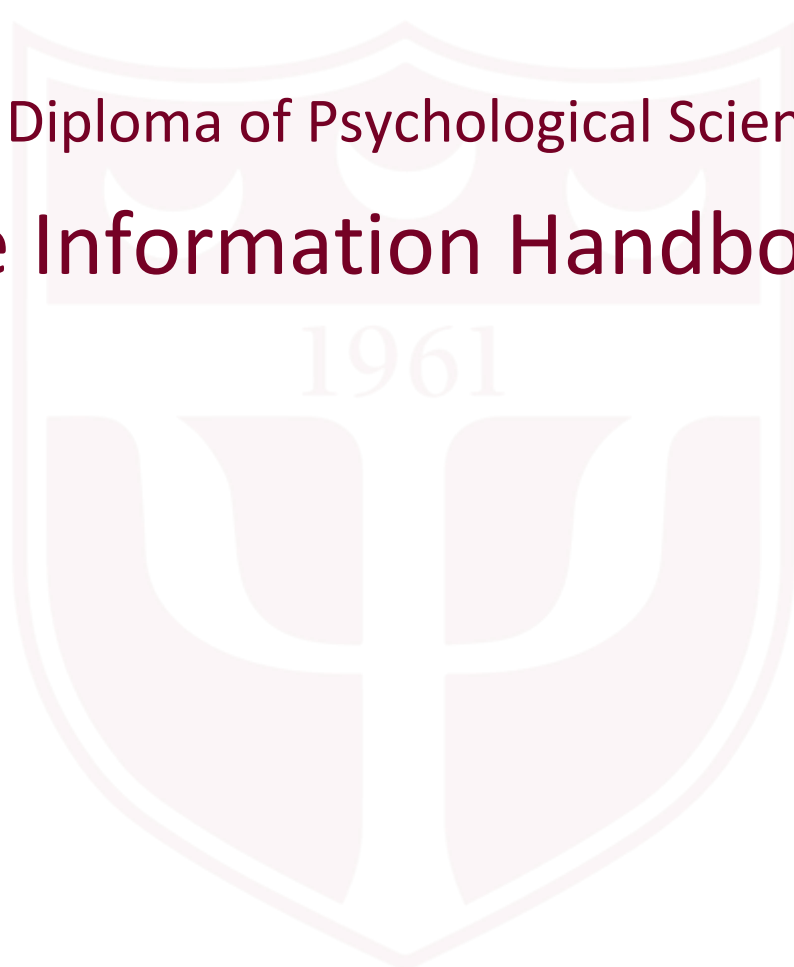




Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science Course Information Handbook 2026

[Course Code]

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Welcome to The Cairnmillar Institute

Congratulations on your success in obtaining a place in the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science degree. This course information handbook addresses many aspects and requirements of the course. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

[Unit Outlines](#)

[Policies and Procedures](#)

These resources provide all the information you need to successfully navigate your way through the different components of the course. If you find anything missing from these handbooks, please let us know.

The Cairnmillar Institute and staff wish you an enjoyable and rewarding professional experience.



Professor Linda Byrne
Dean, Faculty of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy



Dr Sasha Davies
Course Coordinator, Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

The Cairnmillar Institute

The vision of the Cairnmillar Institute is for a mentally healthy and resilient Australia. The Institute is an Australian Health Promotion Charity and non-profit body.

Our role is to continue building a responsive mental health sector through quality education, accessible client services, and evidence-based workforce support. Our work at Cairnmillar is underpinned by our values of compassionate engagement, inclusivity and professionalism and a focus on quality and standards. Connection with trusted partners and community, and a focus on being creative problem-solvers is critical to our business development and will directly enhance our client and student experience. We also aim to strengthen our contribution to the body of evidence-driven research that informs community in practice, and education.

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

The Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science is a one-year bridging program that provides the core foundational training in psychology required for entry into an APAC-accredited fourth-year program. Designed as a 'fast-track' alternative to the equivalent undergraduate major sequence, it allows individuals with a recognised undergraduate degree to complete the psychology sequence in a single year of full-time study.

Graduate Certificate

The Graduate Certificate in Psychological Science is embedded within the Graduate Diploma. Students complete the first four units of the Graduate Diploma, with any points of difference between the two courses clearly identified. Where no differences are noted, information applies to both programs.

Course Content

Students engage with psychological theory across the major domains of the discipline, including cognitive, developmental, biological, and social psychology. The curriculum also covers research methods, ethics, and the empirical foundations of psychological theory, along with key areas of application such as psychological assessment and psychopathology.

