and research/experiment elements of the individual units. Again, this necessity to have four or five units, only, which seems to be driving course writing is greatly diminishing flexibility and certainly, innovation, in the course writing and by extension, in the delivery of subjects.</i></p>	<p>6.2 Noted. More detail will follow in the draft course which will be open to consultation.</p> <p>6.3 Noted. More detail will follow in the draft course which will be open to consultation. It is intended that teachers will have agency to develop Programs of Learning.</p> <p>6.4 Teachers will be able to develop Programs of Learning to develop and teach the concepts that Shape the course. This gives teachers agency to maintain the currency of resources, research and topics offered to students for study. When the course is fully written the Content Descriptions will provide more support for teachers in developing a Program of Learning.</p> <p>6.5 The italics indicate possibilities from the old course which was intended to orient teachers. Those possible aspects will be integrated into the Content Descriptions as illustrative examples.</p> <p>6.6 Notes. That was the intention of the writers.</p> <p>6.7 Noted. The developers will consider this suggestion. Teachers have the agency to develop Programs of Learning that suit the students and context, while engaging with the concepts of the units. The developers concluded that Positive Psychology might be taught within several of the units, such as 'Cognition and Emotions' or 'Self and Identity', but best fits in 'Normality and Abnormality'.</p>
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Public Consultation Report 2021
Psychology A/T/M

	<p>6.5 I particularly found the descriptions at the bottom in italics the most useful. Acknowledgment of teaching expertise is necessary but it is also important to expose students to diversity of topics, even when it extends teacher comfort zones</p> <p>6.6 The units provide a nice balance between consistency with the previous shape paper, allowing teachers some continuity, whilst it also provides an opportunity to refresh and keep units in psychology current.</p> <p>6.7 In past years I have enjoyed teaching Positive psychology for many reasons including - the contemporary nature of this field, the innovative empirical research, the wealth of female figures that head this field and the practical application of this topic to the lives of the students. Positive Psychology does not have a clear place in the changed course. Perhaps in Self and Identity or Cognition and Emotion. Hopefully the interpretation of the units will allow for flexibility in this way.</p>	
<p>Q7 "Considerations", situates the course clearly in relation to curriculum priorities</p>	<p>5 strongly agree 4 agree 1 skipped no comments</p>	
<p>Q8 This proposed course is distinct from other BSSS accredited courses.</p>	<p>5 strongly agree 2 agree 3 skipped no comments</p>	

Public Consultation Report 2021
Psychology A/T/M

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