

A Work-integrated Learning Program for Undergraduate Psychology

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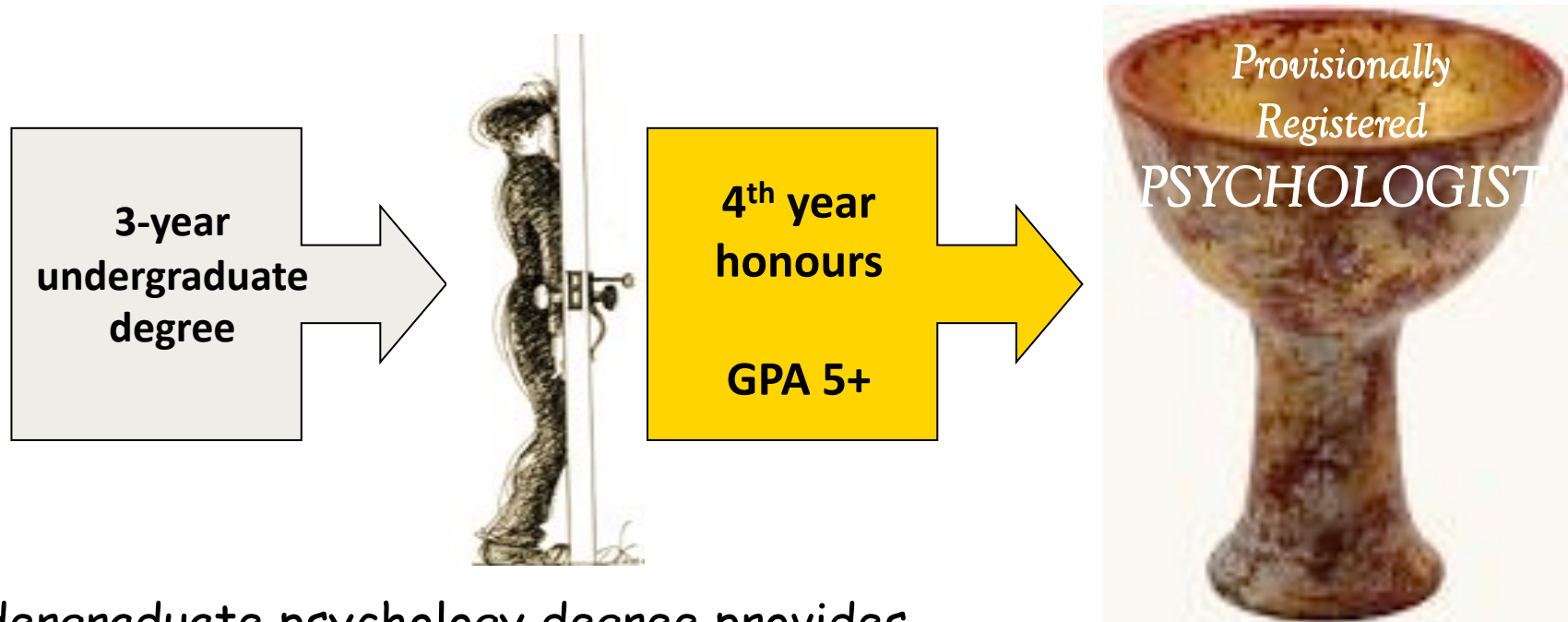
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What can I do with a 3-year psychology degree?



An undergraduate psychology degree provides

- ✓ Strong foundation in the scientific discipline of psychology
- ✓ Strong generic skills - for diverse graduate destinations
- ✗ Not professional training / not practical
- ✗ Doesn't allow registration as a psychologist.

More than 50% of students are not offered a place in a 4th year program!

Psychology students lack awareness of the value of their degree

- **Student consultations** + feedback from careers counsellor
 - Lack of knowledge / confusion about career and study options - No 'Plan B'
- Psychology students' *disproportionate* **eagerness for Careers Day information**
- **Course Experience Questionnaire**
 - Suggested improvements to the course: *practical experience; practical experience; practical experience*
- **The curriculum!**
 - Designed as a stepping-stone to further study – not as an end in itself. Learning goals directed to future study.

APA U/G Psychology Learning Outcomes

Goal 10: Career Planning & Development

Students should emerge from the [degree] with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

- 10.1 Apply knowledge of psychology to formulating career choices.
- 10.2 Identify academic experiences that facilitate entry into the work force.
- 10.3 Describe preferred career paths based on accurate self-assessment of abilities, achievement, motivation, and work habits.
- 10.4 Identify and develop skills & experiences relevant to achieving selected career goals.
- 10.5 understand the importance of lifelong learning and personal flexibility to sustain personal and professional development as the nature of work evolves.

APAC Graduate Attribute 6 (Cranney, 2008)

Learning and the Application of Psychology

Understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organisational issues.