Graduate Outcomes

The course is structured to meet the foundational competencies necessary for professional accreditation while also fostering essential transferable skills, including effective communication, teamwork, critical problem-solving, and lifelong learning.

Entry Requirements

Graduate Certificate of Psychological Science

Students are eligible for admission into the program if they have completed an APAC accredited Level 1 3-year sequence, such as a Bachelor of Psychology (no restrictions on WAM).

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

Students are eligible for admission into the program if they have completed an AQF Level 7 undergraduate degree (no restrictions on WAM).

Duration of the Course

Graduate Certificate of Psychological Science

This course may be completed full time in one semester (six months) or part time over two semesters (one year).

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

This course may be completed full time over two semesters (one year) or part time over four semesters (two years).

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who satisfactorily complete this course will have achieved advanced knowledge and skills in the following areas of study:

1. Demonstrate high-level knowledge of core psychological theory, research skills, statistics, and the associated empirical evidence base
2. Synthesise research and theory from major fields in psychology and apply this knowledge to different contexts to resolve complex problems and apply in professional practice
3. Communicate clearly, effectively, and professionally across a range of contexts including oration, writing, the online environment, and in teams
4. Act ethically and professionally while respecting cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity
5. Demonstrate self-motivated and self-directed learning principles that facilitate lifelong learning and ongoing professional development

Career Opportunities

Graduates of both courses are well placed for employment in a range of sectors, including health and community services, human resources, research, and product design and marketing.

The **Graduate Certificate of Psychological Science** does not on its own provide eligibility for APAC-accredited fourth-year psychology programs. However, students who successfully complete the Graduate Certificate with a WAM of 65 or higher, including a minimum mark of 65 in PSY402, are guaranteed entry into the **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science** at Cairnmillar with recognition of prior learning for the four completed units.

Graduates of the **Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science** meet the foundational APAC requirements and are eligible to apply for entry into APAC-accredited fourth-year psychology programs.

More information about [career pathways](#) can be found on myCMI.

Professional Recognition

Graduate Certificate of Psychological Science

This course is accredited by TEQSA.

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science:

The course is accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and meets the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) requirements for an equivalent three-year undergraduate degree in Psychology.

Graduates will be eligible to apply for entry into the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) program, or an equivalent APAC accredited fourth year program.

More information about professional registration can be found on myCMI: [Professional Registration FAQs](#) on myCMI.

Course Structure & Credit Points

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

This course has been designed to be completed full-time over one year or part-time over two years.

Full-Time Course Structure:

Year	Semester	Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Points
1	1	PSY406	Psychopathology	12.5
1	1	PSY402	Research Design and Statistics	12.5
1	1	PSY403	Social Psychology	12.5
1	1	PSY404	Developmental Psychology	12.5
1	2	PSY401	Theories of Personality	12.5
1	2	PSY405	Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience	12.5
1	2	PSY408	Psychology Research Capstone	12.5
1	2	PSY409	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mental Health	12.5

Part-Time Course Structure:

Note: It is strongly recommended that students take PSY402 in the first semester of the course.

Year	Semester	Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Points
1	1	PSY402	Research Design and Statistics	12.5
1	1	PSY406	Psychopathology	12.5
1	2	PSY401	Theories of Personality	12.5
1	2	PSY405	Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience	12.5
2	1	PSY403	Social Psychology	12.5
2	1	PSY404	Developmental Psychology	12.5
2	2	PSY408	Psychology Research Capstone	12.5
2	2	PSY409	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mental Health	12.5

Mid-Year Entry:

Those commencing the Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science **mid-year** have the recommended study load outlined below.

Note: PSY407 and PSY408 are not available in your first semester.

Year	Semester	Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Points
1	2	PSY401	Theories of Personality	12.5
1	2	PSY405	Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience	12.5
2	1	PSY402	Research Design and Statistics	12.5
2	1	PSY406	Psychopathology	12.5
2	1	PSY403	Social Psychology	12.5
2	1	PSY404	Developmental Psychology	12.5
2	2	PSY408	Psychology Research Capstone	12.5
2	2	PSY409	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mental Health	12.5

Course Details: 100 credit points

Coursework: 100 credit points or 100% of the course

Graduate Diploma of Psychological Science

This course has been designed to be completed full time over 6 months or part time over one year.

Mid-year enrolment students can enrol in any semester 2 unit, including PSY407 and PSY408.

This course involves completing any 4 units of the below:

Year	Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Points
1	PSY406	Psychopathology	12.5
1	PSY402	Research Design and Statistics	12.5
1	PSY403	Social Psychology	12.5
1	PSY404	Developmental Psychology	12.5
2	PSY401	Theories of Personality	12.5
2	PSY405	Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience	12.5
2	PSY408	Psychology Research Capstone	12.5
2	PSY409	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mental Health	12.5

Course Details: 50 credit points

Coursework: 50 credit points or 100% of the course

Coursework Units

Each of the units of study are detailed below. Please note students must pass all units before being eligible to graduate.

