



# Course Outline

PSYC7423

Assessment in Forensic Psychology

School of Psychology

Faculty of Science

T1, 2023

Last updated 11.02.2023

# 1. Staff

---

Position	Name	Email	Consultation times and locations	Contact Details
Course Convenor/lecturer	Amanda White	Amanda.j.white@unsw.edu.au	By Appointment	Email

## 2. Course information

---

<b>Units of credit:</b>	6
<b>Pre-requisite(s):</b>	Enrolled Master of Psychology (Forensic) or Combined PhD/Master of Psychology (Forensic) student
<b>Teaching times and locations:</b>	<a href="#">Postgraduate Timetable; Tuesdays 10-1pm, MAT927</a>

### 2.1 Course summary

This course constructs a framework of standardised tests and procedures used by psychologists to evaluate intellectual, cognitive and adaptive functioning, as well as psychological tests used to evaluate general psychological functioning. Emphasis will be placed on tests typically used by forensic psychologists in forensic contexts.

### 2.2 Course aims

This course demonstrates to students how to use, administer and interpret the principles and techniques of standardised psychological assessment. Students learn to formulate test batteries in response to specific forensic assessments. Students will be taught and assessed on the skills to use, administer and interpret major psychological tests, including the Wechsler scales, and overview other tests that forensic psychologists will require in their work. The course will also address how to communicate assessment findings in report writing.

### 2.3 Course learning outcomes (CLO)

At the successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Communicate concepts around the framework of psychometric principles and theories underlying standardised psychological testing methodology.
2. Apply knowledge of psychological testing in order to evaluate the utility of individual tests and their use in the forensic context at an individual and group level.
3. Competently administer and score Wechsler Scales and other cognitive and psychological tests with adequate standardization.
4. Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.
5. Interpret the validity of test results and individual test profiles
6. Communicate effectively and accurately in a written report the results of test scores for a forensic audience. .

## 2.4 Relationship between course and program learning outcomes and assessments

CLO	Program Learning Outcomes								Assessment
	1. Knowledge of the Discipline	2. Ethical, legal & professional matters	3. Assessment & Measurement	4. Intervention Strategies	5. Research & evaluation	6. Communication & Interpersonal Relationships	7. Working Cross Culturally	8. Practice Across the Lifespan	
1.	Lectures, practicals		Lectures, practicals, placements		Lectures, practicals		Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals	1, 2, 3
2.	Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals, placements		Lectures, practicals		Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals	2,3
3.	Lectures, practicals		Lectures, practicals, placements			Lectures, practicals, placements			1,2
4.	Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals, placements	Lectures, practicals, placements				Lectures, practicals	Lectures, practicals	2,3
5.	Lectures, practicals,		Lectures, practicals, placements			Lectures, practicals, placements		Lectures, practicals	1,2
6.	Lectures, practicals		Lectures, practicals, placements			Lectures, practicals, placements			2,3

## 3. Strategies and approaches to learning

---

### 3.1 Learning and teaching activities

Working within the Scientist-Practitioner model, a sound understanding of psychological testing including underlying frameworks, theories and development and the utilisation of such tests is essential to a practicing forensic psychologist. The course will focus on issues and considerations that are common to practicing forensic psychologists.

Presented through lectures and tutorials with an emphasis on practical learning to ensure students develop sound assessment skills. Specific skills in test and assessment procedures will be taught in practical sessions. Assessments will focus on evaluating test administration, interpretation and communication of results to enhance learning via lecture and tutorials.

Students are encouraged to work both independently and in small groups to practice and master test administration and learn about interpretation. The course hours will be enhanced by students utilising time in the Test Library to familiarise themselves with the vast number of tests available for psychologists.

### 3.2 Expectations of students

It is expected that students are aware of UNSW Assessment policy and understand how to apply for special consideration if they are unable to complete an assignment/exam due to illness and/or misadventure.