- Apply knowledge of psychology, society and the workplace/influencing systems.
- Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings to solve problems in everyday life and in society.
- Apply psychological principles to promote personal development through self-regulation in setting and achieving career and personal goals
- Demonstrate a capacity for independent learning to sustain personal and professional development in the changing world of the science and practice of psychology.

Our journey at QUT ...

- EXTRA-CURRICULAR CAREER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
 - Career development workshops; graduate & employer seminars;
 - Strong partnership with Careers & Employment service
 - Volunteering workshops *Transformative!*
- INCORPORATED INTO THE CURRICULUM
 - 1st year core unit – *Psychology in Professional Contexts*
 - 3rd year elective – *Psychology in the Community*

Student feedback on volunteering

Workshop:

- *I feel so inspired and motivated - it was one of the best experiences of my course so far and has really helped me gain some focus, clarity and direction for the future!*

Volunteering:

- *I can't really say enough positive things about my experience. Volunteering was just so terrific for my confidence and I can't believe how much I learned in such a short period of time.*
- *honestly - I think if I hadn't have done it, I quite possibly would not have continued with my psychology studies. I needed some practical 'stuff' in order to feel like the study was going anywhere. It made the sometimes remote world of study much more real*

Outcomes for students

Linking theory & application

- *Being thrown into the proverbial 'deep end' teaches you a great deal. I think that education teaches you WHAT to do, but "doing it" teaches you HOW to do it.*
- *My volunteering experience helped me to see how my studies could be applied. I also think my understanding and recall of study material was enhanced because I had a context to put things into and had my own examples and cases that reinforced the theory I was presented with in classes. It made it easier for me to be critical of theory and case-study materials we were presented with in classes*

Outcomes for students

Personal insights and growth

- *the biggest thing I've learnt is that no matter how good your marks at uni are and how much you think you know, it's not until you're sitting on the phone with someone suicidal on the other end of the line that you realise how little you know and how much you still have to learn.*
- *To REALLY listen, not to judge, to be patient, that my life is amazing!*
- *ongoing supervision sessions ... Getting feedback on experiences/ thoughts/ ideas/ feelings, as well as hearing about others' experiences, has given me insights that I'll take with me into my professional life.*

Outcomes for Students

Understanding workplace

- *Getting to know practicing psychologists and being able to discuss things like Honours topics, potential supervisors, potential future career direction, useful text books, how they deal with different types of clients and different types of workplace situations has been incredibly enlightening.*
- *There are so many things about how government and non-government services work that I had no idea about.*

Networking & Jobs

- *It seems that lots of paid work is never advertised and volunteering can be a great foot in the door, as well as helping you develop more certainty about the type of work you do or don't want to do later down the track*
- *exposure to the mental health industry and networking were the most valuable things.*
- *I work regularly as a telephone counsellor, but now I'm also involved in training telephone counsellors*
- *CYMHS offered me a paid position so I stopped volunteer work at that time*

PYB207 Psychology in the Community

- If we truly value this transformative experience for our students, it should have a place in the formal curriculum
- PYB207 incorporates volunteering workshops, career development & volunteer opportunities into the undergrad curriculum
- Final semester, 3rd year elective
- Career preparation + 50 hours volunteer work in community
- Offered in 2008 & 2009 – about 25 students each year

Who chose to do the subject?

Not eligible for 4 th year	Went on to 4 th year at QUT	Eligible for 4 th year at QUT
25	14	10
<i>M Social Work</i> <i>M Counselling</i> <i>M Business</i>	<i>PhD</i> <i>M Clin Psych</i>	

Volunteering placements

- Mental Health Services
 - Association of Relatives & Friends of the Mentally Ill (ARAFMI)
 - Child & Youth Mental Health Service (Qld Health)
 - Community support organisations (NGOs)
 - Drug & alcohol support
 - Autism Partnership Qld
 - ARAFMI (Association for friends & relatives of the mentally ill)
 - Lifeline, KidsHelpline, Drug Arm
 - Hospice
- Organisational consultancy
- Brisbane North Parole Office
- Careers & Employment
- CARRS-Q Research centre

Structure & Assessment

- **Preparation – Portfolio A:**
 - skills audit; ‘branding myself’; resume; selection criteria; identify & research an organisation; identify learning goals; interview prep
- Weekly reflections supported by online activities and feedback
- Mid-placement review and feedback
- **Presentation** at mini-conference + satisfactory completion of placement; achieved learning goals
- **Portfolio B;**
 - reflective essay; future directions ...

