



## UNSW Course Outline

# PSYC7423 Assessment in Forensic Psychology - 2024

Published on the 30 Jan 2024

## General Course Information

**Course Code :** PSYC7423

**Year :** 2024

**Term :** Term 1

**Teaching Period :** T1

**Is a multi-term course? :** No

**Faculty :** Faculty of Science

**Academic Unit :** School of Psychology

**Delivery Mode :** In Person

**Delivery Format :** Standard

**Delivery Location :** Kensington

**Campus :** Sydney

**Study Level :** Postgraduate

**Units of Credit :** 6

### Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

## Course Details & Outcomes

### Course Description

This course presents a framework of standardised tests and procedures used by psychologists to evaluate intellectual, cognitive and adaptive functioning, as well as tests used to evaluate general psychological functioning. Students are presented with technical, administrative, scoring

and interpretation of a sampling of standardised tests with an emphasis on tests typically used by forensic psychologists in forensic contexts, especially within the court system.

## Course Aims

This course introduces students to the principles and techniques of standardised psychological assessment. Students are provided direction on how to formulate effective test batteries in response to specific forensic assessments. Further, students are provided direction on how 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 also introduces effective communication strategies in assessment report writing.

# Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Communicate concepts around the framework of psychometric principles and theories underlying standardised psychological testing methodology.
CLO2 : 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.
CLO3 : Competently administer and score Wechsler Scales and other cognitive and psychological tests with adequate standardization.
CLO4 : Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.
CLO5 : Interpret the validity of test results and individual test profiles.
CLO6 : Communicate effectively and accurately in a written report the results of test scores for a forensic audience.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Communicate concepts around the framework of psychometric principles and theories underlying standardised psychological testing methodology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context)</li></ul>
CLO2 : 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Test battery</li><li>• Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context)</li></ul>
CLO3 : Competently administer and score Wechsler Scales and other cognitive and psychological tests with adequate standardization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Test administration vivas</li></ul>
CLO4 : Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wechsler report</li><li>• Test battery</li><li>• Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context)</li></ul>
CLO5 : Interpret the validity of test results and individual test profiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wechsler report</li></ul>
CLO6 : Communicate effectively and accurately in a written report the results of test scores for a forensic audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wechsler report</li></ul>

# Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

## **Learning and Teaching in this course**

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.

## **Assessments**

### **Assessment Structure**

<b>Assessment Item</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Relevant Dates</b>
Test administration vivas Assessment Format: Individual	0%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Week 12: 29 April - 05 May
Wechsler report Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Due Date: Week 9: 08 April - 14 April
Test battery Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Due Date: Week 12: 29 April - 05 May
Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context) Assessment Format: Individual	20%	Due Date: Week 12: 29 April - 05 May

## **Assessment Details**

### **Test administration vivas**

#### **Assessment Overview**

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.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO3 : Competently administer and score Wechsler Scales and other cognitive and psychological tests with adequate standardization.

#### Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

#### Hurdle rules

Students must pass the viva exam in order to be eligible to pass the course.

In order to pass the viva exam, a student must administer all required subtests of the WAIS-IV well with fluid and competent administration. No subtests may be invalidated.

If one subtests is invalidated, or some aspects on a particular subtests are incompetent/insufficient and require further practice but all other subtests are administered competently, a student is graded as a conditional pass, subject to competent re-administratiton of that subtest within one week.

A fail is invalidation of two or more subtests. A student is only permitted one resit of the VIVA exam except in exceptional circumstances. If the student fails the VIVA exam twice, then they will fail the PSYC7423 course.

#### **Wechsler report**

#### Assessment Overview

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.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO4 : Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.
- CLO5 : Interpret the validity of test results and individual test profiles.
- CLO6 : Communicate effectively and accurately in a written report the results of test scores for a forensic audience.

### Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

## Test battery

### Assessment Overview

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.

### Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : 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.
- CLO4 : Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.

### Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

## Class activities (especially within flipped classroom context)

### Assessment Overview

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.

### Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Communicate concepts around the framework of psychometric principles and theories underlying standardised psychological testing methodology.
- CLO2 : 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.

- CLO4 : Evaluate the limitations of psychological test measurement and how limitations are communicated and integrated in the context of a forensic assessment.

#### Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

## General Assessment Information

#### Grading Basis

Standard

#### Requirements to pass course

Viva Exams must be passed in order to pass the course.