It is expected that students have read through the [School of Psychology Student Guide](#), including the statement on Inherent Requirements of the program, and the Master of Psychology (Forensic) Program Guide available on the School website <https://www.psy.unsw.edu.au/current-students/postgraduate-coursework/master-psychology-forensic>.

Students registered with Equitable Learning Services must contact the Course Convenor immediately if they intend to request any special arrangements for later in the course, or if any special arrangements need to be made regarding access to the course material. Letters of support must be emailed to the Course Convenor as soon as they are made available.

Students must attend 80% of lectures and workshops to ensure they are consistently working towards achieving the professional graduate competencies for specialised areas of practice required by the APAC Accreditation Standards. These Accreditation Standards are incorporated in Program and Course Learning Outcomes. Any absence must be accompanied by a medical certificate or other reason for absence. Additional self-study material may be assigned by the Course Convenor to ensure that the trainee has covered any material missed as a result of being absent from workshops or meetings.

Information on any course changes will be made available either on Moodle and/or by email. It is the student's responsibility to check for changes.

## 4. Course schedule and structure

---

This course consists of approximately 33 hours of seminars. Students are expected to take an additional 70 hours of self-determined study to complete assignments, assessments, and readings.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture Topic/s</b>	<b>Tutorial Activity</b>	<b>Related CLO</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction to Forensic Assessment *	Wechsler tests WAIS-IV	1,2
<b>Week 2</b>	Weschler Scales and Intelligence testing- WAIS-IV	Wechsler tests WAIS-IV	1,2,3,5
<b>Week 3</b>	WAIS-IV Scoring and Interpretation	Wechsler tests WAIS-IV	1,2,3,5
<b>Week 4</b>	WAIS/WMS	Wechsler Tests WAIS-IV	1,2,3, 5
<b>Week 5</b>	Weschler testing	Wechsler tests WMS-IV	1, 2,3,4,5
<b>Week 6</b>	Psychometric interpretation	Wechsler tests WMS-IV	3,4,5,6
<b>Week 7</b>	Cognitive and Adaptive Testing*	Wechsler tests (WMS-IV & WAIS-IV) & Adaptive Functioning Tests	1, 2,3,4,5
<b>Week 8</b>	Performance and Symptom Validity Testing*	Psychological tests	1, 2, 3,4,5
<b>Week 9</b>	Psychological Tests within a Forensic Battery	Psychological tests	1,2,3,4, 5
<b>Week 10</b>	Psychological Tests within a Forensic Battery	Psychological tests	1,2,3,4, 5
<b>Week 11</b>	Communicating results/Additional considerations in Assessment	Psychological tests	1,2,3,4, 5,6

---

\* Denotes 'Flipped classroom'

## 5.1 Assessment tasks

All assessments in this course have been designed and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy.

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Mark	Due date	CLOs
<b>Summative Assessments</b>					
<b>Assessment 1:</b> Test administration vivas	2 hours	Pass/Fail	N/A	End of Week 7	3
<b>Assessment 2:</b> Wechsler report	Varied	40%	/100	End of Week 9	4,5,6
<b>Assessment 3:</b> Test battery*	2,500 words	40%	/100	End of Week 12	2,4
<b>Compulsory Activities</b>					
Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context)		20%	/100	Weeks 1-11	1,3,4

**Assessment 1:** You are required to meet the criterion of complete competency in test administration. This will be assessed individually in vivo. You must demonstrate mastery of the test. You will have two chances to meet mastery. If you fail in your first attempt, feedback will be provided and you must submit an 'action plan' outlining a short term plan to meet mastery criterion within two weeks (i.e., you must write and action your plan within a two week period). Failure to pass this component within two attempts will be considered a failure of the course. Tests are typically booked by the end of week 12.

**Assessment 2:** You will be provided a case study and an unscored Weschler profile. You will be required to 1. correctly score WAIS, 2. correctly score WMS, 3. interpret and write the 'test results' area of a cognitive report. Maximum of 2500 words. Typically due at the end of week 9 (Friday by 5pm), with feedback being provided within 10 working days of submission.