Career Development Programs

University Preparation



Career Preparation



Work Placement Preparation



Career Management



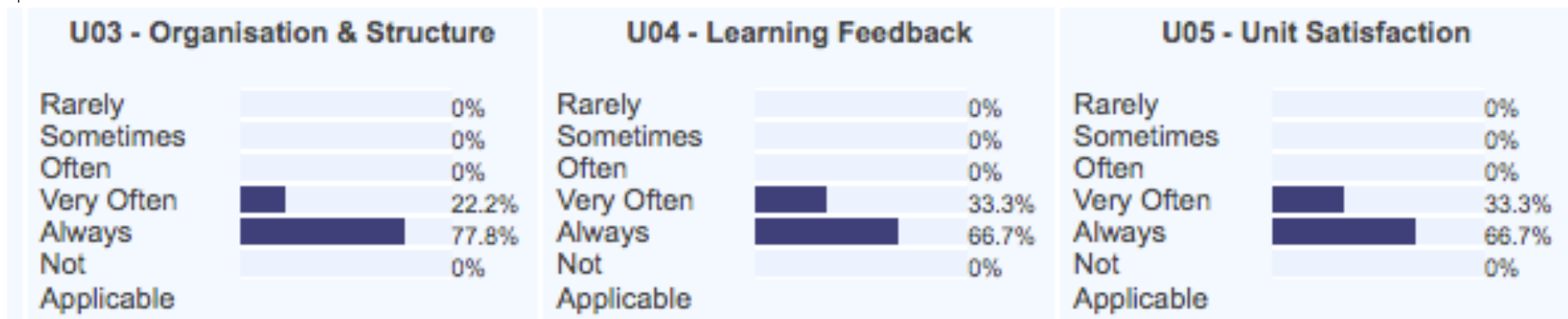
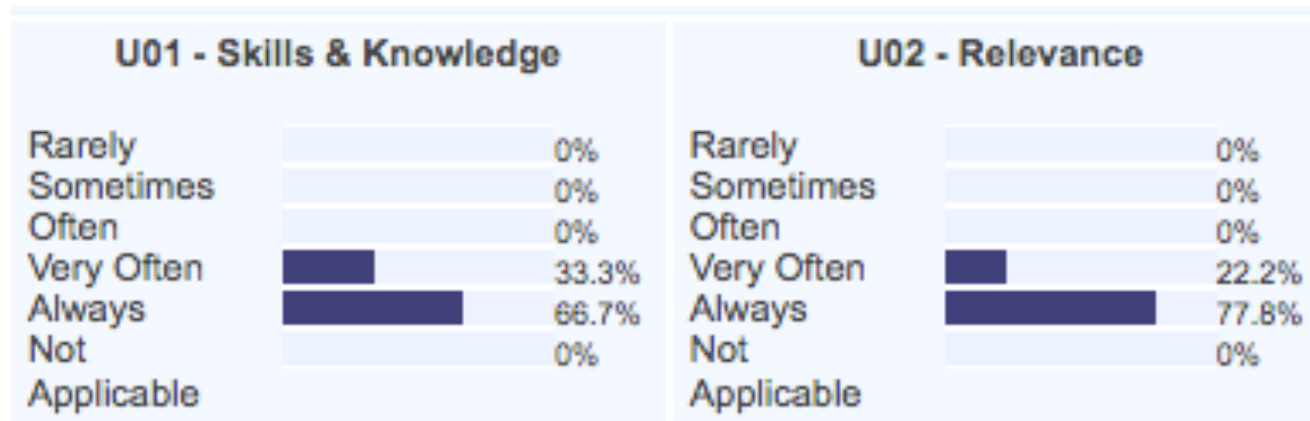
Graduate Careers



Workplace Resilience



Student evaluation of subject



Student evaluations – best aspects

- *Finally, a chance to gain real world experience*
- *It was incredibly helpful to be able to see psychological concepts in action*
- *I now know what practical skills I have and what I need to develop them more*
- *applying knowledge and skills we had learnt into the workplace*
- *All the advice on getting jobs, writing resumes, addressing selection criteria, interview practice and techniques was VERY relevant and extremely helpful*
- *A fantastic subject to finish with. Allows people to develop the skills required for job applications and working in the real world.*
- **Worst aspect**
 - *Workplace Health & Safety forms!!!*

Other outcomes ... jobs

**Volunteer, Youth
Mental Health**

**Research
Assistant**

**Honours
project**

**Master of
Ed & Dev
Psych**

**Lifeline
trainee**

**Telephone
counsellor**

**Counsellor
Trainer**

**Volunteer at
Youth Support
centre**

**Elected
President of
committee**

**Offered a job
*I didn't realise I
was competent***

**Volunteer at Careers
& Employment
service**

**Offered work
developing Careers
module**

The future

- Increase uptake of *Psychology in the Community*
- Develop career and work-ready skills across the curriculum; extend use of student portfolio
- Re-vitalise careers workshops, promote volunteering in 1st & 2nd year
- Stronger links with community agencies
- Authentic & real assessment tasks
- International placements