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

## Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Lecture	Wechsler Scales and Intelligence testing- WAIS-IV
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Lecture	WAIS-IV Scoring and Interpretation
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Lecture	Wechsler Scales: WAIS-IV/WMS-IV
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Lecture	Wechsler Testing
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Lecture	Psychometric Interpretation
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Lecture	Cognitive and Adaptive Assessment
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Lecture	Performance and Symptom Validity Testing
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Lecture	Psychological Tests within a Forensic Battery
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Lecture	Psychological Tests within a forensic Battery (continued)
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Lecture	Communicating results and additional considerations in forensic assessment

## Attendance Requirements

Please note that lecture recordings are not available for this course. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and contact the Course Authority to make alternative arrangements for classes missed.

## General Schedule Information

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.

Classes commence in O-week and run over 11 weeks total. Each weekly class is of 3 hours

duration involving teaching/lecture, as well as group work and practical exercises.

First class in O-Week provides an introduction to forensic assessment, tour of the test library and introduction to the WAIS-IV.

# Course Resources

## Prescribed Resources

Subsections of the following text will be prescribed in various weeks:

Goldstein, G., Allen, D., & DeLuca, J. (Ed.). (2019). *Handbook of psychological assessment* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London, UK: Academic Press.

This resource is available electronically from the library.

## Recommended Resources

Ackerman, M.J. (2010). *Essentials of psychological assessment series. Essentials of forensic psychological assessment* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). John Wiley & Sons Inc.  
Bush, S., Demakis, G., & Rohling, M. (2017). *APA handbook of forensic neuropsychology*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Browne, K., Beech, A.R., Craig, L.A., Cou, S (Eds). (2017). *Assessments in forensic practice: A handbook*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley & Sons.

Lezak, M.D., Howison, D.B., Bigler, E., & Tranel, D. (2012). *Neuropsychological assessment* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

McDonald, S. (Ed). 2021 *Clinical disorders of social cognition*. Routledge. ISBN 9780367461195

Psychological Assessment in a Forensic Context. (2018). In Howard, D., & Westmore, B. (Eds), *Crime and mental health law in New South Wales: A practical guide for lawyers and health care professionals* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed, pp.821-849). Australia: LexisNexis Butterworths.

Sellbom, M., & Suhr, J.A. (Eds). (2019). *The Cambridge handbook: Clinical assessment and diagnosis*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sherman, E.M.S., Tan, J.E., & Hrabok, M. (2022). *A Compendium of Neuropsychological Tests: Fundamentals of Neuropsychological Assessment and Test Reviews for Clinical Practice* [4<sup>th</sup> Edition]. New York: Oxford University Press.

# Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Amanda White					No	Yes

## Other Useful Information

### Academic Information

Upon your enrolment at UNSW, you share responsibility with us for maintaining a safe, harmonious and tolerant University environment.

You are required to:

- Comply with the University's conditions of enrolment.
- Act responsibly, ethically, safely and with integrity.
- Observe standards of equity and respect in dealing with every member of the UNSW community.
- Engage in lawful behaviour.
- Use and care for University resources in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Maintain the University's reputation and good standing.

For more information, visit the [UNSW Student Code of Conduct Website](#).

### Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

**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. 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, plagiarism and the use of AI in assessments can

be located at:

- The [Current Students site](#),
- The [ELISE training site](#), and
- The [Use of AI for assessments](#) site.

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

## Submission of Assessment Tasks

### Penalty for Late Submissions

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

*Any variations to the above will be explicitly stated in the Course Outline for a given course or assessment task.*

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

### Special Consideration

If circumstances prevent you from attending/completing an assessment task, you must officially apply for special consideration, usually within 3 days of the sitting date/due date. You can apply by logging onto myUNSW and following the link in the My Student Profile Tab. Medical documentation or other documentation explaining your absence must be submitted with your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address to be advised of the official outcome and any actions that need to be taken from there. For more information about special consideration, please visit: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

**Important note:** UNSW has a “fit to sit/submit” rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination

or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

## Faculty-specific Information

### Additional support for students

- [The Current Students Gateway](#)
- [Student Support](#)
- [Academic Skills and Support](#)
- [Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety](#)
- [Equitable Learning Services](#)
- [UNSW IT Service Centre](#)
- Science EDI Student [Initiatives](#), [Offerings](#) and [Guidelines](#)