- **PSY401 (Theories of Personality)**

PSY401 Theories of Personality provides a conceptual overview of the major theories of personality psychology. Students will learn about the major paradigmatic approaches used to inform understandings of personality psychology research, including trait and biological, social learning and self-concept, and psychodynamic and motivation approaches. In addition, students will explore, apply, and critically analyse a range of methods used to test and measure personality. Finally, students will also learn about the application of personality psychology to a range of settings and topics, including therapeutic approaches, workplaces, and culture.

- **PSY402 (Research Design and Statistics)**

This unit provides an applied introduction to the scientific approach that characterises the discipline. Students are introduced to modern approaches to critical thinking and scientific enquiry in psychology. Topics include the logic and practice of statistical inference, research design and analysis, and contemporary issues in the science of psychology. After PSY402, students will be able to formulate a hypothesis, design a study to test that hypothesis, plan for data collection, analyse data, and provide sound practical interpretations of results.

- **PSY403 (Social Psychology)**

This unit provides an overview of the major theoretical approaches and research findings regarding how people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour are affected by others in social interactions. The topics that students will learn about include commonly used research methods and ethical issues arising in social psychology; history of social psychology; social cognition; attribution; attitude measurement and attitude change; self and identity; aggression; attraction and close relationships; and social influence processes and group dynamics concerning issues such as crowd behaviour and prejudice and discrimination.

- **PSY404 (Developmental Psychology)**

PSY404 Developmental Psychology provides students with an understanding of human development across the lifespan. Through this unit, you will learn about the key theories of human development and consider the biological, cognitive, and socioemotional development of individuals from the prenatal period to the final stages of life. You will also gain familiarity with the methodologies used to answer important questions relevant to the field of developmental psychology

- **PSY405 (Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience)**

This unit provides an overview of the physiological and neural processes that underlie human cognition and behaviour. Following an outline of the functional anatomy of the nervous system, students will learn about the physiological and genetic bases for a wide range of phenomena including perception, movement, learning and memory, intelligence, emotion and reward, and cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. In addition, the types and nature of psychoactive drugs and their mechanisms of influence are covered.

- **PSY406 (Psychopathology)**

This unit adopts an integrative approach to the study of psychopathology. Students will learn how psychologists define abnormal behaviour and how they undertake clinical assessment and diagnosis. Students will be introduced to the major classes of psychological disorders as defined within the DSM-5-TR including the typical symptomatology, prevalence, aetiology, and typical course. The unit will teach students how the major theoretical paradigms in psychology inform conceptualisation, assessment, and treatment of psychological disorders.

- **PSY408 (Research Capstone)**

In this unit, students consolidate and extend their knowledge of the scientific foundations of psychology in preparation for an honours thesis. Students will identify a topic of interest, formulate a research question, and design a study (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) that could address this question. The unit challenges students to critically engage with methodological and ethical considerations, including cultural accountability, decolonisation, and the responsible use of AI in psychological research. Particular emphasis is placed on reflexivity: students are encouraged to examine who they are as researchers, how their perspectives shape the research process, and the ways psychology research both reflects and reproduces broader power systems. By the end of the unit, students will have developed a research proposal that is ethically grounded, methodologically rigorous, and critically reflective of their role as researchers within the discipline.

- **PSY409 (Interdisciplinary Approaches to Mental Health)**

The aim of this unit is to introduce students to different mental health professions, and to assist students in developing an understanding of varying approaches to working with mental health. The unit provides an overview of mental health disciplines such as psychiatry, social work, medicine, occupational therapy, and nursing and how they work together to assist people experiencing mental health difficulties. The unit will be taught utilising guest lecturers from professionals in each discipline, interactive workshops, and case studies to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of interdisciplinary mental health care. Students will engage in simulations of interdisciplinary team meetings and undertake care planning for complex scenarios.

Students should also refer to the relevant **Unit Outlines** located on [Canvas](#)

Enrolment Conditions

See also: [Enrolment Conditions](#) on myCMI for a copy of the current enrolment conditions. You must agree to the conditions of enrolment every time you enrol in a unit of study.

Attendance

It is an expectation that students will attend all classes*. If you anticipate being absent, please advise your Unit Coordinator via email. Planned absences of several weeks should also be discussed with your Unit Coordinator.