**Assessment 3:** You will be provided a case study and required to identify a reasonable and valid set of tests that will efficiently and effectively answer a specific referral question. The report will consist of your selected test battery and a rationale for their use based on the case study provided. Maximum of 2500 words. Typically due at the end of week 12 (Friday by 5pm), with feedback being provided within 10 working days of submission via a marked rubric with comments.

**Compulsory Activities:** Parts of this course are provided within a 'flipped classroom' environment, which means that you must come to class prepared (through pre-readings) to discuss the class content. You will be assessed through reflections you provide to the course convenor within two days after lectures in weeks 1 and 7 (maximum 200 words each submission). Each reflection is worth 10% of your course mark. You will be marked on your reflections on how you will utilize the knowledge from the class in your professional forensic psychology practice.

Hurdle: You must submit both reflections in order to pass the course.

**UNSW grading system:** <https://student.unsw.edu.au/grades>

**UNSW assessment policy:** <https://student.unsw.edu.au/assessment>

## 5.2 Assessment criteria and standards

Further details and marking criteria for each assessment will be provided to students closer to the assessment release date (see 4.1: UNSW Assessment Design Procedure).

## 5.3 Submission of assessment tasks

**Written assessments:** In accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy must be submitted online via Turnitin. No paper or emailed copies will be accepted.

**Late penalties:** There is a new late penalty policy starting in T2. Unless Special Consideration is granted or there is a time extension as part of an ELP, a 5% per day penalty will apply. Any assessment submitted after 5 days (120 hours) from the initial deadline gets a mark of zero (see Section 3 of the [Assessment Implementation Procedure](#)).

**Special Consideration:** Students who are unable to complete an assessment task by the assigned due date can apply for special consideration. Students should also note that UNSW has a Fit to Sit/Submit rule for all assessments. If a student wishes to submit an application for special consideration for an exam or assessment, the application must be submitted prior to the start of the exam or before an assessment is submitted. If a student sits the exam/submits an assignment, they are declaring themselves well enough to do so and are unable to subsequently apply for special consideration. If a student becomes ill on the day of the exam, they must provide evidence dated within 24 hours of the exam, with their application.

Special consideration applications must be submitted to the online portal along with Third Party supporting documentation. Students who have experienced significant illness or misadventure during the assessment period may be eligible. Only circumstances deemed to be outside of the student's control are eligible for special consideration. Except in unusual circumstances, the duration of circumstances impacting academic work must be more than 3 consecutive days, or a total of 5 days within the teaching period. If the special consideration application is approved, students may be given an extended due date, or an alternative assessment/supplementary examination may be set. For more information see <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>.

**Alternative assessments:** will be subject to approval and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Implementation Procedure.

## 5.4. Feedback on assessment

Feedback on all pieces of assessment in this course will be provided in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy.

Assessment	When	Who	Where	How
<b>Assessment 1:</b> Test administration vivas	Immediate	Lecturer or designate	In person	Verbally
<b>Assessment 2 part 1:</b> Weschler marking WAIS-IV	Week 5 (10 days post)	Lecturer	In class	Written and verbally
<b>Assessment 2 part 2:</b> Weschler	Week 7 (10 days post)	Lecturer	In class	Written and verbally

marking WMS-IV				
<b>Assessment 2 part 3:</b> Weschler report	Week 10 (10 days post)	Lecturer	In class	Written
<b>Assessment 3:</b> Test battery	week 13 (10 days post)	Lecturer	By email	Written

## 6. Academic integrity, referencing and plagiarism

The APA referencing style is to be adopted in this course. Students should consult the most recent edition of the publication manual itself (rather than third party interpretations of it) in order to properly adhere to APA style conventions. Students do not need to purchase a copy of the manual, it is available in the library or online. This resource is used by assessment markers and should be the only resource used by students to ensure they adopt this style appropriately.