Note: Due to the online nature of this course, we consider classes* to include synchronous online activities such as tutorials and lectures held in online platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Student Etiquette

Students are to adhere to relevant ethical guidelines and codes of conduct and show respect for staff, clients, and other students, and our faculty environment at all times. All forms of sexual harassment, vilification, and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Your enrolment carries [inherent requirements](#) that reflect the professional standards you will be expected to meet in practice. If you are studying in a postgraduate psychology program requiring provisional or general registration with AHPRA, you must familiarise yourself with, and adhere to, the Psychology Board of Australia's Code of Conduct. If you are enrolled in counselling or psychotherapy programs, you must ensure your conduct aligns with PACFA's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. Understanding and upholding these obligations is essential to your progression in the course and to your future professional practice.

Students are expected to communicate with professionalism, courtesy and consideration in person and online (including via email and social media). Please see the TLP004 Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policy, TLP008 Student Social Media policy, and FSP002 Discrimination Bullying Harassment Policy. All Policies and Procedures can be found [here](#).

If you feel unsafe at any time or have concerns about the professional conduct of any member of the Cairnmillar community, you are encouraged to inform a staff member.



Submission of Written Work

All written assessment tasks, unless otherwise instructed by a unit coordinator, must be prepared in [Microsoft Word](#) and submitted via [Canvas](#). Please refer to the Unit Outlines on within the unit modules on [Canvas](#) and the [Assessment Style Guides and Formatting](#) guide on myCMI for more information on written assignment requirements.

Referencing & Style Guidelines

The referencing and format for all assignments must be in APA 7 style. Please see [APA Style Referencing](#). See also [Assessment Style Guides and Formatting](#) on myCMI.

Assessment Grades & Records

Final results for each unit will be calculated, then published on the [Paradigm Enrolment Portal](#) by the relevant results [publication date](#). The marks for your final assessment will be withheld until after the release of your final marks.

See [myCMI](#) for information on [results publication](#).

Extensions

An extension may be granted up to 14 calendar days for assignments where there is evidence of unexpected disruptions in the student's available work time. Extensions must be applied for and approved in accordance with the [Assessment Policy and Procedures](#) and any other published procedures found on the faculty website.

Applications must be made [via the appropriate form](#) before the due date and submitted to the Unit Coordinator. An extension is valid only after it has been approved by the Unit Coordinator.

For students with an ongoing or short term health, injury or disability that impacts their ability to study, academic support, including extensions, may be available by registering with the Learning Equity Office. For further information please [click here](#).

See [myCMI](#) for more information on how to apply for an [assignment extension](#).

Special Consideration

Special consideration may be granted in situations where an extension is not possible, such as an exam or in-class work that has been missed, or you need an extension beyond 2 weeks. You should first discuss your situation with your [Course Coordinator](#) before applying. Please see the Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the faculty website for more information. Please see [myCMI](#) for how to apply for special consideration.

Word Limit

Students must adhere to the word limits provided in Unit Outlines and Assessment Guides. Please refer to your Unit Outlines on Canvas for information regarding word limits for each assessment task. There is a 10% leeway on all word limits in which no penalties apply. Exceeding the word limit+10% will result in a penalty of 10% of the total assessment mark. For example, for an assessment with 1000 words worth 20 marks, a student can write up to 1100 words without penalty. However, the student will incur a 10% penalty of the total assessment mark (10% of 20 marks = 2 mark penalty) if they write 1101 words.

Late Submissions

The penalty for late submissions is 5% per day of the total assessment mark (including weekends and non-business days), for a maximum of seven (7) days (i.e., maximum late penalty deduction possible is 35%).

Work handed in more than one week late will not be marked and a fail result will be recorded. No assignment will be accepted once the results for that assignment have been published.

Tasks that are required to be completed and/or submitted in-class, such as class presentations must be submitted on the date of the class presentation unless a student has been granted special consideration. The penalty for late submission or non-submission of in-class tasks is usually 100% of the mark.

See also: [Late Assessment Submissions](#) on myCMI.

Samples of Work

Samples of student work may be taken for purposes of course accreditation and benchmarking. In all cases anonymity will be preserved. If you object to your work being copied for this purpose you must advise the Unit Coordinator when submitting assignments.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process where a student may be granted credit or partial credit towards a qualification in recognition of previous study, skills or experience. RPL can only be granted for units prior to the commencement of your course

See [myCMI](#) for more information on how to apply for RPL or credit transfer.

Marking Scales & Grade Definitions

You can view Cairnmillar's [grade-mark schema](#) on myCMI.

Academic Integrity

Breaches of academic integrity are serious academic offences. It is the responsibility of all students to access, read, and familiarise themselves with the Institute's [Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policy and Procedures](#). See [myCMI](#) for more information about [Academic Integrity](#) at Cairnmillar.

All students must complete an Academic Integrity Module and Quiz on Canvas prior to beginning classes at Cairnmillar. Assessment marks are withheld if students have not completed the Academic Integrity Module and Quiz on Canvas. Please see [here on myCMI](#) for more details.

Course Progress

The Academic Integrity and Progress Committee (AIPC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and is normally chaired by Chair of the AIPC.

The AIPC review incidents of possible plagiarism and other breaches of academic or research integrity, such as collusion, cheating in exams, or unauthorised AI use.

The AIPC also supports students who have poor academic performance or are at risk of failing a course through academic progress intervention and Student Progress Agreements.

Please see '[Academic Integrity and Progress Review Hearings](#)' on myCMI for detailed information on Cairnmillar's academic integrity and progress procedure.

Policies, Procedures & Student Guidelines

It is the responsibility of all students to access, read, and familiarise themselves with the Institute's Policies and Procedures. Students are also expected to review and understand any student guidelines. These are published on our [faculty website](#). Detailed supporting information, guides and forms can be found on the student website, [myCMI](#).

Copyright

There are copyright laws that we need to be aware of and adhere to. Please see the [Australian Copyright Council's](#) website for full information on this topic.

Professional Standards

Students in professional training courses at CMI are reminded that [inherent requirements](#) apply to your enrolment.

You must have a thorough knowledge of the Psychology Board of Australia Code of Conduct or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia Code of Ethics document. It is reviewed and updated regularly, and it is essential to remain abreast of any changes that are recommended.

A full copy of the current edition of the [Code of Conduct](#) can be obtained on the [Psychology Board of Australia](#) or the PACFA website.

Student Support, Counselling, & Wellbeing

Counselling & Support for Students

Please see '[Counselling for Students](#)' on myCMI.

Academic & Writing Support for Students

Please see 'Your Academic Skills Toolkit' on Canvas and the [Academic Skills and Support](#) my.CMI page.

Learning Equity and Accessibility Support for Students

Please see '[Learning Equity Support](#)' on myCMI.

International Student Support

Please see the '[International Students Page](#)' on myCMI.

Other Support Services

A searchable list of other support services can be found on myCMI. Please see [Support for Students](#) page.

Tuition Fees and FEE-HELP

Information regarding the payment of fees can be obtained from myCMI and our public website. Tuition fees and conditions are published on our website, see [Tuition Fees](#). Please see [Fees and FEE-HELP FAQs](#) on myCMI for more information. Non-payment of fees may result in withholding of release of grades, ineligibility to graduate or termination of enrolment.

Termination of Enrolment

Cairnmillar reserves the right to terminate a person's enrolment in a course if the student:

- fails to meet the complete assessment task requirements or breaches the Institute's privacy and ethical conditions
- exceeds the maximum or negotiated time for completion of the course, or
- other conditions as specified in the [Enrolment Conditions](#).

See [myCMI](#) for details on Cairnmillar's [Academic Progress](#) procedure.

Graduation

To be eligible to have the relevant qualification awarded, a student must:

- comply with all the Institute Policies and Procedures;
- pay all relevant fees and charges;
- complete all requirements prescribed for the course of study at least at a PASS level;
- submit the relevant intention to graduate form by the due date.

The appropriate awards are given on satisfactory completion of the course. These are presented at a special annual ceremony or given (posted) directly to students for a fee.

For more information see: [Graduating From Your Degree](#) on myCMI.

Library Services

The Library at the Cairnmillar Institute is a specialist library resource, aimed at supporting the work of the Institute, focusing on the curriculum, teaching, research, and clinical requirements of the students, academic staff, clinical staff, and researchers.

Appointments about Library and research skills can be made through the [Library](#).

Please visit the [Library](#) page on myCMI for more information.

Office 365

All students have access to [Office 365](#) while studying at Cairnmillar. Your Office365 account includes free access to Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook (student email), and much more.

Students also have access to 1TB of OneDrive storage. Find more information on [Office 365](#) on myCMI.

Student Email and Canvas Announcements

Students are provided with a Cairnmillar student email and are required to check this account regularly while enrolled. See: [Accessing your Cairnmillar Student Email on myCMI for full details.](#)

Students should also regularly check or sign up for email [reminders on Canvas Announcements](#) and review the regular [Student Newsletter](#).

Computer & Printer Access

Each student has their own personal [OneDrive](#) account which can be accessed across any computer.

Please see '[Computer Access at Cairnmillar](#)' for more information.

Please see '[Printing/Copying at Cairnmillar](#)' on myCMI for more information.