**Referencing** is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.

Further information about referencing styles can be located at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing>

**Academic integrity** is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.<sup>1</sup> At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, plagiarism may be detected in your work.

Further information about academic integrity and **plagiarism** can be located at:

- The *Current Students* site <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>, and
- The *ELISE* training site <http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise>

The *Conduct and Integrity Unit* provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>.

## 7. Readings and resources

<b>Textbook</b>	Subsections of the following text will be prescribed in various weeks:  Goldstein, G., Allen, D., & DeLuca, J. (Ed.). (2019). <i>Handbook of psychological assessment</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> ed.). London, UK: Academic Press.  This resource is available electronically from the library.
<b>Course information</b>	Available on Moodle
<b>Required readings</b>	Must have read <a href="#">APS Code of Ethics</a> and Ethical guidelines

<sup>1</sup> International Center for Academic Integrity, 'The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity', T. Fishman (ed), Clemson University, 2013.



	<p>APS Ethical Guidelines for Psychological Assessment and the use of Psychological Tests</p> <p><a href="#">School of Psychology Student Guide</a></p> <p><a href="#">Master of Psychology (Forensic) Program Guide</a></p> <p><u>All flipped classroom and reading materials will be made available in Moodle.</u></p> <p>Some additional useful resources can be found in the Library and Test Library and will be included in lecture materials such as:</p> <p>Bush, S., Demakis, G., &amp; Rohling, M. (2017). <i>APA handbook of forensic neuropsychology</i>. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.</p> <p>Psychological Assessment in a Forensic Context. (2018). In Howard, D., &amp; Westmore, B. (Eds), <i>Crime and mental health law in New South Wales: A practical guide for lawyers and health care professionals</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> ed, pp.821-849). Australia: LexisNexis Butterworths.</p> <p>Browne, K., Beech, A.R., Craig, L.A., Cou, S (Eds). (2017). <i>Assessments in forensic practice: A handbook</i>. West Sussex, UK: Wiley &amp; Sons.</p> <p>Ackerman, M.J. (2010). <i>Essentials of psychological assessment series. Essentials of forensic psychological assessment</i> (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). John Wiley &amp; Sons Inc.</p> <p>Lezak, M.D., Howison, D.B., Bigler, E., &amp; Tranel, D. (2012). <i>Neuropsychological assessment</i> (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Strauss, E., Sherman, E.M.S. (2006). <i>A compendium of neuropsychological tests: Administration, norms and commentary</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). New York: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Sellbom, M., &amp; Suhr, J.A. (Eds). (2019). <i>The Cambridge handbook: Clinical assessment and diagnosis</i>. UK: Cambridge University Press.</p>
<p><b>Recommended internet sites</b></p>	<p><a href="#">UNSW Library</a></p> <p><a href="#">UNSW Learning Centre</a></p> <p><a href="#">ELISE</a></p> <p><a href="#">Turnitin</a></p> <p><a href="#">Student Code of Conduct</a></p> <p><a href="#">Academic Integrity</a></p> <p><a href="#">Email policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">UNSW Anti-racism policy statement</a></p> <p><a href="#">UNSW Equity and Diversity policy statement</a></p>

## 8. Administrative matters

---

The [School of Psychology Student Guide](#) contains School policies and procedures relevant for all students enrolled in undergraduate or Masters psychology courses, such as:

- Attendance requirements
- Assignment submissions and returns
- Assessments
- Special consideration
- Student code of conduct
- Student complaints and grievances
- Equitable Learning Services
- Health and safety

It is expected that students familiarise themselves with the information contained in this guide.

## 9. Additional support for students

---

- The Current Students Gateway: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/>
- Academic Skills and Support: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/skills>
- Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/wellbeing>
- Equitable Learning Services: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/els>
- UNSW IT Service Centre: <https://www.myit.unsw.edu.au/>